ADVISING “THOSE MILLENNIAL” STUDENTS: UTILIZING THE TENETS OF STUDENT DEVELOPMENT THEORY AND APPRECIATIVE ADVISING FOR A MORE INFORMED PRACTICE

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Keep in mind the following case scenario during today’s discussion:

Jack, a 19-year old sophomore resident student at a small out-of-state private college has just recently transferred from his local community college as a chemistry major. Jack excelled academically both in high school and community college, having earned multiple awards and recognitions for his talent in the areas of science and math. While Jack was initially excited to transfer to the institution he has always dreamed of attending, two months into the semester he has found the experience to be stressful and confusing. Aside from having difficulty making friends at his new college, Jack is also struggling for the first time with new concepts he is learning in his two advanced-level chemistry courses. Even further, Jack is frustrated that not all of his community college credits seemed to transfer to his program and does not know how long it will take him to graduate, or if he even wants to continue with the chemistry major.

MILLENNIAL CHARACTERISTICS:

According to Howe & Strauss (2000), seven characteristics can be generally applied to Millennials:

1.) They see themselves as special and in need of individual attention.
2.) They feel pressure to exceed expectations others have for them.
3.) They enjoy achievement and respond negatively to perceived failure.
4.) They are confident and optimistic about the future.
5.) They are team-oriented.
6.) They enjoy structured experiences and conventionality.
7.) They have been protected and encouraged by support from others.
NANCY SCHLOSSBERG’S TRANSITION THEORY:

- Schlossberg’s theory highlights the impact that transitions have on adult development and the factors that influence how individuals manage them (Schlossberg, Waters, & Goodman, 1995).
- A transition is defined as “any event or non-event that results in changed relationships, routines, assumptions, and roles” (Schlossberg et al., 1995, p. 27).
- Whether the transition is anticipated or unanticipated, the context in which it occurs, and the extent to which it impacts an individual’s life all come into play when examining transition.
- The four factors that influence how individuals manage transition include: situation, self, support, strategies.

NEVITT SANFORD’S THEORY OF CHALLENGE AND SUPPORT:

- Sanford was one of the first psychologists to study young adult development within college settings (Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton, & Renn, 2009).
- Fostering student growth and development occurs when there is a balance between the levels of challenge and support they receive from their institution.
- The concept of readiness is key, referring to how “open” one is to change and prepared to accommodate it (Evans et al., 2009). Readiness can be shaped by both internal and external factors.

APPRECIATIVE ADVISING:

The benefits/applicability of using appreciative advising with Millennials include:

- Promotion of campus integration/connectedness.
- Grounded in advisor/advisee rapport and effective working relationships.
- Action orientation.
- Fostering of autonomy, decision making skills, and motivation.

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Embrace parental involvement in the advising process, with balance (Bleeker, Bleeker, & Bleeker, 2010).
- Clearly define the advising process and nature of the advisor/advisee working relationship.
- Offer services and materials in multiple formats, including online.
- Establish strong peer mentor and peer advising programs.
- Remember that this population is diverse/avoid generalizations.

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