

Enrollment and the Emotional Wellbeing of Prospective Students: Creating a Culture of Care

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Your Presenters!



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2025 Study Demographics

8,470 12th graders completed our survey from October 2024 to May 2025

Ethnicity

| | |
|---------------------------------|-----|
| American Indian/Native American | 6% |
| Asian | 12% |
| Black | 28% |
| Hispanic | 20% |
| Native Hawaiian | 4% |
| Other | 5% |
| Prefer not to say | 6% |

Gender

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| Female | 68% |
| Male | 22% |
| Non-binary / third gender | 5% |
| Prefer not to say | 3% |
| Prefer to self-describe | 3% |

First-generation status

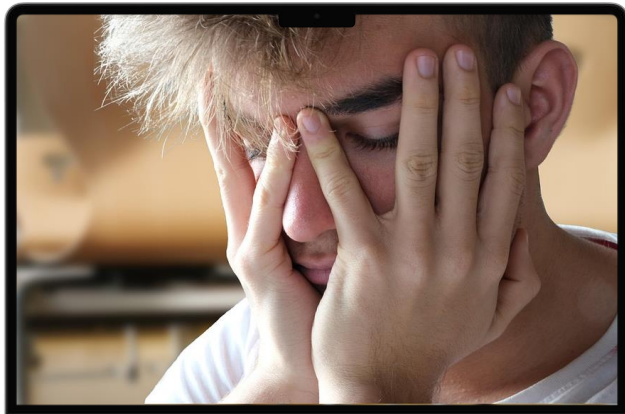
| | |
|-----------------------|-----|
| Continuing generation | 71% |
| First generation | 29% |



Understanding Prospective Students' Emotional Challenges

The Emotional Rollercoaster of College Planning

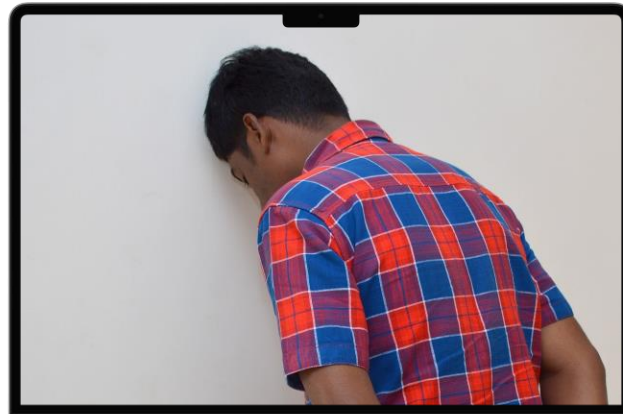
How are 12th graders feeling?



Anxious

Often 89%

Most of the time 44%



Stressed

Often 93%

Most of the time 42%



Worried

Often 82%

Most of the time 29%

Anxiety in 12th Grade

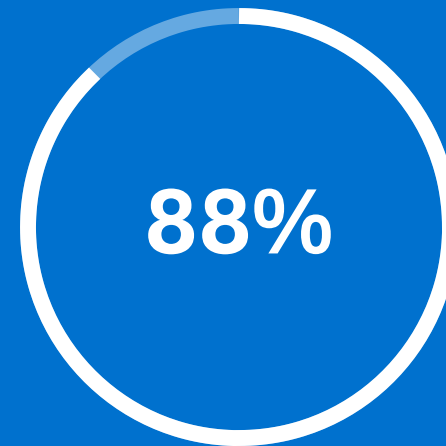
Students who felt anxious "often"



