

Conflict and Community on Today's Campus

A FROSH Facilitator Guide

Because FROSH is used in many different settings, we've written this Guide to help facilitators get the most out of it in both residence life and other student development training as well as in first year student programs. Possible applications include:

Student Life Programs:

- Freshman Orientation
- First Year Programs
- Residential Life Education
- Gender and Diversity Awareness
- Peer Counseling
- Student Leader Training

Staff Training:

- Residence Assistant Training
- All First Year Program Staff
- Counselors and Advisors
- Faculty and Administrator Sensitivity

Other:

- Parent Orientation Discussions

OBJECTIVES

For RAs and Other Staff Training:

1. Sensitize staff to the current anxieties and concerns of first year students.
2. Help RAs and other professionals anticipate problems they are likely to encounter in the residence halls.
3. Help staff better define their own roles and scrutinize specific ideas and programs to ease the transition of the first year.
4. Help staff build a supportive community where pluralism and diversity are sources of strength and personal growth.
5. Take staff on an audio-visual "field trip" through the first year.

For Student Life Programs:

1. Take students on an audio-visual "field trip" through the first year.
 2. Help students articulate their often hidden fears and anxieties.
 3. Encourage students to develop survival strategies through open and honest communication.
 4. Prepare students for life in a pluralistic community.
 5. Make students aware of campus resources.
-

FACILITATOR PREPARATION

I. BACKGROUND TO FROSH

FROSH was filmed at Stanford University during 1990-91 and edited the following year. Two filmmakers, Dayna Goldfine and Dan Geller, moved into Stanford's Trancos Hall, a freshman residence hall, and followed a new group of students from move-in day to spring finals. Their documentary vividly captures university life during this tumultuous rite of passage from adolescence to young adulthood.

For most students, the first year offers their first scary and bewildering experience of autonomous living. Separation from parental oversight, norms, and values brings anxiety along with opportunity. Students are plunged into an unfamiliar lifestyle, sharing a room and a residence hall community with those who may not only hail from different regions of the country or world but also hold wide-ranging political, philosophical and cultural viewpoints. Yet these disparate perspectives, new rules for interaction, and lack of familiar structure also bring freshmen a unique chance to scrutinize their beliefs and experiment with new ideas and behaviors.

FROSH is produced in the style of "cinema vérité." There is no narration. The cameras follow students everywhere, from the classroom to the bedroom to the bathroom. We watch as ten students grapple - sometimes successfully, sometimes not - with a multitude of psycho-social developmental concerns: self-identity and self-esteem; cultural, ethnic and class differences; sexism; homophobia and heterosexism; competence; academic and career choices; security; stress management; autonomy; community building; and substance abuse.

Whether used in staff training or student life programs, FROSH and this Guide will help you assist your own new students to embark on a voyage of self-discovery within a diverse and supportive community.

(Note: The phrases "new student" and "first year student" refer to "traditional age" first year college students not transfer or re- entry students.)

II. About Stanford

Stanford is a highly competitive, private university of 6,500 (plus some 6,000 graduate students) 30 miles south of San Francisco. About 85% of its students graduated in the top 10% of their high school class. Of the 1,600 in FROSH's freshman class, 55% were men, 45% women. 45% were students of color: 25% were Asian American, 10% Latino; 8% African American, 2% Native American. Stanford is expensive; the cost of room, board and tuition tops \$20,000 per year. But nearly 2/3 of undergraduates receive significant financial aid.

First year students are required to live on campus. 80 (40 men and 40 women) lived in Trancos Hall where FROSH was shot: 42 white, 20 Asian American, 8 Latino, 6 African American, 2 native American and 2 Indian students. Also living in Trancos were 4 RAs, and 2 resident fellows (a married couple on University staff).

(Note: Facilitators will want to compare their campus community to Stanford.)

III. PREVIEW FROSH & PLAN SESSION

Preview FROSH on your own. Be sure to read the Synopsis and Character Summaries (see [Appendix](#)) to reinforce your viewing. Familiarize yourself with the Preparatory Activities and Post- Screening Questions and choose those most appropriate to your situation. Feel free to amend them.

Note: FROSH is broken into two parts.

Part I: Freshman (Dis)Orientation runs 60 minutes;

Part II: Building a Home runs 38 minutes.

You may decide to break between Parts. We anticipate training will take 2½ - 3 hours.

PROGRAM

I. PRE-SCREENING ACTIVITIES: DEFINING THE PROBLEM

(allow 10 - 15 minutes)

A. A WALK DOWN MEMORY LANE - Guided Imagery

Whether your group consists of new students, RAs, or staff, have them find a comfortable position and close their eyes. Ask them to go back to the moment they spied their college

acceptance letter in the mail. (pause) Open your letter. What do you feel? Who do you tell first? (pause) The summer before you leave for college is a busy one. What are you doing? Do you have any anxieties about going away to school? (pause) You begin packing. Which clothes? Books? Keepsakes? (pause) It's time to leave. The car is ready. You're on the road to...college. (pause) What are you thinking? Any fears, worries, concerns? (long pause) Try to identify your anxieties. Open your eyes. Then...

