



a newsletter for parents & families

February 2015

Seasonal Student Issues

There's a seasonal ebb and flow when it comes to student issues. Here are a few things your student may be experiencing this month:

- Difficulty getting into study mode
- Things become routine... school finally becomes home
- Pressure to figure out living plans for next year as the room assignment process draws near
- Missing family and friends at home, and friends who did not return to school
- Cliques become stronger within residence hall communities, student organizations and in classes
- Cabin fever and winter doldrums
- Valentine's Day sadness if not dating
- Spring break planning underway

What Lies Ahead

Decisions your student may be facing

Your student will likely be in decision-making mode these next few months, as she seeks opportunities and determines intentional directions for her life. Here are some key decisions on her plate...

Choosing a Major. If your daughter is in her second year, she'll likely have to declare a major. This involves looking at her learning, her future goals, classes she has enjoyed and more. Remind her that her academic advisor, as well as other campus professionals, can help her make this type of decision.

Seeking Purposeful Summer Work. Finding work or an internship that allows your student to explore her major and interests is just *smart*. She'll need to make contacts, consult with our career coordinator in the achievement center, create a resume and get her name out there. Making the most of the summer will help her be ahead of the pack.

Figuring Out Spring Break. How will your student spend her spring break? Being intentional with this chunk of time can definitely work to her benefit. Perhaps she'll go on a service trip, do interviews for summer jobs/internships, shadow someone in a profession that interests her...



Planning can ensure that she doesn't waste this valuable time!

Conversations, loving challenges and support can give your daughter added strength during this decision-heavy time of year.

How You Can Help

Ask Questions. They may include "What are you thinking about for the summer?" or "How can I help you weigh options for a major?"

Be a Sounding Board. Listen as your student bounces around possibilities.

Offer Support. Let your daughter know that you believe in her and are there to help.

Exploring Healthy Relationships with Your Student

February is Relationship Wellness Month. Talk with your daughter this month about what a healthy relationship looks like. It doesn't really matter if you're talking about the love of your student's life or a good friend. The basic tenets of healthy relationships are the same, regardless! Consider using this acronym to get the conversation started:

Signs that a Relationship is Healthy...

Vitality. In a healthy relationship, both individuals have the opportunity to grow, explore areas of interest to them and live life to the fullest.

Acceptance. It's nearly impossible to change another person. In a healthy relationship, both partners accept one another as they are.

Love. This goes without saying! But, it's important to note that love is intimacy, friendship and respect — not possessiveness, obsession and manipulation.

Emotion. Relationships are emotional roller coasters, there's no doubt about it. If you didn't truly care about the person, the relationship wouldn't be hard

work. Sometimes you'll face uphill battles and sometimes you'll feel like you're coasting downhill. This is all-important in building a strong, solid relationship.

Natural. In a healthy relationship, partners aren't pressured to do things they don't want to do. If something doesn't feel right, it's quite likely that it isn't. You should never feel intimidated or put down by the person who supposedly loves you.

Trust. It's much easier to be vulnerable when you trust someone wholeheartedly. And this vulnerability is so important in achieving an authentic relationship built on honesty and openness.

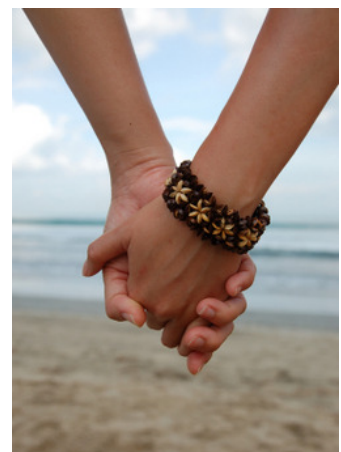
Interdependence. In a healthy relationship, partners live and work together. Neither is dependent or independent from the other and both have their own positive identity.

Nourishing. A relationship should make deposits in your emotional bank account, not withdrawals. Healthy relationships are those that make you feel good about yourself.

Effervescence. If you're not

feeling excited about your relationship, something is wrong. Although relationships are hard work and take a great deal of compromise, if you've tried this and you're still not feeling excited, it might be time to evaluate why you're feeling the way you are. This is okay! Sometimes you just need to take stock to realize all that you have. But sometimes, it may be time to part ways. If this is the case, stay true to yourself and be as honest as you can.

Now's the time to get the conversation started. Show your daughter that you care about her emotional well being by encouraging her to take a close look at the health of her relationships.



CSM Students Honor our Mission of Service

Ten CSM students joined Campus Ministry Director, Vickie Zobrist, for a service immersion experience in Milwaukee, Wisconsin over Christmas break. Students served at homeless shelters, an orphanage, and soup kitchens. The group learned about the structural causes of poverty and reflected on their own call to work for a more just world.

Perfectionism

The quest to be “perfect” is something that many students may be feeling, especially as they embark on a new semester, new classes and new student leader challenges. Some of the traits that perfectionists may exhibit include...

“If you are a perfectionist, it is likely that you learned early in life that other people valued you because of how much you accomplished or achieved.”

— SUNY Potsdam’s online “Perfectionism” brochure

Setting unrealistic or unachievable goals. Often perfectionists set goals that are so high and unrealistic that it is almost impossible for them to be successful.