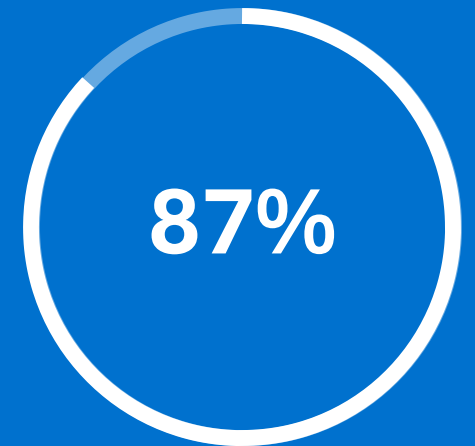
October



December



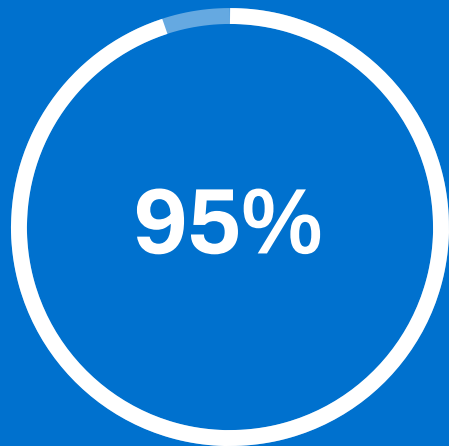
March



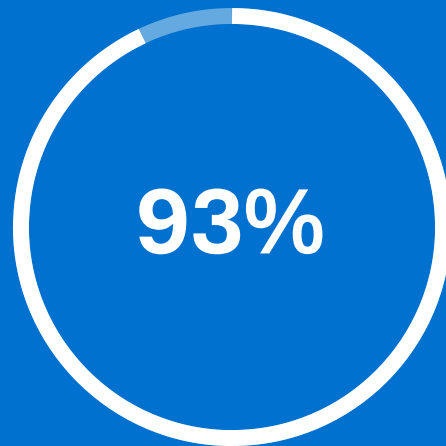
May

Stress in 12th Grade

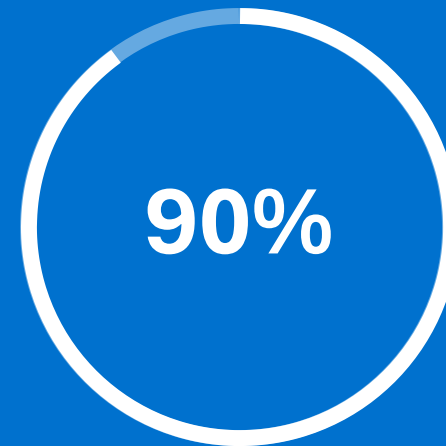
Students who felt stressed "often"