B. ANXIETY SELF-AUDIT

Make a list of your 4-5 biggest worries as a new student (e.g. grades, finding friends, feeling different...).

II. CRITICAL VIEWING.

(allow 100 minutes)

A. PRIOR TO SCREENING

Write down the names of the main characters (see [Appendix II.](#)) on a blackboard or newsprint. Make two columns under each name, one titled "Concerns" the other "Responses." Ask viewers to choose (or you can assign) one character each. Instruct viewers to make two columns of notes as they watch FROSH. In one, list the issues, dilemmas, and concerns their character confronts (e.g. grade anxiety). In the other, note their character's responses (e.g. want to transfer). (Note: You need not assign all the characters. Stick to those most germane to your own agenda).

B. SCREEN FROSH

III. POST-SCREENING: AWARENESS AND REFLECTION

(Allow 45 - 60 minutes)

After the initial general discussion, questions are divided by theme. Identify those questions most pertinent to your campus to ensure quality time spent on them. Note that most questions below are addressed to first year students, but you can easily adapt them for use with RAs and professional staff.

A. GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. Group activity: Using the roster of characters you've posted on the blackboard or newsprint, ask viewers to refer to their notes and list the concerns and responses of each character. Be sure to write down their suggestions. You'll have cause to reference them throughout the discussion.

2. Which issues are typical for students on our campus? Site specific examples. What other issues do first-year students on our campus face?
3. Refer back to your Anxiety Self-Audit. Which characters appear to share your anxieties?
4. Which characters changed the most from fall to spring? What factors were responsible? What expectations do you have about your first year? (or: How did your values and desires change during your first year?)

B. IDENTITY, SELF-ESTEEM AND COMMUNITY VALUES

1. Who do you think liked themselves the most? Why? Whose self- image seemed weakest? Why?
2. Cheng's self-esteem suffered when he didn't receive straight A's. To what extent is your self-worth tied to the following: Achievement (e.g. academic, artistic, athletic)? Popularity (platonic, sexual, greeks)? Appearance? Belonging to a desirable or stigmatized group (e.g. race, class, gender, sexual orientation)?
3. How have your parents' feelings affected your self-esteem? Can professors, advisors, and friends substitute for parents? How can we build an accepting and supportive community which values each individual for who they are yet challenges them to do better?
4. Monique's mother was addicted to crack. How might this have affected Monique's relationship to her peers? How did Monique cope?
5. Sam says he wants "a girlfriend, just once." What do you think he means? Do you feel inadequate when not in a sexual relationship?
6. Which behaviors and types (jock, brain, party animal, etc.) are held in high regard in the community and which not?

C. SEXISM, FREEDOM OF SPEECH, & CENSORSHIP

1. What would you do if you saw a suggestive poster of a near-naked woman in a common room? In a student's bedroom? What about a racist cartoon?
2. Is there such a thing as "hate speech?" How would you balance the right of the community to live in harmony with the right of the individual to free expression? Should hate speech or degrading representations be banned or regulated? How does your department deal with hate speech (i.e. judicial process)?
3. How did you feel about Gerardo and Chris searching through a frosh picture book for a prospective date? Is this kind of practice typical in our community? How do you think

Debbie felt when Gerardo asks about a potential date's "big butt?" How do men feel about Monique's "brain in the penis" comment?

4. In the aftermath of the incident over the photo of men kissing, Cheng makes reference to being "PC." What does PC mean to you? Are there aspect of PC that are valuable? Aspects you dislike? Do you feel pressure to be or not be PC?

5. Sam seems surprised when he's upbraided for using the term "girl." Ask two men, two women, or one of each, to debate the use of "girl" vs. "woman." What, if any, difference does terminology make?

6. How are feminists regarded on your campus? How many different "feminist" characteristics / behaviors can you list? Can a man be a feminist?

D. GENDER ROLES AND SEXUAL ORIENTATION

1. The student newspaper photograph of two men kissing on the quad upsets Sam and others. How do you feel about the photograph?

2. Nick is very open about his bi-sexuality. How do you feel about his directness? Do gays, lesbians, and bisexuals feel free to be open about their sexuality on our campus?

3. Why do you think Nick conducts most of his social life outside Trancos? How do you think he felt during Valentine's Day? Can anything be done to make Nick feel more at home?

4. Rumors fly that Chris and Gerardo are gay because of their close friendship. How are male friends expected to behave together? How might we make our community supportive of strong friendships?

