



WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT

College Transition Groups

These groups bring together first-year and transfer students navigating the adjustment to higher education, offering peer support, psychoeducation, and community during one of the biggest transitions of emerging adulthood. The move concentrates many stressors at once: separation from family and old friends, new academic demands, unfamiliar social settings, more autonomy and self-management, and financial pressure. The first year is also a period of heightened vulnerability, coinciding with the peak age of onset for many mental health conditions.

WHO IT'S FOR, AND WHO IT'S NOT

- A fit for any student wanting community during the adjustment.
- Especially for those feeling isolated or finding it harder than expected.
- Clinical-level depression or anxiety needs individual counseling too.

What it's for

First-year, transfer, and other students adjusting to higher education.

For academic pressure, homesickness, and building a social world from scratch.

Some focus on first-gen students, students of color, or other populations.

WHAT TO EXPECT

1 Weekly, 60 to 90 minutes, during the academic term.

2 Open peer discussion, or a skills curriculum through the counseling center.

3 In person, online, or hybrid, and usually free to enrolled students.

Social support is one of the strongest protective factors in the college years.

- A review of 51 studies found social support was consistently linked to **better mental health and wellbeing**, with peer support especially protective against depression and anxiety.¹
- The peer support literature shows group support builds **connection, hope, and self-management** through mental health challenges.²

MAKING THE MOST OF IT

It's social, not just academic. Rebuilding a social world is half the work.

You're not the only one. Naming homesickness and doubt drains their power.

Belonging matters most. A group that says "you belong here" changes the year.

QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE YOU JOIN

- 1** Is it open peer support or a structured skills group?
- 2** Is it for all students, or focused on a specific population?
- 3** Is it peer-led or facilitated by a counselor or trainee?

Ready to find a group?

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If you're in crisis, call or text 988.

The Group Guide is a directory, not a clinic. This handout is general education, not medical or mental health advice. Listings are written by group leaders and are not endorsements. Confirm details, cost, and fit with any group you contact. Sources on page 2.



Sources

College Transition Groups · references keyed to the numbers on page 1.

- 1 Li, R., Hassan, N. C., Zhu, Q., Ouyang, S., & Dong, J. A systematic review on the impact of social support on college students' wellbeing and mental health. *PLOS One* (2025), 20(7), Article e0325212.
- 2 Lyons, N., Cooper, C., & Lloyd-Evans, B. A systematic review and meta-analysis of group peer support interventions for people experiencing mental health conditions. *BMC Psychiatry* (2021), 21(1), Article 315.

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