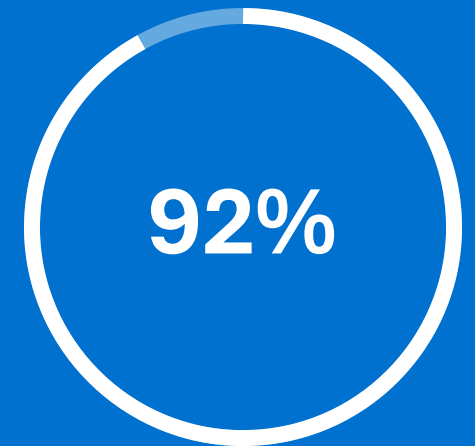
October



December



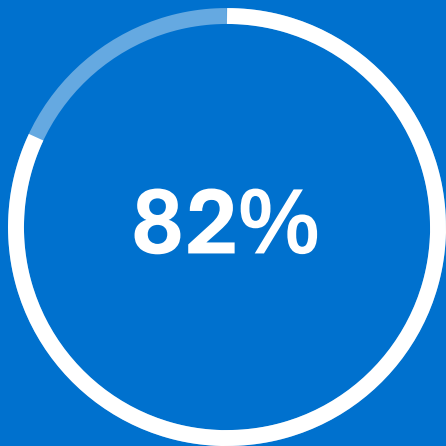
March



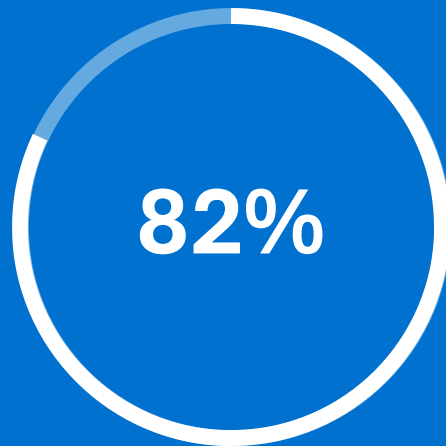
May

Worry in 12th Grade

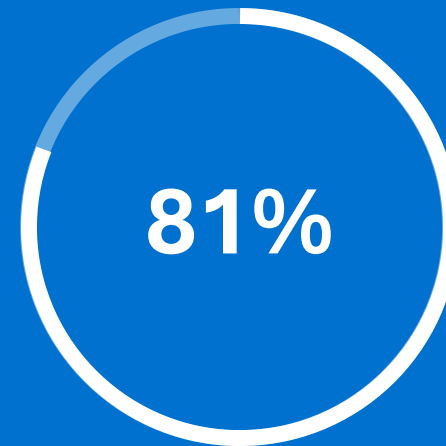
Students who felt worried "often"



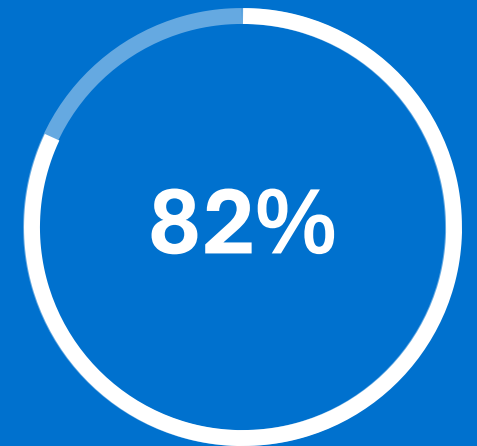
October



December



March



May

Top Barriers in College Planning

What are the main roadblocks to application?



Not knowing if they will be able to pay for college
83%



Not knowing how to choose "the right college"
68%



Forgetting to submit a required form
69%



Filling out financial aid forms
60%

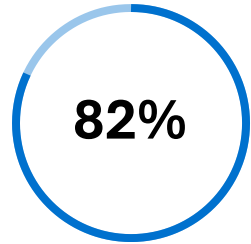


Understanding how to qualify for financial aid and scholarships
69%



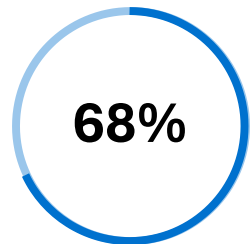
Filling out the FAFSA
51%

Hidden Concerns



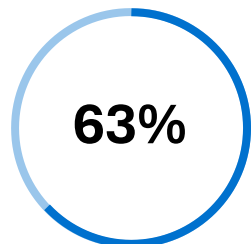
82%

Safety



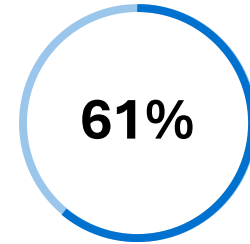
68%

Getting poor grades



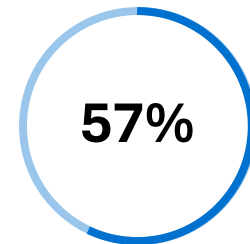
63%

**Reaching out when
they need help**



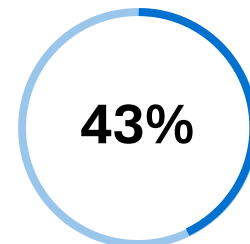
61%

**Not having enough money
to pay for college**



57%

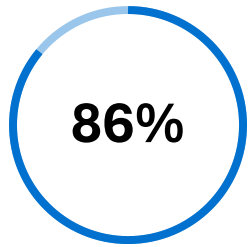
**Taking care of themselves
(physically and mentally)**



