



FLORIDA STATE  
UNIVERSITY

FSU College Life Coaching Institute

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# **SHOCK & Awe:**

## **Mentoring Transfer Students Through the First Year**

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# Who Are We?

## Dr. Kimberly Burgess



Faculty  
Transfer Student Services  
Florida State University

20 years of experience  
teaching, advising, and  
supporting adult and non-  
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## Ms. Dawn Adolfson



Doctoral Teaching Assistant  
Instructional Systems and  
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Florida State University

10 years of experience in  
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# Transfer Student Services at Florida State University

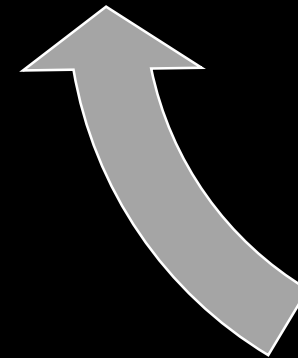
**Transfer  
Experience  
Workshops**



**Pre-  
Advising  
and  
Information**



**SLS 3140  
Academic  
Success  
Strategies  
for Transfer  
Students**





# Shock and Awe!

- What is “transfer shock?”
- Shocking factors for transfer students and colleges/universities
- Meet transfer students (case study)
- A mentoring model for coaching transfer students



# Transfer Students at Our Institutions

- Half of all college students begin at a community college. Low-income students are three times more likely to do so than high-income students.
- Students who begin at a community college are less likely to earn a baccalaureate degree.
- Only 33% percent of community college students transfer to a four-year institution within six years.



# Shocking Factors for Colleges and Universities

Cejda (1997)

Jack Kent Cook Foundation (2019)

Allen, Smith & Muehleck (2013)

- **Public institutions** enroll four times as many community college transfer students as private institutions; transfer students also make up a larger percentage of public enrollment.
- Transfer students who perform well at the community college tend to perform well when they transfer in all areas except for **business and STEM**.
- Community college students who transfer to *selective four-year schools* perform as well as – or even better than – their peers who come directly from high school.
- Transfer students who transfer into fine arts, humanities, and social sciences experience **“transfer ecstasy.”** Overall, when transfer students persist beyond the first semester, **their grades improve.**



# Transfer Shock

First-semester transfer students are **overwhelmed** with the pace of the four-year college life, are **stymied and confused** by unexpected bureaucratic hurdles, and feel varying levels of **alienation and isolation** when the norms, values, and expectations of the new institution are so different. This usually results in a **slight to significant GPA drop** in the first semester.



# Shocking Factors for Transfer Students

- Larger campus with large class sizes
- Increased credit hour expectations (from 12 to 15)
- Unforgiving first semester schedules
- New procedures and advising systems
- Confusing institutional policies
- Faculty more focused on research than on student development
- Transfer credits that don't or won't transfer
- Higher tuition costs
- Limited/exhausted financial ability
- Feeling anonymous or "like a freshman."





# Shocking Factors for Transfer Students

Berger & Malaney (2001)

Carlan & Byxbe (2000)

Hartman, Bjerrgaard & Lord (2009)

Grites (2013)

- From the nurturing of a community college environment to the pressured independence of a four-year institution.
- Colleges and universities holding outdated assumptions of the needs of transfer students.
- Students' "over-" and "under-" estimating of their own abilities to navigate the high-pressure environment.
- Transfer credit and tuition surprises.
- Drastic changes in demographics or sharp regional differences.



# Meet Daniela!

- 28 year-old, Black woman
  - Single mom with four children (6-months to 11 years old)
  - No help or support from family
  - Teenage parent who earned her high school diploma in an alternative teenage parent program
  - Earned AA from two-year after 9 years of part-time/full-time enrollment
  - Criminology major, 2<sup>nd</sup> semester
  - 1.10 GPA (academic probation)
- She comes to coaching because she is “freaking out” before her mid-term exams.
  - She says she doesn't know how to study or manage her time. Because she is the only caregiver for her kids, she struggles with work-life balance.
  - She also struggles with writing papers and essay questions.
  - She thinks maybe her family is right about her. Now she is even doubting her career choices and coming to FSU.



