



# WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN YOU'RE EXPECTED

UNCOVERING THE ROLE OF CULTURAL CAPITAL IN  
COLLEGE SUCCESS

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# Abstract

First-generation college students are almost three times as likely to withdraw from school within three years as students with parents who have a bachelor's degree (National Center for Education Statistics). Despite this, first-generation students make up about one-third of students enrolled in college. To encourage the creation of fair and equal college experiences, there is a need to understand what first-generation college students require to be successful. Prior research has examined the general barriers to success that college students experience (e.g., Hansell, 1982; Sgan-Choen & Lowental, 1988), but we know very little about how parental expectations shape student success. Drawing on five in-depth interviews with first-year college-age women from a liberal arts institution in the northeast United States, a marked difference in parental involvement is found. Analysis of narratives of students whose parents are college-educated reveals a specific collection of behaviors that were employed by students to succeed, while examination of narratives of first-generation college students uncovers the challenges that these students encountered navigating college without the cultural capital that is afforded from parents who have college educations. The preliminary data suggest that the first-year college students' experience is shaped by their own parents' experience and familiarity with the academic and social aspects of college life. The findings from this study point to the need for counseling directed towards first-year students about behaviors that can foster achievement and confidence in college, and accessibility to skill toolkits that will equip first-generation college students to thrive in an environment with which their parents have had limited exposure.

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# Introduction

Transitioning to college is one of the most stressful, yet exciting times, for young adults during their junior and senior high school years (Hansell, 1982). The whirlwind of college applications, acceptance letters, and anticipation for move-in day can be extremely overwhelming. Parents and family members expect specific behaviors from their students, which can make the transitional process tough. Before even stepping foot on campus, students feel overly compelled to meet the expectations of their parents and make them proud (Hirsch & Ellis, 1996).

Besides the standards for appearance and behavior that society compels, a students' parents play a large role in expectational pressures during the transition to college, particularly regarding grades. But, are there other ways that parental pressures are manifested? Drawing on five in-depth interviews with a racially diverse group of first-year college women, this paper investigates the parental pressures experienced by these women and how they navigated the

expectations of their parents during and after their transition to college. Investigating how these pressures are managed provides insights into how parental expectations can directly affect student behavior. The findings of this paper contribute to an understanding of how parental pressures influence students' actions and decisions, as well as explain the role that high cultural capital plays in a first-year students' success.

# Literature Review

## Stress of Change

The transition from high school to college is a challenging time to which many students have difficulty adapting (Towbes & Cohen, 1996). The stress of this transitional experience can extend from the beginning of the semester through the end, with little to no relief (Wright, 1964). The high school-to-college transition drastically affects students emotionally and fosters feelings of vulnerability (Wright, 1967). First-year students are most at risk for experiencing stressful situations than older college students (D’Zurilla & Sheedy, 1991). While older students have found their niche, first-year students are struggling with classes, trying to develop friendships, and attempting to manage money (Sgan-Choen & Lowental, 1988).

## Parents as Supporters

It is not uncommon for students to feel homesick when they first arrive at college. Many students turn to their parents for support and assistance during this time. Maintaining relationships with parents and family members while away from home can be difficult, especially for students who have traveled far away for college. However, maintaining these relationships is vital. In a study conducted by Chang and colleagues in 2017, they discovered that students with higher family support were less likely to experience loneliness while in school. These key relationships, which are established prior to college, act as a safety net for students as they transition to college.

## Parents as Stressors

While parents can be an important source of support, they can also be a source of stress for college students. Researcher John White (1967) conducted a qualitative analysis that focused on the possible stressors that college students experience. Among the top five stressors for female students were mothers and fathers. In 1999, researchers Ross, Niebling and Heckert reported that parents were listed under the interpersonal stressor category as “trouble with parents” in their study of stress in college students. Twenty-one of 100 individuals who participated in the study identified parents as one of their main stressors.