5. If you're heterosexual, has the fear of being "accused" of being gay or lesbian ever prevented you from getting as close to someone as you'd like? Why? What would change if your community thought you were gay?

6. Role play that you're heterosexual: How would you react if your roommate or friend "came out?" Role play you're homosexual: How would having a heterosexual or even homophobic roommate affect you?

E. ACADEMIC PRESSURES

1. Shayne's mother doesn't want Shayne to major in feminism. How involved are your parents in your academic choices? How do you handle disagreements? Who can you turn to on campus for advice?

2. In choosing pre-med, Debbie may have selected an inappropriate major. How did you choose your major? Still undecided? Who or what helped you make your decision?

3. How important are grades to you? Where do competitive academic pressures originate? What other kinds of intellectual achievement are valued on campus and by whom?

4. Describe a residence hall culture which values intellectual life for its own sake. Does Trancos Hall match that description?

5. Monique has no trouble with her coursework, but hands her paper in late and considers dropping out. What might she be dealing with?

6. Monique's advisor tells her she better get her act together. Why didn't Monique drop out? How would you have helped Monique? How do you feel talking to your advisor?

7. Have you ever felt like saying the hell with it and dropping a course, or dropping out altogether? What made you stay?

F. MULTI-CULTURAL IDENTITIES AND COMMUNITY BUILDING

1. Stanford has a more diverse student body than many campuses. Did you detect any differences or frictions which were racially based? How does the racial composition of our campus compare to your home town? What sort of difficulties and / or benefits might the racial diversity of our campus bring?

2. How is your personal identity tied to your race? What other "identities" do you have? How fixed or fluid are these identities?

3. During winter break Cheng's mother says "I just want him to marry a nice Chinese girl and be happy." How do you feel about that comment? Earlier Scott expresses apprehension about black women dating white men. What are our campus attitudes towards interracial dating? What pressures are faced by people who date interracially?

4. One of Cheng's Asian friends says he "prefers white girls." Do you think "equal opportunity" exists on campus when it comes to dating?

5. Monique is offended by statements like, "He's good looking for a black guy." What are the standards for attractiveness on campus? Is there a "caste" system or hierarchy tied to how closely skin color, hair, and facial features resemble a European ideal?

5. After winter break, both Monique and Shayne proclaim Stanford their true home. Why? What made for community in Trancos Hall?

6. What does community mean to you? What makes you feel included? Brainstorm ways you might build an inclusive community in your residence hall. List different groups one might belong to. Is there a place where people of color and others not part of the "dominant culture" can belong to a community?

G. ALCOHOL

1. In the party scene, Nick slams himself and a mattress into a wall. What might his behavior signify?
2. Have you ever felt pressured to drink or use other drugs? Have you ever regretted partying when you should have been studying? If so, why did you do it?
3. Have you ever played drinking games? Why? What pleasure, if any, did you get? How might you bow out after you've played for a while?
4. When are the big "party nights" at our institution? What alternatives can you suggest? Do you always want to join the party or do you sometimes need to stake out a place away from the party? Where do you go? Do you think there's too much drinking or drug- taking in your hall? What can you do about it?

H. SAFER SEX

1. The discussion in FROSH regarding safer sex attracts a large group. What programs are presented in our community about safer sex?
2. Most people know about "safer sex" but aren't changing their behavior. Why?
3. What are the dating protocols in our community? Is there much "casual sex"? What affect does alcohol have on promiscuity? How does it affect a person's decision to have safer sex?

I. GREEK LIFE

1. How many new students go through Rush on campus? Is "pledging" a big deal?
2. In FROSH someone declares that Fraternity life can limit "what someone can become during college." What did he mean? Do you agree?
3. It's important for Sam to become "accepted" in a fraternity. Why? How did membership make Sam more of a "player"? What alternatives did he have?
4. How did the characters in FROSH feel who didn't take part in Rush?
5. How did you feel about Gerardo not getting into a Frat? About Chris's decision not to join because of Gerardo's exclusion? How might you be pro-active in working with a disappointed student who doesn't receive an invitation?
6. Scott says he'll be patronized by the frats during rush? What does he mean? Do you agree? How do "white" fraternities relate to black students? Do they want black members? How many?

IV. WRAP UP

1. Here is the speech beginning FROSH: "You've come to a free market place of ideas, the freest we can make. Because we're so devoted to that freedom we don't control the flow. That means you have to be careful evaluators, tolerate and examine the unfamiliar but be awake to ulterior motives and resist those who proselytize. Remember, finally, that the task of those who teach you here is not to give you their ideas or their values but to give you the capacity and intellectual tools to choose your own." How can you help students sort among the many ideas they'll encounter and form their own values?
2. Is anyone considering new activities they'd like to try with first-year students? Now would be a good time to share them and get feedback.
3. Handout a Resource List of campus programs and organizations which can assist first year students (e.g. counseling center, academic resources, multicultural center, women's center, gay- lesbian-bisexual center, etc.).
4. Activity: Suggest that some students capture their own Freshman year on video.