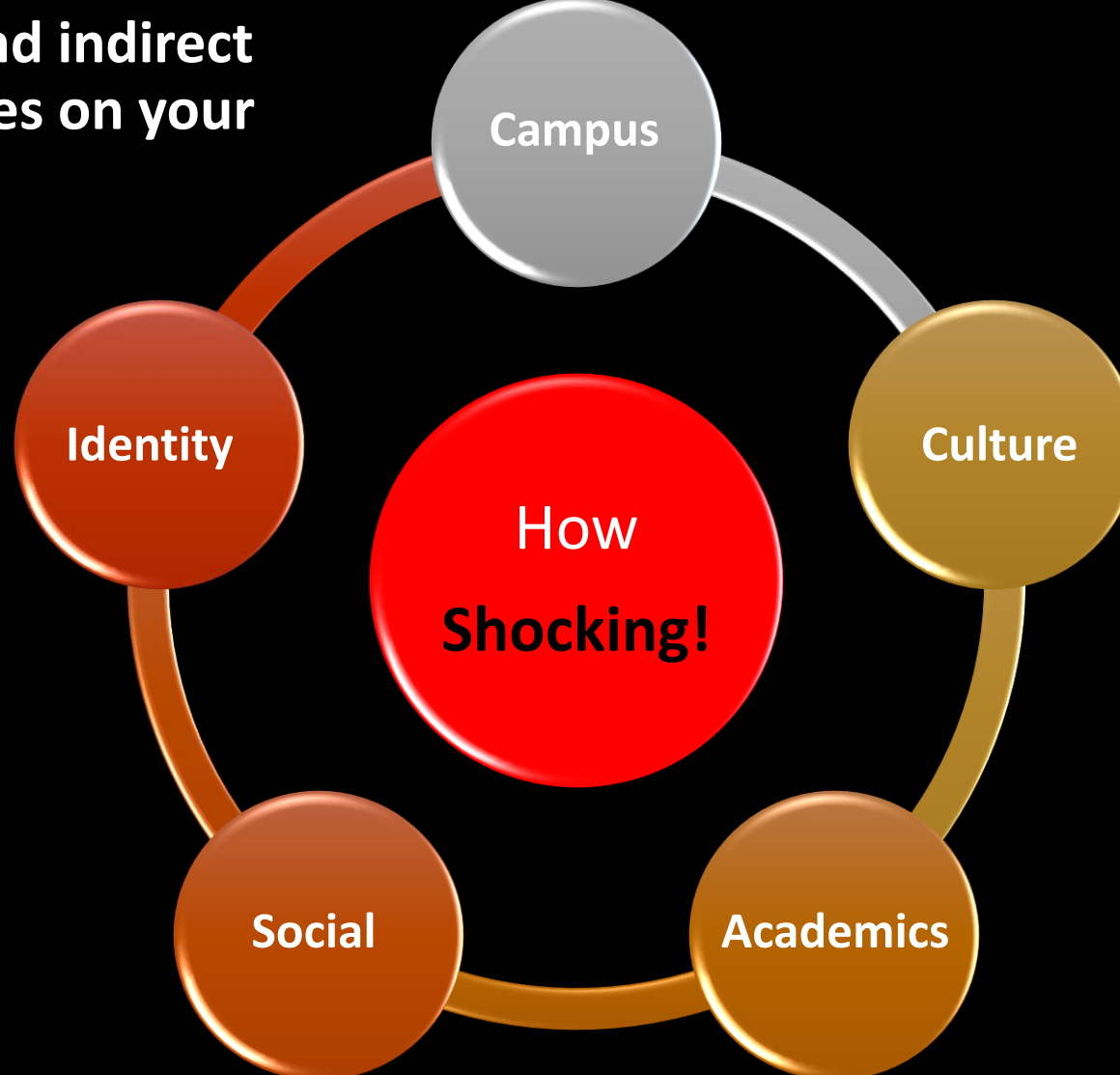
# How Can You Help?

- **What more do you need to know** about this student in order to have a better sense of her and her journey?
  - If more information is needed, what questions will you ask the student?
  - What information can you get from other sources?
- **What are the various shock factors** impacting this student's success?
- **What advice would you give?** What referrals would you/could you make?
- **What would be the appropriate follow-up protocol** for this student?