Some researchers have investigated the specific ways that parents engender stress in their children as they approach college. Many students decide to attend college through encouragement from their college-graduate parents or family members (Anderson & Scott, 2014). Parents push their children to apply and attend college, especially if they are college graduates themselves (Salas, 2016). Students, who see their parents succeed in the workplace presumably because of their college educations, are inclined to attend college and earn degrees, as Anderson and Scott found in their study. Parents also urge their children to perform well academically and create positive relationships with professors. Parental pressure to achieve high academic scores reigns as one of main contributors of stress among college students (Ross, Niebling, & Heckert 1999). This particular expectation is likely derived from parents’ own experiences as college students and reflects the cultural capital that these parents gained. This form of cultural capital is in an “embodied state,” that is knowledge acquired over time through education and experience (Bourdieu, 1986).

### The Role of Cultural Capital

Chen (2015) defines cultural capital as “a toolkit for navigating the social world.” Parents who attended college are equipped with cultural capital or embodied knowledge that can be used to influence and guide their children. Children of college educated parents can leverage their parents’ knowledge, or tool kit, to accelerate their own academic and social experiences (Salas, 2016). On the other hand, first-generation college students, that is, those whose parents did not attend college, do not have access to this knowledge accumulated through experience (Merolla & Jackson, 2014). Lack of access to this resource has important implications. Swartz (1997) reported that students’ “expectations with regard to education and career are structurally determined products of parental and other reference-group educational experience and cultural life.” Thus, children of college-educated and non-college-educated parents develop different expectations and life plans.

### The Expectation and Pressure Conundrum

Research confirms that even young students are motivated to achieve from the expectancies their parents place on them, and that children embrace these parental expectations as their own goals (Berndt & Miller, 1990). This adoption of parental expectations, and desire to meet them, is fostered by the prospect of positive outcomes, such as content parents, popularity, and academic recognition. Expectancy-value theory asserts that students choose to perform specific actions based on the expected outcome (Feather, 1988). However, conflict can arise between adult students and parents who share a close bond; students strive to please their parents, but may simultaneously feel pressure and resentment.



Although research has confirmed that the transition from college to high school is challenging and has identified parents as both supporters and stressors in the lives of college students, the latter particularly with respect to grades, other ways that parents induce stress have not been reported. This paper attempts to define the ways that parents create stress through expectations and pressures that they impose on their college-age children through in-depth interviews with a racially diverse group of first-year college women. The ways that these women navigated the expectations of their parents during and after their transition to college and the effect of parental-induced stressors are described, including decisions regarding choice of college and social/extracurricular activities.

# Methods

To investigate the role of parental expectations and academic experience, five first-year college age women from a liberal arts college in the Northeast United States were interviewed.

Participants were recruited for the study through a Research Participant Flyer (see Appendix) posted on a Facebook page dedicated to first-year college students. Participants volunteered to be interviewed through the page, offering themselves as participants. 13 students responded to the posting and interview times were confirmed with 5 students. (see Appendix). Each student was interviewed in a private location of their choice on their college's campus. Students signed a Consent Form before the interview, and were aware that they were being recorded, but that pseudonyms would be used to protect their identities. On average, the interviews lasted about 58 minutes. During the interview, the participants were asked a series of questions about their relationships and social life on campus.

Through the creation of concept maps and memos, findings were examined, results were compared, and common themes were discovered associated with parental expectations and familiarity with the academic and social aspects of college life. Writing memos helped to uncover some of the main expectations from parents that students reported and how they managed these parental directives. Originally, participants were asked how they managed their social relationships on campus, but after noticing a theme regarding parental expectations, the final interview questions focused on parental expectations and pressures.

# Findings

Interviews with five racially diverse first-year college women revealed the nature of parental expectations and the ways in which students managed these expectations. Together, their experiences illustrated the many aspects of these students' early college decisions which were influenced by their parents. Additionally, the students' actions which were encouraged by their parents reflected the cultural capital which college-educated parents offered--an insider understanding of college life and behaviors essential to success in college. In this article, the expectations that parents place on their students based on their own perspective and evaluation of college life are determined. The ways that students followed through with these expectations, while also adapting to their initial college experiences and managing their personal social lives are also explained and analyzed.

## Do As I Do

The decision to attend college or enter the workforce weighs heavily on the shoulders of young adults. Research shows that parents who attended college highly encourage their children to attend college (Anderson & Scott, 2014; Nicholas & Islas, 2015) and that parents who attended college have valuable knowledge of the college experience, which can enable their children's success in college (Salas, 2016). Furthermore, many parents encourage their children to pursue paths similar to theirs, and even pressure children to the extent that attending college is presented the only reasonable option, specifically because parents had successful careers after graduating from college (Nicholas & Islas, 2016). For some children of college-educated parents, the

decision to not attend college is not an option. Katie, a white college freshman, was pressured by her parents to attend college from an early age:

I've always been expected to attend college. Not going (to college), or going to work some job, was never an option in my family. Both of my parents went to school, so I was going too.

