

# Developing Life Skills

RAMFAM Association Meeting  
CSU Denver Center  
April 6, 2013



Colorado State University



# Outline

- Life Skill Themes from 2012 Biennial Survey
- Tips for Developing these Skills
  - Student testimonials
- How CSU is Advancing these Skills
  - Science of Learning
  - Campus Ecologies
- Group Discussion



# 2012 Biennial Survey Themes

- Managing stress
- Making responsible choices & Problem-solving
- Living off campus
- Seeking out resources
- Effective communication strategies
- Transitions



# Stress

- Triggers
  - Minor, major, or ongoing stress
- Identification/Recognition of Stress
- Stress-Less Tips:
  - Sleep, exercise, journaling, positivity, time management, prioritizing
- Relaxation Techniques:
  - Deep breathing, meditation, progressive muscular relaxation
- CSU Resources
  - Campus Recreation, CSU Health Network, TILT



“I am also learning Time Management skills and prioritizing which tasks or projects to complete first. As far as time management goes, I have been learning to balance work, classes, homework, sorority obligations, social life and theatre. At times it has been extremely stressful but I have gotten better about making lists of what I have to complete and following through and making sure I actually complete everything that is on that list.”

- Annie, Sophomore, Liberal Arts



# Responsible Choices & Problem-Solving

- Responsible choices could include health, safety, academics, managing time, substance use, etc.
- How do we make good decisions?
  - Determine the issue
  - Compare options
  - Make an informed decision
  - Take action
  - Check back
- CSU Resources
  - CSU Health Network, Dieticians, Residence Hall Programming, Conflict Resolution and Student Conduct Services



“I’ve learned to know how to compromise. It’s surprising how many things I took for granted and it’s definitely important to learn these things. The SLiCE office, Key Explore, CASA, and the Undeclared Leadership Council, have helped me with those skills.”

– Elizabeth, Social Work, Freshman



# Living Off Campus

- Finding a place to live
- Finding a roommate
- Managing a budget
- Buying and preparing meals
  
- CSU Resources
  - Off Campus Life, Upper Division Peers (through involvement), CSU Health Network



“The most important skill I have learned this past year is how to successfully grocery shop, buying nutritious food that doesn’t break my fragile bank account. I received help from the health center on campus as well and a process of nutrition my friend recommended.”

– Erin, Chemistry, Sophomore

“I have learned how to be more self-sufficient by seeking out the resources on campus such as the Career Center, Hartshorn medical center, and the many involvement offices (SLiCE, OTP). Also, upper classmen served as great role models for non-school things like grocery shopping and renting an apartment!”

– Elise, Communications, Sophomore



# Seeking Out Resources

- Importance of Support Systems
  - Explore student service resources
  - Go into the office and meet the staff
  - Connect with advisors and counselors for academics, mental/physical health & stress management
  - Join student organizations
  - Seek out resources important to you
- CSU Resources
  - CSU Health Network, Student Diversity Programs & Services, Student Case Management, TILT, The Career Center, SLiCE, Student Financial Services



“Although we are here first and foremost as students, college is so much more than the classes we attend everyday. During my time at CSU, I have faced some of the greatest challenges of my life. Each experience however, has proved to be well worth the fight. In the face of every challenge, I redefined my bravery. I have come to realize, the strongest thing you can do is allowing others to see you vulnerable and lean on them when it is necessary. This awareness has given me the self-confidence I never possessed before, provided me with lifelong friendships, and support. In short, CSU has given me the opportunity to find myself and I wouldn’t change my time here for anything.”

– Lauren, Junior, Business Administration – Marketing

“Housing- the housing fair is very helpful. Resume- Career Center. Issues with my roommate’s health- Health Center.”

– Megan, Environmental Communications, Sophomore



# Effective Communication

- There are many types of people students engage with regularly: roommates, professors, supervisors, friends, and advisors
- Communication Strategies:
  - Cultural Considerations
  - Type of Communication
  - Listening
  - Using “I Statements”
  - Seeking First to Understand
- CSU Resources
  - Conflict Resolution, Residence Life

# Student Perspectives:



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“I have learned to be comfortable living with new people, and living in the residence halls have taught me that.”

– Oriana, Sociology, Freshman

“I have learned to use the many resources you are given by being a student on campus. TILT free tutoring, the Career Center for resume and interviewing advice and critiquing, and even just office hours getting to know your professors. Get to know the people you spend your time with.”

– Zach, Business, Freshman

“To be more open to diversity. I’ve gained more of an understanding of people who have different beliefs or ideas than me, and I’ve grown to be more accepting of the background of others. I’ve used the LDC, PLP, and SLiCE office.”

– Kate, Undeclared, Freshman

“Through the different organizations I am in, such as Black Student Alliance, The President’s Multi-Cultural Student Advisory committee, The President’s Leadership Program just to name a few, I have been able to learn the life skill of communication and the importance of having conversations with different groups of people and to remain open-minded about the different perspectives that other have.”

– Christina, Sophomore, Communications



# Managing Transitions

- Ending, Losing, Letting Go; the Neutral Zone; the New Beginning
- Varying needs for entering college, approaching breaks, transitioning out of college
  - Be realistic and honest about expectations
  - Help identify issues and stressors
  - Discuss resources and how to navigate them
  - Be patient and understanding of struggle
- CSU Resources
  - Orientation and Transition Programs, Career Center, Counseling Center, TILT



“How to become more independent and learn how to find the places I need to go to do the things I need to do. I got involved in many groups like Key Service and PLP where I met a lot of people and was able to use as support for anything I needed.”

– Sebastian, Political Science and International Studies,  
Freshman



# Bridging the Curricular and Co-Curricular Gap

“I am a firm believer in learning more out of the classroom than when you are actually in a class. With my academics, I have been able to develop a sense of well-roundedness that has allowed me to think about different situations in a more deep context. I believe that it is an essential life skill to learn about what is around more so than what you already know because that is what keeps life going and the satisfaction of learning something new every day.”

– Christina, Sophomore, Communications



# What We Know About Learning

- Prior knowledge
- Skills to enhance personal responsibility
- Interpersonal abilities and learning
- Experiential validation
- Benefits of community service
- Impact of diversity experiences



# How CSU Supports Learning

- Intentionality of student affairs learning from and with faculty, and vice versa
  - The learning and skills development students express are intentional
- Taking a learning ecologies approach
- Working to be even more explicit with drawing connections



# How Can You Help?

- Conversations with other parents and families of students of a similar class year and, anticipating growth in future years.
- What strategies have you employed to best support your student in developing these skills?
- What has been successful?
- What would you do differently?



# Resources:

- CSU Health Network Stress Management:

<http://www.health.colostate.edu/pages/resources/stress-management.aspx>

- CSU ACCESS Project:

[http://accessproject.colostate.edu/sa/modules/sec4/tut\\_sec4.php?display=pg\\_1](http://accessproject.colostate.edu/sa/modules/sec4/tut_sec4.php?display=pg_1)