



New Jersey Center for Tourette Syndrome  
AND ASSOCIATED DISORDERS

*Collaborative Partnerships  
for the Tourette Syndrome Community*

908.575.7350

50 Division Street • Somerville, NJ 08876 • Fax: 908-575-8699 • www.njcts.org • info@njcts.org

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## **“College 101” breakout session a big hit with students at Dare To Dream Student Leadership Conference**

*Rutgers University students share tips with New Jersey middle schoolers and high schoolers on how to transition from high school to college*

PISCATAWAY – Transitioning from high school to college is a difficult proposition for any student. It’s even tougher for students with Tourette Syndrome or associated disorders such as OCD, ADHD, anxiety and Asperger’s Syndrome. But it is not only possible, it is probable – with proper preparation.

That was the message delivered by four students on behalf of the Rutgers University College Support Program during a well-attended breakout session at the first Dare To Dream Student Leadership College for New Jersey middle school and high school students with TS and/or associated disorders. The conference – a joint venture between the New Jersey Center for Tourette Syndrome & Associated Disorders (NJCTS) and the New Jersey Department of Education – took place May 21, at Rutgers’ Busch Campus Center.

The goal of the Rutgers students – Max, Michael, Merlin and Eleanor – all of whom are on the autism spectrum, was to share experiences about their path to college. They addressed topics such as what’s best to know before coming to college, what it means to be successful and the biggest differences between college and high school. They were asked questions by College Support Program Coordinator Pamela Lubbers, P.D., M.A., and the array of middle school and high school students, as well as parents and educators, in attendance.



Photo by NJCTS

**Rutgers University College Support Program Coordinator Pamela Lubbers, left, introduces the panel of students who discussed college life with those in attendance at the Dare To Dream Student Leadership Conference.**

At one point, about a third of the nearly 300 people who attended the conference were present in this breakout session. Here are some of the questions, as well as the answers, posed during the session:

- **What frightened you about coming to college?** Living on my own, more difficult workload, making friends, finding my way around, dorming, the change in lifestyle, balancing lifestyles.
- **What were you looking forward to?** College life, clubs, professors, food, activities, learning, adjusting to new people.
- **What was hard about the transition?** How to properly do assignments, balancing time, finding the right services to meet my personal needs, commitment to classes, trusting the right people.
- **What was easy about the transition?** Actually doing the schoolwork and being motivated, making friends, finding classes, meeting new people, transportation, creating my own social life.
- **How was high school different than college?** The work is harder; there's not as much free time; classes are bigger; there's more independence, more diverse choices in courses, and a more spread-out schedule; the classes are longer; there are less people judging you; and that Advanced Placement (AP) classes don't always help in the way that they need to.
- **What skills are good to have before heading off to college?** Time management, self-sufficiency, knowing how to seek out what services are offered for people with disabilities, how to ask for what you need, how to advocate for yourself.
- **What worked for you in choosing a college?** Close to home, organized campus, good programs and majors, good support programs for students with special needs, academic reputation, comfort level.
- **What resources have worked for you?** Peer mentors from the College Support Program, academic coaching, time-management techniques, counseling services, stress management.



Photo by NJCTS

The Rutgers University College Support Program panel fields questions from the audience during the “College 101” breakout session at the Dare To Dream Student Leadership Conference.

The goal of this breakout session, according to NJCTS Education Consultant Melissa Fowler, was to help students with various neurological conditions feel confident and comfortable as they ease out of high school and prepare to jump into the college environment. Fowler also noted that the conference “represented a golden opportunity for New Jersey to see how NJCTS’ programs and services not only benefit children and families with Tourette Syndrome, but also those with OCD, ADHD, anxiety, Asperger’s Syndrome and other neurological disorders.”

And according to Robert Haugh of the New Jersey Department of Education's Office of Special Education, the session – and the conference as a whole – was a resounding success.

“There’s something quite amazing when you get this many people together and something happens. There’s a sense of community,” Haugh said. “Everyone respected each other. Everyone supported each other, regardless of the disabilities they had. They see that there are other people have made it and are successful. It gives young people the determination and the vision to be able to work toward their own goals and accomplishments.”



Photo by NJCTS

More information about the Dare To Dream Student Leadership Conference, as well as the programs and services of NJCTS, is available by visiting [www.njcts.org](http://www.njcts.org). For the complete NJCTS photo album from the conference, please visit NJCTS' home on Facebook at

<http://www.facebook.com/TouretteSyndrome>. The conference also is a point of discussion on NJCTS' Teens4TS blog at <http://www.njcts.org/teens4ts>.

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**NJCTS Education Outreach Consultant Melissa Fowler, right, thanks New Jersey Department of Education Office of Special Education Coordinator Robert Haugh for his role in making the Dare To Dream Conference such as success.**