

Module 3

Senior Summer

The third and final module of Diplomas to Degrees is designed to prevent the summer melt, a phenomenon whereby postsecondary-bound high school graduates “melt” away during the summer and do not end up enrolling. Instead, this module helps teens use the summer after graduation to prepare for a successful transition, touching on topics relevant for the first-year experience in a postsecondary education environment. Activities cover key tasks to complete for enrollment, the differences between high school and postsecondary education, living with roommates, time management and consent.

**TIME**

55 Minutes

**SIZE**

10-15

**HANDOUTS**

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Session 1: The Summer Melt

Supplies Needed:

- Small to medium bouncing balls (at least four)
- Flipcharts
- Markers
- Sticky notes

Handouts:

Teen Guide Checklist: Avoiding the Summer Melt

Links to Resources:

Summer Melt: Why One-third of College-bound Students Don't Make It to Campus in the Fall: <https://blog.ed.gov/2018/06/summer-melt-why-college-bound-students-dont-make-it-in-the-fall/>

Academic Skills:

- Postsecondary awareness
- Planning

Social-emotional Skills:

- Identifying and solving problems
- Perseverance
- Adult connections

Session Objective: Teens will learn about the “summer melt” phenomenon and propose solutions to avoid melting off before fall enrollment.

Warm Welcome (1-2 minutes)

Greet members by name and engage in meaningful conversation.

Community Builder (10 minutes)**Juggling Balls**

- Ask teens to stand in a circle.
- Explain that the object of the game is to never let a ball drop to the floor. As a team, they should try to keep the balls in the air for as long as possible. They don't catch the ball, but bounce it back into the air.
- When a ball drops they have to start again.
- Once teens are ready, toss one ball into the center of the circle.
- As teens get comfortable, continue to add balls to the circle so the team keeps all four balls off the floor.
- Debrief with the following questions:
 - › What about keeping these balls moving reminded you of your college application process?
 - › What strategies worked to keep all the balls off of the ground?
 - › How did you feel when you kept the balls off of the ground?

Group Agreements Review (2 minutes)

Reference the Group Agreements in your program area to remind youth of their commitment to one another.

Use the following prompts to review the Agreements with your group:

- “Does everyone commit to our Agreements today?”
- “Is there anything we need to add?”
- “Is there anyone who still needs to commit to the Agreements?”*

**If there are youth who join the group and did not get to participate in creating the Group Agreements, they can write their ideas and add them to the Group Agreements.*

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Potential Review Questions:

- What parts of the Agreements have helped our group?
- What feelings have we, as a group, done an especially good job of honoring during our program time?
- What behaviors have we all used successfully during our time together?
- What are some examples of problems the Agreements have helped us resolve?
- How can we continue to honor these Group Agreements with the rest of the Club even after the program ends?

Main Activity (30 minutes)**Activity Preparation:**

Meet with Teen Leaders and share the goals and details of the session. Discuss opportunities for them to lead portions of the session and determine the role they would like to play.

Introducing Youth to the Activity:

- “Congratulations on all you have accomplished!”
- “Not only did you put in the work of graduating high school, but you also put work into graduating with a plan for the future!”
- “Before you head off to your different schools and start your journey to your careers, we wanted to put an extra focus on you to help you have a smooth transition.”
- “This module of Diplomas to Degrees is meant to do just that.”

Step-by-step Directions:**1****Step 1:**

- Ask the group if anyone has heard of the term “summer melt.” If they have not, what do they think it means?
- Explain the meaning of the phrase.
- Say, “Did you know that one-third of all students who graduate from high school with firm plans to attend a postsecondary institution never actually show up and enroll? They’ve already been accepted but they don’t enroll. Why do you think that is?”
- Ask the group to brainstorm possible reasons for not enrolling. Write their responses as headings on different flipcharts and post them around the room. If the following answers are not stated, consider suggesting them to the group:
 - › Money
 - › Transportation
 - › Childcare
 - › Mindset (overwhelmed, scared, etc.)

