

# ENGAGEMENT THROUGH CHANGE

## USING TRANSITIONAL EXPERIENCES TO DEVELOP STUDENTS & BUILD COMMUNITY

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*Our complete session slides and additional resources can be found online (see below). But until then, here is a brief summary of what you can expect from this session.*

### **Session Abstract**

Learn how to create environments where personal development and community growth happen naturally by examining the concept of liminality – those in-between transitional times in life (and college) that can either build community or cause students to give up. Participants will identify liminal moments in student experiences and take home best practices for support and leadership development.

### **What can I expect in this session?**

What can we learn about student development from African tribes? A lot, it turns out.

By looking at liminality - the idea of "in-between" or "threshold" spaces and experiences, you will see

**PRESENTATION SLIDES AND ADDITIONAL, UPDATED RESOURCES CAN BE FOUND HERE:**  
[jonsampson.wordpress.com/naspa11](http://jonsampson.wordpress.com/naspa11)

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how to view your campus culture in a new light. **Using both student life theories and research from other fields, we'll discuss how to *create* liminal spaces that help students grow and connect to others using examples from our context as well as research from across multiple fields. We'll also talk about how to *spot* and *use* those liminal, transitional times that already exist on your campus - from study abroad and roommate issues to first-year experiences.**

Times of transition are pivotal moments in student development. When done right, they can create an environment that helps students grow and connects them to others. But without the proper support, transitions can also cause students to feel isolated and create a space where they fail to thrive.

This session's content applies to people working across most areas of student life - first-year experiences, residence life, leadership development, student activities, outdoor adventures, career services, study abroad, and more.

As campuses change and budgets are cut, it is now more important than ever to understand the unique ways that the higher education experience shapes and grows students. By understanding how liminal spaces can build community, we can harness a powerful force in student success and retention. Instead of feeling out and alone in a first year (or any type of) transition, we can challenge and support students in the journey.

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