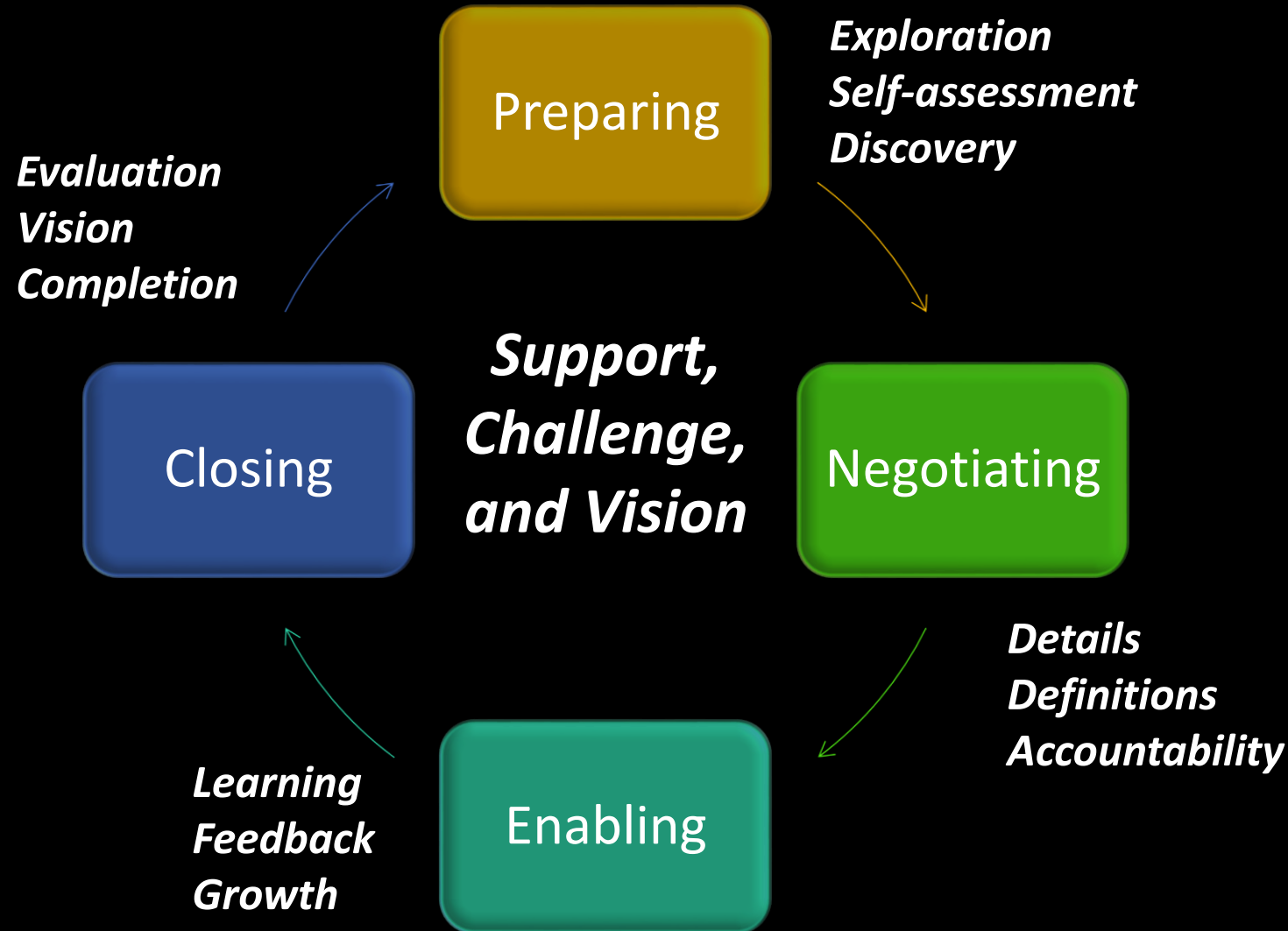
**What is the direct and indirect impact of these forces on your students' success?**

***How many other "shocks" can you identify?***





# Mentoring Transfer Students





# Mentoring Transfer Students

*Tools and knowledge that would allow a student to negotiate the transfer process*

*Connecting academic, career, and life goals to each other AND to major choices*



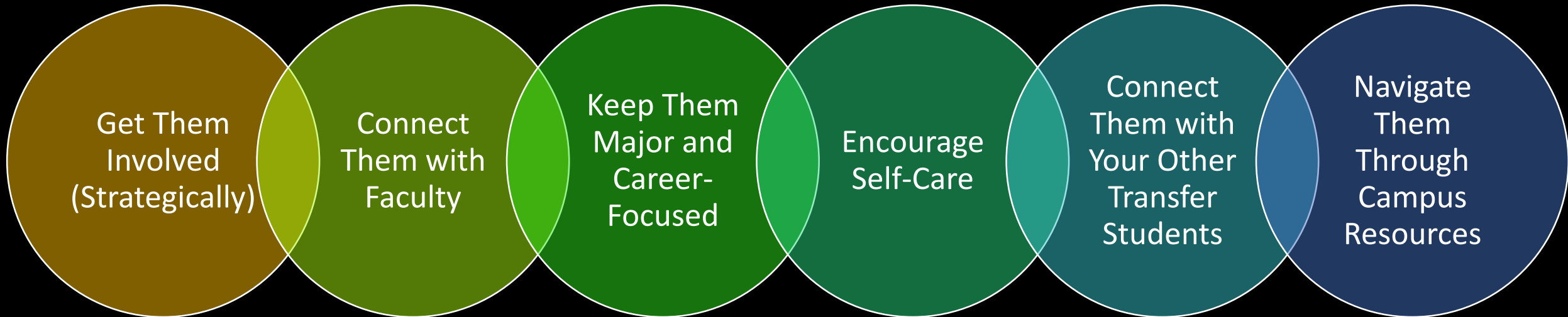
*Focusing on self-direction, critical-thinking, decision-making, problem-solving, and coping*

*Socratic questioning, listening, reflecting*

Allen, Smith & Muehleck (2013)  
Laanan, F.S. (2004)  
Zachary (2011)



# Helping Students Avoid Transfer Shock





Questions?





# Thank You!

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## Contact Us!



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