Fear of failure. Perfectionists often measure their own self-worth or value with their failure to achieve goals.

Fear of messing up or making mistakes. Because perfectionists equate their mistakes with failure, they organize their lives around avoiding mistakes and, thus, often miss opportunities for learning, growth and development.

All-or-none thinking. Perfectionists often believe that they are worthless EVEN if they have achieved small successes or met parts of their goals along the way.

Overemphasis on “shoulds.” Perfectionists often live by rigid rules based upon what they believe they *should* do rather than considering their own needs and feelings.

Believing that others are easily successful. Most perfectionists believe that they are alone in daily struggles to meet expectations; they believe that others achieve success with minimal effort.

Imposing perfectionist ideals on others. Perfectionists tend to have high expectations of others and get frustrated when friends and colleagues are unable to meet those expectations. In typical perfectionist fashion, they believe that the things that are important to them should be just as important to everyone else.

These students are stressing themselves out, trying to meet the expectations of parents, families, friends, advisors . . . those whose opinions are important to them. Perfectionism is also often about expecting too much of oneself.

Sources: State University of New York at Potsdam, College Counseling Center, www.potsdam.edu/studentlife/counseling/selfhelp/upload/perfectionism-1.pdf; Adapted from an article by Susan Spangler, Higher Education Consultant

What Parents and Families Can Do

To help students overcome or at least work on their perfectionist tendencies, those who care about them can try the following...

Encourage students to set realistic, achievable goals. These should be based on students’ own wants and needs, plus what has been accomplished in the past. This will allow them to achieve a greater sense of self-esteem.

Help students prioritize goals. Encourage them to prioritize activities and responsibilities that are most important, and help them recognize that perfection is not something they can achieve in one area (let alone four or five).



Ask students to experiment with their standards for success. SUNY Potsdam’s “Perfectionism” brochure suggests that

students choose an activity and, instead of aiming for 100% success, they try for 90%, 80% or even 60%. This activity helps students realize that the world doesn’t end when they are not perfect.

Understand process vs. product. Perfectionists often miss the boat on relationships because they are so focused on the final outcome of a project or activity. Thus, it is important to teach students to enjoy the *process* of doing an activity rather than solely focusing on the end result.

Provide students with the opportunity to learn from mistakes. When students approach you, depressed or withdrawn because they feel they have failed, it’s important to allow them to reflect on why they are feeling that way. Ask, “Have you set up impossible expectations of yourself in regard to this situation?” and “What can you do to prevent this from happening in the future?”

Help students understand that everyone has individual priorities. Perfectionists often expect others to buy into the perfectionist myth, too! Therefore, it is important to help students understand that each individual has their own priorities and goals.

Your care and concern go a long, long way when contending with perfectionism.

Is my Daughter Safe?

Curious about crime in and around campus? Wondering what happens in our residence halls? All you need is a computer and you can check it out! You can go to ope.ed.gov/security which gives you access to campus crime data for all postsecondary institutions receiving federal aid funding.

College of Saint Mary releases its Annual Campus Security and Fire Safety Report on October 1 each year. This report, required by federal law, contains policy statements and crime statistics for the university. The report addresses our policies, procedures and programs concerning safety and security of our campus community, as well as information about crimes occurring on our campus and in our residence halls.

Included in each report is three years of statistics for certain types of crimes that were reported to have occurred on campus and on public property immediately adjacent to the campus.

This report is available online at www.csm.edu/student-life/campus-living/campus-safety-and-security. A paper copy of the report may be requested from the CSM Security Office at 402-670-8848. We are very proud of our safety record and small number of crimes on campus.

Why is this report important to parents? By reviewing these stats, you as a parent are able to have quality conversations with your students about their safety on campus. Please feel free to contact David Ferber, Director of Safety and Security, if you would like to discuss this report or any safety concerns you might have.



CSM Dates to Remember:

- * **Monday, February 2: Student Orientation Staff Interest Session**
- * **Tuesday, February 3: Resident Assistant (RA) Information Session**
- * **Tuesday, February 3: Saint Blaise Mass (Blessing of the Throats)**
- * **Thursday, February 5: Studying in Style Workshop**
- * **Friday, February 6: Basketball vs. Oklahoma Wesleyan University**
- * **Saturday, February 7: Queen of Hearts**
- * **Saturday, February 7: Basketball vs. Haskell Indian Nations University**
- * **Friday, February 13: Basketball vs. College of the Ozarks**
- * **Saturday, February 14: Basketball vs. Central Baptist College**
- * **Monday, February 16: Strategic Studying in Style Workshop**
- * **Wednesday, February 18: Ash Wednesday Mass**
- * **Saturday, February 28: Softball vs. Dakota Wesleyan University**



Greetings from the Vice President for Student Development!

Dear Parents and Families,

I can't believe we are already beginning the second month of the semester! Time flies when you have so much going on with an engaged, active student body. Last week we celebrated the installation of a new Student Senate and the introduction of this year's Queen of Hearts student court, (students being honored for their character, leadership and service) and enjoyed the high spirits at the spring involvement fair. It seems there is always something happening here at CSM!

Happy spring semester, and Happy Valentines day!

Sincerely,

Tara Knudson Carl, Ph.D.

