Fall FYE Discussion Guide
Mental Health Topics
Contact Dr. Budd at 953-5640 for more info
http://counseling.cofc.edu/

Common themes among students who seek counseling: suggested discussion topics

1. Loneliness & Homesickness
   a. **Fact:** Both are very common among incoming freshmen, and can last 4–6 weeks until you get a routine, start your classes, and begin to know your way around campus. Friends are what everyone wants, but take time to develop – loneliness becomes a prison leading to a self-fulfilling prophecy.

   b. **Discussion Q:** How can you meet others you relate to? Ex. What if you can’t relate to the drinking scene? How do you get over any fear of judgment or rejection?

   c. **Post Discussion:** What can you do about it? Know your options on where to meet people and get involved. This includes:
      2) Cougar Activities Board: http://charleston.orgsync.com/org/cab
      3) Invite roommates, classmates, or others on your hall to go to the dining hall, out for coffee, to a CofC event. Check out, New Student Programs College Calendar or call 843-953-2017.
      4) Check out one of over 200 campus clubs and organizations at: http://www.cofc.edu/campuslife/clubsandorganizations/

   More info available at: CASAS homesickness page: http://counseling.cofc.edu/counseling/homesick.pdf

2. Anxiety
   a. **Fact:** Anxiety is the number one mental health issue among college students, especially social anxiety. According to the 2014 American College Health Association Survey, 17% of men and 21% of women felt at least one episode of overwhelming anxiety sometime in the last year.

   b. **Discussion Q:** How do you know if you or someone else is anxious? How can anxiety affect your life (academics or relationships) or the lives of your friends?

   c. **Post Discussion:** What can you do reduce or better manage anxiety?
      1) Ask group what skills and things they have tried, what works best.
      2) Learn how to get control through relaxations skills, counseling and/or medication.
         Ex. CASAS offers yoga twice a week and has multiple skills listed, even apps for your phone at: http://counseling.cofc.edu/self-help-resources/index.php Call 843-953-5640 for an apt. or walk-in or text their Cougar Counselor Team, M-Th, 4-9pm, Text "4support" to 839863
3. Depression
   a. Fact: According to the 2014 American College Health Association Survey, 14% of men and 17% of women felt so depressed that it was difficult to function sometime in the last year. An estimated 20% of incoming freshman are already on psychiatric medications.

   b. Discussion Q: What can cause depression? How do you know if you or someone else is depressed? What can you do if you or someone else has thoughts of harming themselves?

   c. Post Discussion: What can you do to help reduce or better manage depression?
      a. Get educated:
         http://screening.mentalhealthscreening.org/CofC-CASAS

      b. Learn to decrease by stress/take care of yourself:
         http://counseling.cofc.edu/self-help-resources/index.php

      c. Seek help:
         http://counseling.cofc.edu/index.php 843-953-5640 for a counselor
         http://counseling.cofc.edu/cct/index.php  Call 843-953-7411 or TEXT “4support to 839863

4. Relationships:
   a. Fact: Good friends, people who you can let your guard down with, are hard to find. Many students have a history of bad relationships at home or intimately. Too many people put up with a bad or abusive relationship just to avoid being alone.

   b. Discussion Q: What makes a relationship (friendship, romance, etc.) a good one? Encourage students to think of the best relationships in their lives and share what makes them the best.

      What are some indicators of a bad or unhealthy relationship?
      Encourage students to think of the worst relationships they have been in or seen and share what makes them bad.
      These could even be characteristics they have seen on television or read in books.

      How might an unhealthy relationship impact someone’s life?

      What can be done to make a bad relationship better?

      When is it time to walk away? How could you approach ending things?

   c. Post Discussion:
      1) If you feel trapped in a bad relationship, talk to someone about it. Reach out to a family member, good friend, or try counseling services at the College, including the CCT’s (Text "4support" to 839863
2) If you suspect that your or a friend is in an abusive (verbal, physical, sexual) relationship, or has been a victim of sexual assault contact Office of Victim Services – 953-2273; or CASAS – 953-5640; or People Against Rape – 745-0144). You can also submit an anonymous concern to the Dean of Students Office who can look into the situation and make sure everyone is safe and gets any help needed, http://deanofstudents.cofc.edu/ and click on the “Report a Concern or Violation” link in the left column of the page.

5. Substance Abuse

a. Fact: NO, not everyone is drinking. Only 25% of male and 15% of female students drink to intoxication two or more times per week, only 55% of student drink to intoxication once every two weeks. Alcohol abuse by one or both parties is involved in 80% of sexual assaults. Every semester 20+ students are at risk of dying of alcohol poisoning and have to be rushed by ambulance to local hospitals.

b. Discussion Q: Alcohol Safety and Substance Abuse.

Alcohol Safety/Risk Reduction
1) What are some negatives that can happen when someone gets drunk, especially at a party or in public (injury, alcohol poisoning, sexual assault)?
2) What are ways you could prevent these negatives?
3) What could you do to help an intoxicated friend? What if he or she is passed out or showing signs of alcohol poisoning?

Substance Abuse
1) When does alcohol or drug use become “abuse” or a problem? In other words, what does substance abuse look like?
2) How can substance abuse affect someone’s life?
3) What should you do if you think you may have a problem? What about a friend?

c. Post Discussion: What can you do about it?
1) Use CofC’s “Good Samaritan policy” get a drunken friend help before it’s too late.
2) Always stay with a friend who is getting “hammered or tipsy” and/or make sure someone safe can get them home.
3) If you want to party, identify ahead of time who will help you get home safely.
4) Take a FREE, ANONYMOUS, survey to find out if your drinking is crossing the line from use to abuse: http://screening.mentalhealthscreening.org/CofC-CASAS

Student Learning Outcomes
• Students will be able to make an appointment at CASAS as needed, to explain basic services, and state that there are no fees and confidentiality is in place.
• Students will be able to assist a fellow student who has concerns about depression, anxiety or substance abuse problems.

CASAS staff are always willing to help, 843-953-5640.  http://counseling.cofc.edu/
They are free (services paid for by tuition), and confidential (parents are not informed unless you sign an informed consent giving permission), services do not go on your transcript. They are also glad to help you problem solve what to do about someone you have concerns about, many friends, roommates and others often come with questions about someone else.