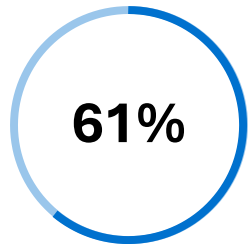
43%

**Making a mistake in the school
they choose to attend**

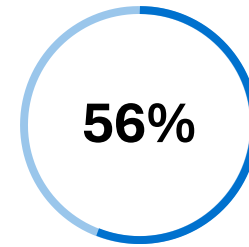
Hidden Concerns Beyond Academics



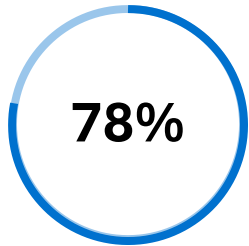
Peer pressure



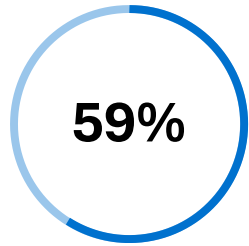
Going away from home



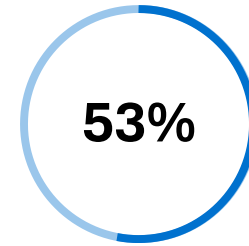
Having a hard time making friends



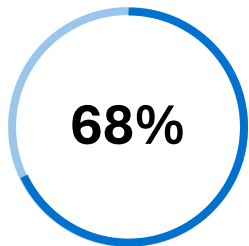
Not finding a club or a group to join



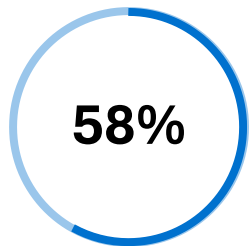
Living in a dorm



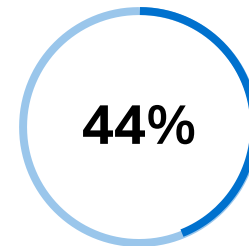
Not getting along with their roommate



Having a roommate



Being by themselves for the first time



Not fitting in

What Are Students Excited About?



Going to new
places
94%



Living in a dorm
90%



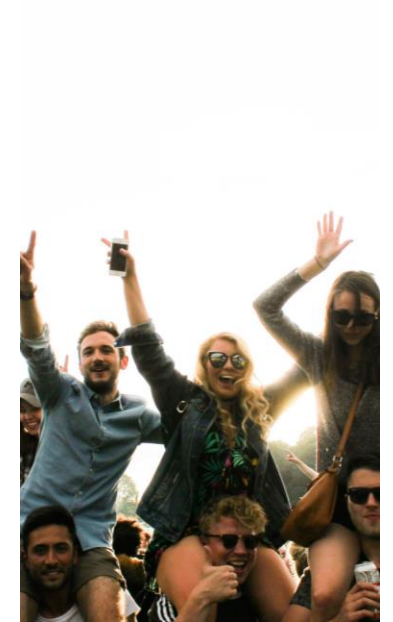
Being by
themselves for
the first time
79%