Key Terms:

Summer melt: a phenomenon where recent high school graduates who have been accepted to postsecondary education and are intending to enroll, do not end up enrolling in the fall

Teen Leadership and Youth Voice Opportunities

- Help prepare for the session by borrowing one to two bouncing balls from the gym. Be sure to return them after the session.
- Lead the Community Builder for this session.
- Try leading each Step of the Main Activity, knowing that Club youth development professionals are there to support and help you in any way you need.

Teen Leaders: Make It Your Own

This portion of the program is only for graduating seniors! How do you want to kick it off to motivate each other to keep moving forward? Do you have a song you play to get you energized and focused? Consider bringing it to kick off the session.

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- Give everyone a marker and ask them to spend 10 minutes going around the room to the different flipcharts. At each flipchart, they should write suggestions/solutions for what a graduate could do if the related heading will keep them from enrolling in the fall. When they feel like they have finished one topic/flipchart, they are free to move to another one.
- Ask everyone to stop writing suggestions and start doing a “gallery walk,” which is visiting each flipchart to read the various suggestions their peers have written down for each heading. If they see a suggestion they want to try for themselves, they should write it on a sticky note to take back to their seat.
- Give the group five minutes for the gallery walk and then ask the following questions:
 - › Did the reasons that were listed feel real for them? If so, which ones?
 - › What would they do if they were facing similar setbacks?
 - › Would anyone be willing to share a suggestion they saw that really jumped out at them? Why did it stand out to them?

3**Step 3:**

- Say, “While these obstacles are real reasons that could cause the summer melt, another main cause is that sometimes people simply forget to send in the right paperwork. It is easy to overlook the letters and emails from schools requesting paperwork (e.g., financial aid forms, health records, housing selection, etc.) but if you don’t respond the school will assume you are no longer planning to attend and could remove your name from their list.
- Say, “The best way to avoid this phenomenon is to stay organized by using a checklist to keep you on track. Page 27 of the Teen Guide has a quick checklist you can use. You might also want to give the checklist to someone in your Squad and ask them to help keep you on track by sending you reminders of important tasks throughout the summer.”
- Review the checklist and encourage members to add any of the suggestions they wrote on sticky notes during the gallery walk.
- Answer any questions that may still be lingering.

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Youth Reflection (5-10 minutes)

- **What?** – What did you learn about summer melt?
- **So What?** – How can planning and being organized keep the summer melt from happening to you?
- **Now What?** – What specific things are you going to ask people to do to help keep you on track this summer?

Recognition (5 minutes)

Have members recognize someone who gave them a good suggestion for avoiding the summer melt.

Closing and Transition (2 minutes)

- Ask members to return materials they've been using to their designated areas.
- Provide members with clear instructions for the transition to their next program area or activity.

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Session 1 Teen Guide: Avoiding the Summer Melt

Instructions: The following checklist includes a few key tasks to complete during the summer to make sure you are still on track to attend your postsecondary institution in the fall:

Who from my Squad can help me? _____

Open ALL mail and read it

Read all emails from the school and look for deadlines to complete registration

Set up orientation

Accept financial aid offer

Complete loan paperwork (if accepting a loan for financial aid)

Send in tuition deposit

Select meal plan (if necessary)

Finalize housing plans (e.g., dorm, apartment, staying at home, etc.)

If staying in a dorm contact your roommate to figure out what you should bring for the room

Send final high school transcript or confirm that the high school counselor already sent it

Check for computer requirements

Get a medical physical from my doctor

Start shopping for basic school supplies and dorm needs

Finalize transportation needs. How am I getting there with all of my stuff? Will I need help?

Connect with the school on social media to catch any announcements

Other potential challenges I might face:

Suggestions to get past these challenges (from the Gallery Walk):

1.

2.

3.

*Adapted from College Board: <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/making-a-decision/you-made-your-college-choice-whats-next>