

Student Health & Wellness

“Parenting Your College Student”

Orientation

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UCMERCED

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Parent Orientation 101

- ✓ Mom and Dad have questions...
- ✓ What can parents do to help their student through this transition while allowing them the autonomy to be adults?
- ✓ How can parents help themselves through the emotional transition?
- ✓ Do you remember when you sent your child off to kindergarten?

Helpful Ideas

- ✓ Allow yourself to feel sad.
- ✓ Don't feel guilty if you feel relieved.
- ✓ Find a good balance between connection and intrusion.
- ✓ Stay out of academic issues.
- ✓ If you are paying, let your student know what you expect.

Helpful Ideas, continued

- ✓ Communicate about alcohol.
- ✓ Communicate about visits home.
- ✓ Find other activities to keep you busy.
- ✓ Hang in there, Mom and Dad!
- ✓ Congratulations on raising a child who is now in college.

Tips for Parents: From a Student's Perspective

- ✓ Don't ask if they are homesick.
- ✓ Write often and regularly.
- ✓ Ask questions, but not too many.
- ✓ Expect change, but not too much change.

More Tips

- ✓ Don't worry (too much) about those “nothing is right” telephone calls and letters.
- ✓ Visit, but not too often.
- ✓ Don't say “these are the best years of your life.”
- ✓ Put trust at the forefront.

Life of a Freshman...

- ✓ Common Emotional Conflicts of University Students
- ✓ The conflicts and stress that I will describe are examples of what a student might experience during their first year at the University.
- ✓ Not all students have these experiences...

August...September

- ✓ Values crisis.
- ✓ Feelings of inadequacy and inferiority.
- ✓ Students may feel depressed.
- ✓ “Culture Shock.” Too many new experiences.
- ✓ Stress.
- ✓ Decision making problems.
- ✓ Time pressures.

October

- ✓ Life is not perfect.
- ✓ Depression. Inability to fit in.
- ✓ Mid-term work loads pressures.
- ✓ Dating, conflicts and confusion.

November

- ✓ Academic pressures.
- ✓ Depression and anxiety. Inability to adjust.
- ✓ Economic anxiety.
- ✓ Friendships...are they worth it...
- ✓ Anxiety, fear, guilt. Exams, papers coming due.

December

- ✓ Extracurricular time strain.
- ✓ Drug and alcohol use.
- ✓ Pre-Holiday depression.
- ✓ Financial strain.

So what can Parents do?

- ✓ Encourage their student to be familiar with all the Student Wellness programs and to have emergency numbers programmed into their phones.
- ✓ Model coping with stress effectively.
- ✓ Encourage and model help seeking.
- ✓ Positive communication. You know your children best.
- ✓ Care packages.
- ✓ Ability to laugh and play together.
- ✓ Relating adult-to-adult.

When to Step In

- ✓ Repeated, tearful phone calls.
- ✓ Significant, rapid change in weight.
- ✓ Frequent illness or fatigue.
- ✓ Marked changes in behavior or mood.
- ✓ Social withdrawal or poor class attendance.
- ✓ Compulsive behaviors.
- ✓ Difficulty coping with trauma or family crisis.

Stepping in...

- ✓ Prolonged, recurrent, or severe sadness or anxiety.
- ✓ Threats of suicide or signs of substance abuse.
- ✓ What to do? Stay engaged, ask questions.
 - Listen.
 - Express concerns directly.
 - Encourage them to seek help... Counseling and Psychological Services are available.
 - Normalize the idea that seeking help is not a sign of weakness.

What about Parent Wellness Strategies?

- ✓ Exercise, dance, etc.
- ✓ Healthy eating.
- ✓ Write, journal.
- ✓ Being creative.
- ✓ Cultivating healthy relationships.
- ✓ Counseling.
- ✓ Relaxation techniques.
- ✓ Study, learn something new.
- ✓ Practice optimism.
- ✓ Cultivate humor and play.

Remember...

- ✓ Congratulations on raising a child who is now at the University of California, Merced.
- ✓ The transition can be tough, but you can do it.
- ✓ You made it through the first day of kindergarten, right?

Welcome Home

- Questions?
- Next...Den Discussions with Orientation Leaders.

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