Meeting new
friends
77%



Going away from
home
77%



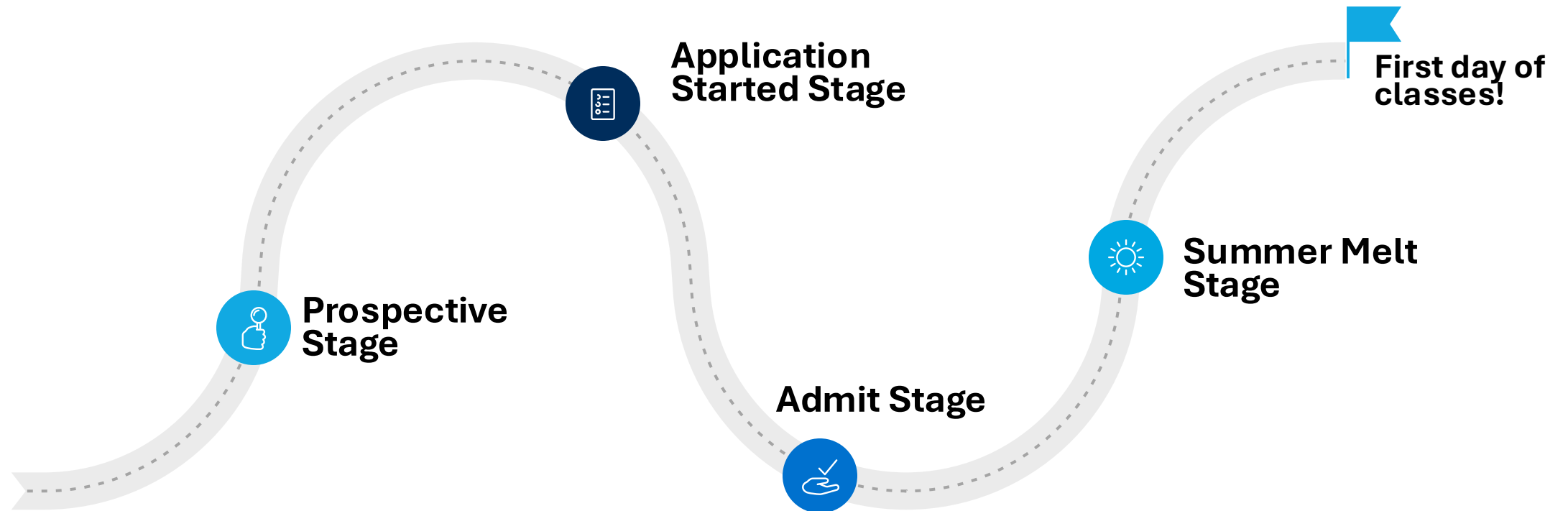
Having a good
time
59%

Fostering a Culture of Care in Enrollment



Reimagining Recruitment

Creating an enrollment culture of care!



Prospective Stage

Before application

- 1 Simplify and clarify financial aid info early.
- 2 Share authentic student testimonials to build connections.
- 3 Offer virtual campus tours and student meet-up opportunities.
- 4 Use AI with total transparency, offer alternative paths for students who are comfortable with the use of AI.
- 5 Host financial literacy webinars for families and students.
- 6 Invite students to become part of your online student community, where prospective students can connect.

Applicant Stage

Help application completion

- 1 Send personalized reminders for deadlines and forms.
- 2 Host essay writing workshops and tips sessions.
- 3 Provide clear step-by-step application checklists.
- 4 Use AI chatbots to answer common application questions (offer alternative paths).
- 5 Create peer mentor programs to guide applicants.
- 6 Connect students in your digital community so they can direct access to admissions counselors.

Admit Stage

Help yield

- 1 Send personalized congratulations with next steps clearly outlined.
- 2 Use personalized financial aid videos.
- 3 Invite admitted students to virtual social events and Q&A.
- 4 Offer early orientation sign-ups with mental health resources.
- 5 Provide financial aid counseling tailored to each student's package.
- 6 Connect admitted students with current students for mentorship via your digital community.

Summer Melt Stage

Prevent drop-off

- 1 Maintain regular check-ins through texts or calls.
- 2 Share mental health and wellness resources proactively.
- 3 Provide clear guidance on housing, registration, and orientation.
- 4 Host Q&A sessions addressing last-minute concerns.
- 5 Share information about clubs and organizations based on students' interests to create a sense of connection and belonging.
- 6 Continue to engage students in your online community with fun relationship-building games and activities.

Key Takeaways & Next Steps



Prioritize emotional well-being throughout enrollment.



Assess current recruitment/emotional support practices.



Use technology, transparency, authenticity, and proactive support.



Identify gaps and implement targeted improvements.



Foster a welcoming culture from first contact through matriculation.



Commit to a culture of care that centers student wellbeing.



Stage-specific strategies increase student success and reduce stress.

Questions?



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