### Location, Location, Location

The options of where to attend college span the gamut from local to international locations. The idea of attending college spurs feelings of independence, which encourages some students to look at colleges in locations distant from their hometowns. Despite the array of choices and the draw of independence, it is not uncommon for students to attend colleges in their home states. In fact, The Chronicle of Higher Education reported an increase in students enrolling in colleges in their home states in 2014. Staying close to home offers benefits of commuting to class and avoiding the costs of paying for on-campus dorm options. For many students, going to college far away from home is not an option that parents support. Of the five interviewees, Katie's parents most unambiguously established the geographical range for her future college location and suitable college options:

My mom and I printed out a map and she drew a circle around the area that I was able to apply to. I was only able to apply to colleges within that circle, nowhere else. At first I thought it was strange, but she knows what she's doing more than I do. My parents went to college close to home and they both liked it.

Both of Katie's parents attended college and knew how distance played into their own college experiences. Katie's parents had cultural capital, or prior knowledge, about how they preferred to be close to home. Due to this, they encouraged Katie to remain close to home as well, specifically because this was an aspect they enjoyed.

For many, the distance aspect between college and home is a difficult concept for parents, and even students themselves to embrace (Hartstein, 2017). Financial considerations can be an important determinant in college choice, with selection of a school in closer proximity to home being a more viable option than a school far from home. Haley, a white first-year college student, originally wanted to attend college in California. After sitting down to discuss college opportunities with her parents, they encouraged her to look at colleges within a specific radius of their hometown in New York:

My mom was okay with me looking at colleges in California at first. My parents actually sat me down one night and told me that they did not want me to attend school too far away. They encouraged me to look at schools in our home state, which is how I found this school. They said it would be cheaper to stay closer to home.

Parents who attended college, such as Haley's are cognizant of the financial burdens of college, because they either struggled with money in college, or saw others who did. The cultural capital that her parents possess allowed them to steer her in the direction of minimizing student loans and debt.

Students who hold close relationships with their parents feel inclined to stay near their homes for comfort. When students leave for college, both parties can experience separation anxiety (Phillips, 2007). Heather, a Mexican-American first-year college student, felt anxious about leaving her parents at home and originally attended a college in her hometown for a few days, before transferring to a school farther away:

Leaving my parents was very difficult, and I was concerned that I wouldn't be there for things. I helped raise my siblings, and so that was a big part of life....being there for my parents. But, at the same time, it was kind of a relief to be away at a different school because I had a little more time for myself.

The relationship that Heather and her parents held made her feel inclined to attend school close to home, potentially allowing her to help out at home. Heather is a first-generation college

student, and both of her parents entered the work-force directly from their high school graduations in Mexico. Neither of them were aware of the demands of college life, and both still hoped that Heather could maintain her leadership roles at home while attending college.

Heather's parents do not have the cultural capital that other interviewees' college-educated parents have. They were not aware that the demands of college may preclude continuation of childcare and other responsibilities at home, and thus encouraged their daughter to attend a college located in the neighborhood in which they lived.

Alternatively, a negative relationship between parents and students can encourage a student to attend a college farther away from home. Taylor, an Indian-American first-year college student, specifically choose a school that was not located in her hometown because of the over-bearing relationship she held with her parents:

My parents were very protective in high school, and I often felt that I could not be myself. My dad is not really invested in my life anymore, and my mom is usually very busy with my brother. I wanted to go farther away so I would have time for myself. When my parents went to college, they lived closer to home to see my grandparents. I didn't want that.

Also, clingy, over-protective or "helicopter parents" (Lum, 2006) can become a burden for many college students as they attempt to navigate college life independently. When asked about her relationship with her parents, Haley explained that, "they definitely miss me more than I miss them." To combat the lack of proximity, students and parents may turn to electronic communication to stay in contact.

