

## How Do You Know When a Student Is Struggling with This Transition?

Here are some signs and symptoms of transition distress:

- a decrease in school interest
- increased isolation from others
- increased feelings of anxiety or panic
- increased feelings of depression
- a decline in self-confidence and faith in one's ability to be successful
- a lack of clear goals for the future

If you recognize these symptoms in a student, be sure to seek opportunities to provide more support, perhaps involving the school counselor, parents/guardians, and other appropriate adults.

## Conclusion

A smooth transition from high school involves hard work, a strong support system, a clear set of goals, and sound decision-making. When these key ingredients are in place, a strong foundation is laid for entry into the world of adulthood.

# Moving On from High School

## FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

### To the Facilitator

Before showing the video, take time to review this guide, which provides general information about the transition from high school and a suggested session outline. Also included is a transition planner to help students prepare for this important transition time.

## Purpose of This Video

This video helps students deal with the issues of moving on from high school, whether that be into the workforce, college, vocational school, the military, or marriage. The video is designed to stimulate an important discussion about ways students, parents/guardians, and school staff can ease this transition into the world of young adulthood.

## How Can This Video Be Used?

This video can be used in a variety of settings, including

- career/life counseling sessions or classes
- general class discussions
- pre-graduation programs
- a “moving on” session in high school
- a “welcoming” session in college or vocational school

In addition, this video can be used with young people in community youth programs.

## Learning Objectives for the Video

After viewing this video, students will be able to

- identify the rewards and challenges of moving on from high school
- apply a variety of strategies to successfully cope with the stress of moving on from high school
- motivate themselves to seek out adult and peer support if they are struggling with this transition

## Introduction

The transition from high school represents some of the most significant changes ever experienced by students and their families. All students—even those who choose to live at home—face the realities of transitioning into

the “real world” with numerous decisions to be made, roles and responsibilities to be assumed, and pressures to be faced.

Each student responds to this transition differently. Some race into this new world with enthusiasm, while others react with fear and uncertainty that may temporarily prevent them from taking action.

Although their peers are important to them, young adults continue to need older adults in their lives to whom they can turn for advice, encouragement, and role modeling. Especially important at this time are adult-guided career exploration programs that provide information as well as emotional support.

## What Can Your School Do to Ease This Transition?

Schools can do a number of things to ease this transition from high school. Here are just a few ideas:

- provide career counseling opportunities beginning as early as the junior year
- arrange tutoring for students who need additional academic support
- take time to listen and respond to students’ fears and concerns about graduation
- assist students in finding information on colleges and vocational schools
- encourage parents to be involved in their child’s education and transition
- offer counseling sessions for students who need help coping with this change
- through health programs, teach students how to handle stress and change
- have young adults who have graduated mentor older high school students

# Moving On from High School

## Suggested Session Outline

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Here is a suggested outline for a 50-minute student session, which includes viewing of the *Moving On from High School* video. Adapt this outline to fit your group's needs and time frame.

### Materials Needed:

- *Moving On from High School* video
- VCR/monitor
- "My Transition Planner" handout (included in this guide)
- pens or pencils

### Preparation Needed:

- Be sure to preview the video and write down some of its key messages to review with students. Think through possible answers to the discussion questions before the session.
- Photocopy "My Transition Planner," one per student.

### Getting Started (6 minutes):

Ask students: **What do you think life will be like after you graduate from high school? How will it be different from your experience in high school?**

Allow several students to respond.

Explain: **Today, we're going to talk about moving on from high school and what that transition will be like. We're going to start by showing a video.**

### Playing the Video (14 minutes):

Play the video. Make sure every student can easily see and hear the video.

## Discussing the Video (10 minutes):

Ask students the following questions:

- 1. What were some of the rewarding or positive aspects of moving on from high school that were mentioned in the video?**  
(Possible answers: more freedom and independence; meet new people; see new places; get to do “real life” stuff)
- 2. What are YOU looking forward to in moving on from high school?**  
Allow several students to respond.
- 3. What were some of the challenges students faced in moving on from high school that were mentioned in the video?**  
(Possible answers: more responsibility; have to make tough decisions about careers and schools; have more pressure on you to do something with your life)
- 4. What are some of the concerns YOU have about moving on from high school?**  
Be sure to spend extra time on this question. Allow several students to express their concerns.
- 5. Explain: One of the biggest issues students often face after leaving high school is the increased pressure to use alcohol and other drugs, particularly the pressure to binge drink.**  
Briefly talk with students about the dangers of binge drinking and other chemical use.  
(Dangers of binge drinking include the potential for fatal alcohol poisoning, impaired judgment and driving, increased risk of violence, blackouts, and addiction.)
- 6. What are some things YOU can do to make this transition easier for yourself?**  
Have students share ideas from the video, but also their own ideas.  
(Possible answers: set goals and pursue dreams; develop a good support system of friends and adults; exercise and take care of yourself; get career/life counseling or help in making decisions; believe in yourself and your abilities)

Spend a few minutes talking about the people who will be available to support the students in this transition. This may include guidance counselors, teachers, coaches, parents/guardians, and friends. If available, give specific names of people that students can go to for help.

### Going Deeper (15 minutes):

Divide students into groups of two or three. Give each student one of the “My Transition Planner” handouts and a pen or pencil (if they don’t have one).

**Explain:** **I have given each of you a planner that will help you prepare for this transition from high school. I would like each of you to fill in the first three statements by yourself.**

Allow students a minute or two to fill in these questions.

**Explain:** **Now, working as a group, help each other fill in statements 4 through 9 on your planner. When you are done with this, fill in statement 10 on your own.**

As students are filling in their planners, be sure to walk around the room offering ideas.

**Optional:** If there is time, have students share some of their answers on their planners.

### Taking It Home (5 minutes):

Review some of the key concepts covered in the video. Then encourage students to take their “My Transition Planner” home and review it periodically as they make the transition from high school.

### Extending the Learning (Optional):

Here are some additional ideas, if you would like to spend more time on this topic with your students:

#### **Activity 1:**

Invite young adults who have been out of high school for a few years to talk with your students about their experiences in making this transition. What was the transition like for them? What helped make the transition easier?

#### **Activity 2:**

Create a group “yearbook” containing not only pictures of students but also descriptions of their hopes, dreams, and plans for the future. Where will they be in five years? Ten years? Photocopy the yearbook and give each person a copy.

#### **Activity 3:**

Ask students to describe some of the situations they are concerned about in moving on from high school. Choose a few examples and have students discuss solutions or role-play how they would handle these situations in positive ways.

# My Transition Planner

This transition planner is designed to help you better prepare for life after high school. Fill out each area as completely as you can.

<p><b>1.</b> As I reflect on my high school years, I am most proud of:</p>	<p><b>6.</b> Activities I plan to get involved in after high school are:</p>
<p><b>2.</b> Three things about moving on from high school that I am looking forward to are:</p>	<p><b>7.</b> Three goals I have for my life after high school are:</p>
<p><b>3.</b> Three things that concern me about moving on from high school are:</p>	<p><b>8.</b> Two things I will do to reduce the stress of this transition are:</p>
<p><b>4.</b> To prepare myself to move on from high school, I plan to:</p>	<p><b>9.</b> My family can help me meet the challenges after high school by:</p>
<p><b>5.</b> Key people in my life who can help make this move easier are:</p>	<p><b>10.</b> Overall, my feelings about life beyond high school can be summed up in these words:</p>