Relationships Matter: Understanding The Transition to College

Presented by:

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Overview

- Transition issues for new students
  - Academic
  - Social
  - Emotional
- How parents can help
- When “stress” becomes “distress”
- Information on student mental health counseling services
Increase in academic workload
* Extensive reading and writing assignments
  ★ Many projects due in relatively short amounts of time
  ★ Potential to fall behind very quickly

New study habits are usually needed, including:
★ Study schedule
★ Study environment (s)
Academic, cont.

As your student makes adjustments to keep up with the increased academic load, there will be some impact on time spent as a family.

✓ **Communication Tip:** “We realize that you have a lot of coursework and will need to develop some new ways to study. What can we do to support you in keeping a good study schedule?”
New environment, new faces
- Many people of different ages and backgrounds
- Some feelings of loss due to leaving familiar environment and friends behind
- May feel isolated
- Need to make new friends and find ways to “fit in”
- Depending on student, can be exciting, challenging, or stressful
A delicate balance:

- New students want and need to become more independent
- New students may also feel a need for extra support during this time of change

**Tip:** Keep the lines of communication open. Be there to listen, offer support, and encourage discussion.
Recognize that this is a new developmental stage for your son or daughter

- Part of successful adjustment includes “trial and error” while learning new skills and competencies

Provide guidance and support, while empowering your child to solve problems on her own

Avoid “rescuing” your son or daughter from new challenges & responsibilities
Listen, and then listen some more

- Listen with empathy and interest ("That sounds difficult... how did you handle it?" or "Tell me more...")
- Do not interrupt with a quick solution
- Ask questions for clarification (without blame or judgment)

Let your child know that he does not have to protect you from problems. Keep the door open for additional conversation.
Additional Communication Examples

- “I know that you want to make friends and do well in your classes. If you find yourself struggling, please know that I am here to listen and to support you.”

- “We know that you have a lot more work now than you did in High School. How are you managing with all of the new material & deadlines?”

- “What do you like (or dislike) about your classes?”
  - Inevitably, there will be something that your child does not like. Encourage your son or daughter to come up with his or her own problem-solving ideas.
Transition to Higher Education may be Stressful

Some changes in behavior and mood can be expected.

Sometimes general adjustment stress can turn to distress.
Physical:

- Weight gain or loss; eating more or less
- Sleep pattern changes; sleeping more, trouble falling asleep, increased napping
- Stomach distress
- Headaches, muscle tension, other pain
- Fatigue

*It is important to see a doctor if there are concerns about physical problems.*
Emotional:

- Withdrawal from family and friends; loss of interest in activities that were once fun
- Irritability
- Sadness, crying
- Increased dependency
- Excessive fears and worries
- Difficulty making decisions
- Appears overwhelmed
Counseling Services Overview

- For any personal concern causing distress or interfering with academic progress
  - Typical concerns include stress, relationship issues, anxiety, depression, and adjustment issues.

- Free
- Confidential
- Up to six visits per academic year
- Referral coordination
- Consultation for faculty, staff and parents
Reach out if You are Concerned

If you believe there is a significant change that goes beyond a general transition or adjustment, reach out.

Tip: “I’ve noticed that you seem sad (unhappy, withdrawn) lately. I care about you and am here to talk whenever you’d like.

* Parents may consult with Counseling Services: (425) 352-3183
* Parents may contact 24-hour community crisis lines:
  - King County: (206) 461-3222
  - Snohomish County: (800) 584-3578
“I learned during orientation that there are free counseling services on campus and that it’s easy to make an appointment.”

Go to ‘Current Student’ on the UW Bothell website, find ‘Counseling’ under ‘Student Services’ and call the number listed.

(425) 352-3183
Sources