### Only a Phone Call Away

With the advent and expansion of technology, staying in contact has become easier than ever. Reaching out to family members and friends from a distance is easy and convenient with the use

of text messaging and video messaging applications. There is an expectation that students will stay in close contact with their parents, if the parents themselves also stayed in close contact with their parents during college. The separation anxiety between parents and students may spur the desire for regular communication (Phillips, 2007). Many of the interviewees made parental contact a priority since coming to college. Haley's sister attends college 20 minutes away from their hometown, while she is 4 hours away, but both of them receive a similar amount of contact from their parents:

My Mom and Dad contact me every day, same with my sister. Sometimes my sister will call me and ask me to tell our mom to stop texting her. It's not that we don't love them and like hearing from them, it's just that we both just have a lot going on.

During Haley's interview, she explained how both of her parents stay in close contact with her grandparents. Because her parents maintained close contact with their own parents in college, they expected their daughters to do the same. Haley's parents attended college and knew of the importance of contacting their parents when they needed assistance and they wanted to offer the same support to their daughters. Haley's parents' insistence on regular exchanges represents cultural capital, in that Haley's parents recognized the value of parental support during crucial experiences in college.

Other interviewees had similar experiences with parental contact and the expectation to make time for contact. Sometimes, this contact comes in the form of a family group-chat that allows siblings and family members to stay connected. Katie said that she and her family keep in contact through group text messages:

We are always texting in the chat. If I'm in class, and I can't respond, my mom will sometimes call me to see what's going on. It's ridiculous. I usually just text her and tell her I'm in class.

The ability of every member in Katie's family to have a cellphone reflects their high level of socio-economic status. This is objectified cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986) in the form of surplus wealth to afford smartphone plans that allow for unlimited contact.

Another interviewee, Heather, said that she contacts her parents every day and has kept true to the promise she made to her mother during move-in day.

I promised my mom I would call her every day. If we aren't on the phone talking, then I am texting her. We are usually always in contact. She pretty much knows what I'm doing at all times.

Heather's socio-economic status also reflects objectified cultural capital, similar to Katie's family. Both families are able to afford smartphone plans that encourage consistent communication while their children are away at college.

### Where are You? How are You? What's Going On?

The excitement of going to college leads parents to worry about their children (Phillips, 2007). Living independently for the first time allows students to discern their personal passions and engage in activities without having to gain permission from their parents to do so. However, there is a parental expectation that students let their parents know what they are doing and where they are going (Small et al., 2011). If students are engaging in activities that their parents might not approve of, then students may lie about activities or omit information.

Many of the interviewees listed "going out" as an activity they enjoy on the weekends, but clearly stated that they did not share this aspect of their weekends with their parents because they would not approve. Lila specifically stated that her parents would not approve of her attending parties on the weekend:

Sometimes my parents will call me at night and I'll tell them that I'm getting ready for bed, but I'm actually putting on my makeup to get ready to go out for the night.



Parents who attended college are aware of the risky behaviors that can occur while in college, representing another aspect of cultural capital (Dumais & Ward, 2009). Research shows that there is a protective element involved in parent-student communication about behaviors, specifically drinking alcohol (Small et al., 2011). In research conducted by Small et al., they discovered that students who contacted their parents more often were less likely to drink on the weekends due to effect of disappointing and upsetting their parents. Katie reported that she does not drink on the weekends because she does not want to risk her academics, in turn upsetting her parents:

My parents and I discussed partying way before I got to college. I did go to a few parties at the beginning, but I don't really go to any parties anymore. I just always feel gross the next morning, which makes me unmotivated to do my work. My parents would not be happy if they found out my grades were bad because I was drinking.

For some other interviewees, this already posed a problem. After receiving lower than expected grades, Haley spoke to her parents about her weekend activities:

My grades started to fall a lot, and my parents knew I went out a lot. They told me I needed to stop going out and start studying more. Which, at the time, I was like 'I am studying! My classes are just hard!' But, after I stopped going out as much, my grades started improving. They were right after all.

Parents expect their children to perform well in classes and resist the temptation to drink and engage in less-than-ideal behaviors on the weekends (Smallet al., 2011). Parents who have attended college are cognizant of the drinking that occurs on the weekends and are prepared to discuss this aspect of college life with their children, and guide them to other activities, such as meeting friends and creating relationships with professors (DuMais & Ward, 2009).

