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Factors Promoting Positive Adaptation and Resilience during the Transition to College

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ABSTRACT

The transition to college can be a difficult time as students adjust to new social and academic demands while adapting to new living circumstances in a collegiate environment. The ability of students to cope with the stress of such a transition and display positive outcomes despite challenges has important implications for psychosocial well-being as well as academic success. The present study examined the relative impact of four domains that have been shown to promote resilience in the face of stress in order to determine the extent to which each factor predicted student stress independent of all other factors. First-year college students from four universities completed measures assessing their perceived level of stress as well as their social connectedness, self-care behaviors, cognitive style, and life skills. Results revealed that social support and cognitive styles characterized by optimism significantly and uniquely predicted lower stress among students. Findings are discussed in relation to the development of university-based programs to promote the skills and characteristics that are most likely to result in positive outcomes for students during the transition to college.

KEYWORDS

Resilience; Stress; College; Adjustment

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