APPENDIX I. FROSH Synopsis and Approximate Chapter Times

(numbers at left indicate elapsed time)

00:00 - First frame of picture.

4:50 - "This is So Weird" - After arrival on campus, students quickly get personal.

12:30 - "I Wonder if She Thinks About Me..." - Dating protocols and the dance between the sexes. Monique talks about her mother.

18:45 - "Let's Just Trim These margins" - First papers and academic pressures. Segues into Nick on his sexuality, Jason on living with Nick

27:25 - Student Newspaper headline (no chapter heading) - The controversy over photo of two men kissing, and Shayne on church dogma.

33:00 - "Do You Go Out With Asian girls?" - Interracial dating. Discussion of courtship. Sam amidst he doesn't have a girlfriend.

39:45 - "Is Aristotle Evil?" - Montage of classes leads to arguments about sexist posters and censorship. Sam and Debbie on being a white man. Segues into condom demonstration and discussion of sex.

47:10 - "It's Much Too Late to Go to Bed" - Pushing the limits: Partying and the morning after.

51:10 - "I Have No Room for Fun" - Cheng, Debbie and Monique receive their first grades. Students meet with advisors. Monique wrestles with dropping out.

57:00 - "Get On Your Knees and Pray" - Fall finals and aftermath. Debbie considers dropping pre-med, Cheng wants to transfer, and Monique decides to stick it out.

1:02:45 - "The Longest Three Weeks of My Life" - Winter break. Students realize how much they're changing. Bonds of friendship reaffirmed upon return to school.

1:09:45 - "One Month Later ..." - Tensions increase. Shayne decides to leave the Church. Valentines Day. Gerardo confronts rumors that he and Chris are gay. The men put on face masks in solidarity with Nick.

1:21:05 - "Looking for a Safe Place" - Fraternity and sorority rush. Sam finally sees himself as a social "player."

1:28:05 - "So You're Getting to the End of Your Freshman Year" - Students prepare to depart as Brandi and Monique debate issues of autonomy and over-determination.

Appendix II. FROSH - Character Summary

Shayne - A white woman from a middle class, conservative Catholic family from rural Connecticut. Her exposure to feminism is thrilling but puts her in painful conflict with her family and Church.

Monique - An African American woman from Oakland, CA. Monique has defied the odds, getting into Stanford despite a crack addicted mother she hasn't seen in 2 1/2 years. Outspoken, funny, and blunt, she often challenges the other students. Despite her capable intellect, she finds college life alienating and considers dropping out.

Brandi - An African American woman who grew up in an upper-class white, Midwestern community largely without Black culture. She immerses herself in African American classes and activities in search of meaning and her black identity. A strong support for Monique.

Cheng - A first generation Chinese American from an upper middle class family in Centreville, OH. Cheng aced high school and faces a crisis when college no longer brings straight A's. Cheng is also impatient with the University's emphasis on multi-culturalism and wants more Western culture.

Gerardo - A first generation Mexican American man from a working class family in Fremont, CA, and Chris, a white man from an upper middle class St. Louis suburb, are roommates and become inseparable friends despite their differences. Other men on the floor taunt them with accusations of homosexuality leading to a confrontation. Another crisis looms when Chris is accepted by a fraternity and Gerardo is not.

Sam - A protected, upper middle class white man from New Jersey who attended Catholic boys' schools his entire life. Pre-marital sex, homosexuality, feminism are all new to him and he struggles to reconcile his traditional values and behaviors with the liberal perspectives of many of his new peers.

Nick - A wealthy white man from the San Francisco Bay Area, Nick is very open about his bi-sexuality. Although various men talk behind his back, Nick makes no apologies for who he is and several homophobic men eventually befriend him.

Scott - An African American man from a lower-middle class family in Oceanside, CA. He speaks openly about interracial dating and the racism inherent in the fraternity system. He and Sam develop a friendship based on love of basketball and frank discussions about sex.

Debbie - a white woman from middle class Trumbull, CT, Debbie is eager to learn about life outside suburbia. Her frank questions, no matter how naive, often serve as a catalyst for discussion, but her academic difficulties force her to reconsider a pre-med track.

Facilitator Guide written by: Rose Cholewinski, Kerry Krueger, Larry Adelman.

For additional copies of FROSH, this Guide, or other videos for student life, contact:

CALIFORNIA NEWSREEL

e-mail: contact@newsreel.org

web: newsreel.org