Parents who did not attend college may not be aware of the extent of drinking behavior on college campuses and may not be as sensitive to the need to turn their children away from partying.

### Just Say Hi!

Meeting new people and making friends in an unfamiliar environment can be hard for many students. Parents, many of whom were enrolled in college activities themselves, encourage their students to join on-campus organizations to motivate them to form new relationships (Lum, 2006). Parents who attended college are aware of the importance of networking and creating friendships (Lee & Chen, 2016). Like advice about avoiding alcohol intake, parental advice about joining campus organizations is rooted in protective parenting (Phillips, 2007). While some parents may explicitly state their opinions, others may make indirect references to encourage participation in organized extra-curriculars, such as commenting on the array of options at their children's colleges, asking what groups others are joining, or reminiscing about their participation in fraternities or sororities (Rubin & Sloman (1984). Taylor's parents encouraged her to attend her college's student organization fair to make new friends:

Because I had transferred and didn't really know anyone, my mom told me I should try to join some group on campus, she was in a volunteer group for a few years, I think. I went to the event and signed up for the first table I saw: Women's Rugby. I guess she was good motivation, because I am still on the team.

While Taylor's parents did not participate in college sports themselves, they knew from prior experience that joining organizations and being a member of a group expedited the process of developing friendships. The prior knowledge that Taylor's parents had regarding college networking is an example of cultural capital. Haley had a similar experience. Because of her

mother's past involvement in sports, her mom encouraged her to look at the possibility of joining a club sports team:

I have always wanted to join a sports team, and my mom said I should try lacrosse, because she played in college. She went out and got everything I needed to try out; cleats, a stick, the headgear, everything. She really wanted me to try something new.

Haley's mother had the socioeconomic resources that allowed her to purchase the equipment necessary for lacrosse try-outs, even though Haley was not even on the team at that point.

Parents, at every stage of their child's life, fear that their children will not find friends who share their passions. So, they encourage and motivate their students to try something new, especially if they have experience with college organizations themselves, with the hopes that they will meet new friends and make new connections just like they did (Lum, 2006).

### They Are There to Help You

In addition to parents having concerns about students establishing relationships with friends, some parents are overly concerned that their children will not have positive relationships with their professors (Lum, 2006). Parents who attended college encourage their students to attend office-hours, participate, and ask questions in class, all in an effort to create relationships and friendships with their professors. As Lee & Chen (2016) found, parents with college degrees influence their students to network because they themselves experienced the value of networking while they were in college. Heather identified herself as a generally shy individual, but explained that her parents wanted her to open up to professors at her college:

I was not very close with my teachers at school, but both of my parents explained that creating relationships with my professors would be a good idea because they can help me with homework and write recommendation letters for the future.

Parents have a desire to see their children succeed, especially if they themselves were rewarded from networking, and their motivation for their children to create these relationships derives from this (Nicholas & Islas, 2015). Students who do not usually need extra help or did not express this need while in high-school are nonetheless encouraged by their parents to seek out their professors outside of class. Katie performed very well in high-school, but her parents still wanted her to attend office hours:

My parents asked me if I had gone to office hours with my professors yet. When I told them “No,” they were kind of surprised and irritated. My mom suggested I look at tutors for class....she was a TA. They really wanted me to go, meet them, and create a friendship early on. I’ve gone to a few so far now.

Parents want their children to take advantage of all the available opportunities that they have access to in college themselves—establishing new relationships with peers and professors, joining clubs and sports teams—which creates a network that can foster opportunities in college and after graduation (Phillips, 2007). Parents who experienced the value of networking during college offer another aspect of cultural capital that can foster success in college and beyond.

## Conclusion

In this article, the expectations that parents place on their students as they begin their transition to college, including advice to attend college, select a school close to home, maintain contact with parents, avoid alcohol intake, and establish relationships with peers and professors were examined. Many of these expectations are derived from the cultural capital that parents who attended college themselves have gained. However, advice was also given by parents who did not attend college and was motivated by the parents' desire to continue assistance in the home provided by a college-bound daughter. This study focused on the ways that each student managed the expectations that their parents placed on them. Some students in the study expressed resistance to parental expectations, while others acquiesced to parental counsel; for example, Heather and Taylor chose to attend schools far away from their hometowns while Katie and Haley followed their parents' recommendations to attend a school close to home. Similarly, students' responses varied with respect to parental requests to maintain regular contact and avoid risky behaviors. Heather followed through on her promise to maintain contact with her mother, while Katie and Haley responded with frank and reasonable explanations if they could not talk or text because they were in class. Lila used avoidance regarding the subject of her social life with her parents whereas Katie and Haley were compliant with parental expectations. In contrast, students were generally receptive of advice regarding participation in campus organizations and interactions with professors.

