

TIPS FOR PARENTS AND FAMILIES OF COLLEGE STUDENTS

Going to college can be both exciting and challenging for students and their families. For some, it is a smooth transition and for others it can be overwhelming. Here are some ways to help make the transition as easy as possible.



SUPPORT YOUR CHILD'S AUTONOMY.

Give your student some room to get settled into their new life. College students often have a difficult task of balancing autonomy and self-reliance. It can be a fine line between helping too much and helping too little. The degree to which you decrease support depends on your student. The goal is to continue to be supportive without doing everything for them.



HAVE REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS.

49% of students report that their family's expectations are too high. This often leads to feelings of anxiety, guilt, shame, and sadness. Failure (and learning how to deal with it) is integral to their success. Talk to your student about how you love them and want the best for them, but that you are there for them regardless.



ALLOW YOUR CHILD TO RELAX.

College is about development; academically and socially. In addition to your student focusing on their schoolwork, it is important for them to relax with friends. A balanced life that includes work, play, and rest is essential to a healthy life (for everyone!). Encourage your student to make time for friends and activities they enjoy.



FORGET THE STIGMA AND DISCUSS MENTAL HEALTH.

Approximately 50% of people will experience a mental health challenge in their lifetime. Your student may not feel comfortable starting the conversation, so be the one to start it. Give your student mental health resources (see list below) and show them that you are supportive of them seeking services. Family acceptance often plays a big role in a child's ability to manage stressors.



STAY IN TOUCH.

College is a transitional time and homesickness is very common, especially for first-year and transfer students. Create a realistic plan to stay in touch on a regular basis whether it's through writing, emails, texting, skyping or talking over the phone. You can also help make the transition easier by attending Parents' Weekend and helping them get connected to clubs and services on campus.

Provided by staff at Counseling, Alcohol and Other Drug Assistance Program & Psychiatric Services (CAPS).

If you think your student could benefit from services at CAPS, have them contact us at 848-932-7884.

More information about CAPS services is available at health.rutgers.edu/CAPS.

Emergency resources can be found at health.rutgers.edu/Emergency-Resources.