This research could be used to create informational material for the parents of first-year college students. If parents are informed about topics to which students are more open to receiving advice, then parents may wish to focus their efforts on these topics. Also, it may be helpful for parents to recognize that students may reject or discount parental advice, and that this is part of children learning, expressing their individuality, and becoming independent young adults.

Additionally, this research can be used by college counselors to help determine the root of stressors in first-year college students and to fill a potential void by providing counseling to students who do not have college-educated parents who offer cultural capital.

Scholars can extend this research further by including first-year college men in their research.

Using this research as a stepping stone to explore the relationship between male first-year college students and parents would provide valuable insight into how all first-year college students navigate the transition to college. Additionally, this research could become a longitudinal study, investigating students' changing relationships with their parents over their 4-year college period.

This study was limited in time and in participant sample. Because the timeline for this project was 3 to 4 months, there was not sufficient time to recruit and interview a larger sample. There were 5 female participants in this study, and thus may not be representative of all women.

Furthermore, since all participants were female, the results cannot be generalized to men.

Additionally, most of the participants had parents who had attended college previously, which limits generalization to students whose parents did not attend college. Lastly, all of the participants were from a small, liberal arts college in the Northeast which is not representative of students from larger colleges and universities across the United States.

Finally, despite its limitations, this study provides insight into the parental expectations of college students and students' responses to these expectations during transition to college.

Through this study, attention was brought to the important role of cultural capital in parental expectations which foster constructive behaviors in first-year college women.

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# Appendix

## A: Interviewee Information Chart

<b>Interview #</b>	<b>Last Name</b>	<b>First Name</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Hours from Home</b>
1	Pilkin	Taylor	First-year	18	Indian-American	2.5 Hours
2	Turner	Haley	First-year	18	White	4 Hours
3	Haws	Lila	First-year	17	Filipino	3 Hours
4	Conner	Heather	First-year	17	Mexican-American	2.5 Hours
5	Grandy	Katie	First-year	18	White	3.5 Hours

## B: Informed Consent Form

Title of the Study: First-Year College Females and Social Connection  
Principal Investigator: Margaret Tippett, Ithaca College  
Faculty Advisor: Dr. Joslyn Brenton, Assistant-Professor, Ithaca College

### Invitation to Participate in a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. In order to participate, you must be a first-year college student who identifies as a female. Taking part in this research study is voluntary. You are not required to participate in this study. You may stop or withdraw your participation from this study at any time.

### Important Information about this Research Study

**Purpose of the study:** This study is being conducted to determine the significance of social connection in the lives of first-year college females.

**If you choose to participate,** you will be asked to conduct an in-depth interview with me, at a quiet location of your choice (with minimal distraction and noise) on a day that is convenient for you. The total time commitment for participation is approximately 60 minutes. Risks and discomforts associated with this research are minimal, and include any discomfort or stress you may experience talking about your relationship with family, friends, professors, your social life on campus, or your level of comfortability on campus.

**Direct benefits to the participants:** You will receive no compensation, monetary or otherwise, for participating in this study. People who participate in research often find the process to be interesting and valuable. Being interviewed offers people an opportunity to express their ideas and talk about their experiences.

**Please read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether you would like to participate in this research study.**

### Purpose of the Study

This study focuses on the significance of social connection in first-year college females. By learning about relationships, comfort, and students' social lives, I will ascertain knowledge and research about the 'first-year student experience' for female students. I will also have the opportunity to study their feelings and thoughts about the value of social connection to their present lives.

### Benefits of the Study

- This study will help me to advance my learning about social connection, as well as about sociological research methods.
- The study will provide you with the opportunity to share your knowledge and insights about the experience of social connection for first-year college females.

1. What You Will Be Asked to Do

- Participate in a 60-minute interview
- I will ask a series of open-ended questions that ask you to share your experiences and ideas around social connections on, and off campus.
- You have the right to not answer any questions you do not wish to discuss

4. Withdrawal from the Study

- Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may end the study at any time. You may refuse to answer any questions you do not want to answer, without penalty.
- You are free to leave the interview at any time.

5. Risks

- There are no obvious or significant risks associated with this study. There is always the possibility of minimal risk. Risk is considered minimal when the likelihood of harm or discomfort is not greater than that encountered in daily life. People who are uncomfortable, or would feel distressed, talking about social connection and their experience as a first-year college female, should not participate in this study.
- There are very few risks for this study, but if you do find the material disturbing, please contact the Counseling Center (607)-274-3136 to discuss your feelings. You may also contact the Faculty Supervisor for this project, Dr. Joslyn Brenton: [jbrenton@ithaca.edu](mailto:jbrenton@ithaca.edu) (607) 274-7384.

6. How the Data will be Maintained in Confidence

I will maintain confidentiality by not connecting your real name, or any other identifying information, to study documents. I will assign pseudonyms as a way of obscuring your identity in written and oral presentations of the data, including verbatim quotes. A master key that links each interview record with the subject's name will be maintained apart from the records. The records will be kept in a secure place (locked file cabinet and password protected computer files), accessible only to the student and the faculty supervisor, Dr. Joslyn Brenton.

The master key that links subjects with interview records will be destroyed at the end of the study. Audio files will be destroyed at the end of the study.

Transcriptions produced from audio files will be kept in password-protected electronic locations accessible only to the student and the study supervisor (Brenton).

7. Use of information beyond this study

The participants' information will not be used or distributed for future research studies even if identifying information is removed.

8. Compensation for Injury

If you suffer an injury that requires any treatment or hospitalization as a direct result of this study, the cost for such care will be charged to you. If you have insurance, you may bill your insurance company. You will be responsible to pay all costs not covered by your insurance. Ithaca College will not pay for any care, lost wages, or provide other financial compensation.

9. If You Would Like More Information about the Study

If you would like more information about this study, please contact myself, Margaret Tippett, my faculty adviser Dr. Joslyn Brenton, or the Ithaca College IRB. All contact information is below.

Student Researcher

Margaret Tippett  
[mtippett@ithaca.edu](mailto:mtippett@ithaca.edu)  
443-845-0638

Faculty Advisor

Dr. Joslyn Brenton  
Department of Sociology  
#112 Sociology Suites  
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(607) 274-7384

Ithaca College IRB

Peggy Ryan Williams Center  
953 Danby Road  
Ithaca, NY 14850  
[irb@ithaca.edu](mailto:irb@ithaca.edu)  
(607) 274-3113

I have read the above and I understand its contents. I agree to participate in the study. I acknowledge that I am 18 years of age or older.

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Print or Type Name

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Signature

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Date

I give my permission to be audiotaped.

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Signature

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Date

**C: Research Participant Flyer**

Social Connection and First-Year College Females

I am a junior Sociology major and as part of my Research Methods Sociology course I am interviewing first-year Ithaca College students who identify as female, to learn more about their thoughts and feelings towards social connection. You need to be over age 18 to participate.

The interview involves questions about your attitudes and feelings towards on/off campus relationships with friends and family, as well as your social life and comfort level on campus. The interview should take about 60 minutes to complete and is entirely confidential. The interview will need to be conducted in a quiet location of your choice, with minimal noise and distraction. I will ask for your permission to record our interview so that I may reference the interview later when writing my report.

There are very few risks involved in participating in this study. Possible risk includes feeling uncomfortable about discussing your relationships and personal social life. Many people find that they enjoy the opportunity to talk about their feelings and experiences with their first-year at college.

The results of this study will be used only for the purposes of this class. I will not use your real name, or any other identifying information, in my written report. You will not be compensated for participating in my study. Your participation will help to advance my learning.

For more information or to interview, please contact:

***Researcher:***

Margaret Tippet  
[mtippet@ithaca.edu](mailto:mtippet@ithaca.edu)  
443-845-0638  
Sociology Department

***Faculty Supervisor:***

Joslyn Brenton  
[jbrenton@ithaca.edu](mailto:jbrenton@ithaca.edu)  
607-274-7384  
Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology