



a newsletter for parents & families

September 2014

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:

- Feelings of loneliness and homesickness may increase
- A desire to feel connected to campus
- Roommate adjustments
- Experimentation with alcohol
- Getting acclimated to a new type of academics
- Figuring out how to get organized and manage time
- Searching for a sense of belonging
- Exploration and acknowledgement of personal values
- Long distance relationship strain

Time Management Strategies

Learning to work smartly and efficiently

Smart time management is a key path to success this academic year. You can help your student by discussing time management strategies with her, such as...

Using In-between Times. That 45-minute chunk of time between a class and a meeting can be used wisely instead of wasted. That's several pages of reading for a class, studying for a quiz or buying a birthday card at the campus store. Those in-between times add up quickly!

Not Over-Scheduling. There comes a time in some students' schedules where they just can't fit anything else in. So, learning to say "no" is important. It's much better to be realistic than trying to be all things to all people. The latter is bound to disappoint someone and to overwhelm your daughter.

Recognizing That Stuff Steals Time. When you have too much stuff in your living space, you spend more time looking for things. By doing a "stuff purge," your student will be better able to get to things quickly while staying more organized.

Decompressing Your Mind. A stressed, overactive mind is not as time efficient as a calm, collected one is. So, whether your daughter uses breathing techniques, exercise or other stress management tools,



it's important to make them a natural part of her everyday life.

Avoiding Weekend Reliance. During the busy weekdays it's easy to say, "I'll get to that over the weekend." However, weekends often get full, plus it's important for students to give themselves some down time, too. So, encourage your daughter not to rely on weekends as her time to get most things done. Instead, she can dose it out over the weekdays, for maximum efficiency.

Time Stealers

Random texting, chatting endlessly on the phone, spending hours on Facebook... all are Time Stealers. Gently ask your daughter if this is how she wants to be spending her precious free time.

Talking to Your Daughter About Being Safe on Campus

The safety and security of every member of the CSM Community is a major priority for all of us. We want to work together with parents to help students become more aware of important issues as they relate to security measures, both on and off-campus. Please consider taking some time to discuss these issues with your student. Some of the strategies listed below can help you to generate a healthy dialogue that will communicate your concern as well as your expectations.

Urge your daughter to be aware of her surroundings. CSM is located in an urban environment and no city is immune to crime. Students need to be alert to where they are, the time of day, and the area surrounding the College. Walking or running in dark areas, and alone, can increase their vulnerability to crime. We encourage students not to wear ear buds or headphones when walking or running alone.

Encourage your student to sign up for CSM Alerts. It's simple and easy - all they have to do is log into MyCSM and click on CSM Alert to sign up for the text alert program. These alerts are sent via e-mail and text messages to all members of the College community whenever a serious crime occurs, either on or off- campus.

Remind your student not to venture out alone off-campus at night in un-lit areas. Students should think about having a plan of how they are getting from one place to another, before they leave their original location. For example, confirming plans with a friend, who can be on the "look-out" for her.

Discuss with your daughter how alcohol/drug use can compromise an individual's ability to make good judgments. It is important that students be in control of themselves at all times. Not only should they be aware of their own safety, but they should also deter their friends from entering into dangerous situations.



Urge your student to minimize the use of a cell phone while walking off-campus. Cell phone theft is one of the fastest growing property crimes. Thieves target victims for the value of their smart-phones and students can be easily distracted while conversing or texting.

Remind your daughter that **Safe Walk** is available at CSM. The Safe Walk is a Safety & Security Department Crime Prevention Program designed to assist the CSM community by providing escort services from one campus location to another. Members of the Safety and Security Department will provide the escort as needed 24 hours a day. Safety and Security can be reached at 402-670-8848 or by dialing "1" on any campus phone.

Gaining Independence

Students need to express their autonomy and spread their wings when they get to school. This doesn't mean that they've stopped needing you – of course not! What it may mean, though, is that your student needs a chance to:

- ⇒ Make her own mistakes
- ⇒ Decide how to confront challenges
- ⇒ Communicate with others when there's a problem
- ⇒ Choose how to spend her time
- ⇒ Take responsibility for her actions

- ⇒ Struggle a bit
- ⇒ Learn from experience

Be there to talk things through when your daughter needs that and to offer support. The actual "doing," though, is primarily up to her. She needs to be in the 'driver's seat!' This independence is one of the main ways that she will learn, grow and develop into a strong and confident adult.



Helping Students Deal with Homesickness

When the initial excitement and newness of the new year wears off, it's common for a student to long for home and the familiarity of her old routine. You can help your student cope with these feelings by offering the following suggestions:

Acknowledge your feelings and worries. Once you've identified the feelings, it can be easier to address them.

Take advantage of the resources available on campus. There are so many people available to help! Residence life staff, achievement center staff and other faculty and staff members are prepared to help students who are homesick or lonely. Don't be afraid to tap into them...you won't be the first.

Get involved. If you sit and think about what you are missing at home, you are also missing what you could be doing on campus. This is a lose-lose! Trying new things and meeting new people is one of the best ways to combat loneliness.

Call home or communicate in other ways with those who matter to you. Although it's important for you to develop some independence, staying connected is a great way to feel supported as you grow during your collegiate journey.

Most of all, you can help your student by reassuring her that, by accepting her life in college, she's not giving up her life at home.

When Your Student Needs Something More

How do you know if your student is experiencing a normal bout of homesickness or if she is *really* struggling in a way that might require some additional support? Here are some signs that might signal that your student is severely homesick:

She finds reasons to call. If your daughter starts contacting you much more often than normal, it could mean that she is looking for reasons to talk to you.



She's not getting involved. If you aren't hearing your student talk about co-curricular activities or she keeps giving excuses as to why she isn't getting involved, she could be holing up in her room and not connecting with her peers.

She's becoming more and more dependent. Is your daughter asking you to take care of simple tasks that she normally handles on her own or should be handling on her own now that she is in college? It's one thing for a student to call for some advice or to talk through some possibilities, but it's another for a student to call home to ask someone to handle something she should be.

She keeps getting sick. Sometimes, homesickness can manifest itself in physical symptoms such as headaches, insomnia, nausea or fatigue. If your daughter is experiencing these symptoms with regularity, it could mean more than simple illness.

Poor grades. Severe homesickness can make it really difficult for a student to concentrate on her schoolwork. Talk with your daughter about her grades, what she is learning in her classes and what she is enjoying about her academic pursuits.

If you believe your student is severely homesick, encourage her to call CSM's free Counseling Assistance Program (CAP) at 402-398-5566. A professional can help her work through her feelings and get her on the right track.

Most of all, you can help your student by reassuring her that, by accepting her life in college, she's not giving up her life at home. She can have both...it just looks different. Send her some things to remind her of home, make sure she knows you are thinking about her and help her feel confident about the months ahead.

Some information adapted from Helium.com.

Fostering Self-Responsibility in Your Student

Going away to college can be a big transition for some students. Here are seven ways you can foster self-responsibility in your student:

1. **Help Your Daughter Make Her Own Decisions.** When you say, “Well, what do you think you should do?” during a phone conversation, you’re offering your support but, instead of jumping in with advice, you’re helping your student figure out her own answer.
2. **Trust Your Student.** And let her know that you do. She’ll likely feel more confident, supported and able to stand up for what she believes as a result.
3. **Communicate without *Over* Communicating.** Check in with each other a few times each week via email, text or phone. However, don’t feel like you need to touch base every day – there needs to be some space so your daughter can gain a sense of independence.
4. **Don’t Solve Everything for Her.** The tendency to want to jump in and “take care of things” is natural. Yet, students need to start learning to do these things for themselves. So, try not to fix things – instead, ask questions like “What steps have you taken so far?” to help your student take the lead and take self-responsibility.
5. **Stay Involved.** Just because your daughter goes off to college doesn’t mean she stops needing your input. Your involvement is essential to her success. Be interested, ask questions without prying too much and listen to what she has to say.
6. **Let Go a Bit.** You can’t know where your student is every hour of the day – nor should you have to keep track of that. Instead of inquiring about where she’s been, ask more general questions like “Have you gone anywhere interesting lately?” or “How have you been spending your free time?” so she can share without feeling put on the spot.
7. **Keep Her in the Loop.** Even though your student is building a new life at college, it doesn’t mean she should be cutoff from what’s happening back home. Share a balance of news to keep the connection strong—and to make sure your student focuses on people besides herself, too!



In this time of transition, keep the lines of communication open, let mistakes be made and encourage your student to make decisions for herself. It’s all part of the process, especially in this important first month!

CSM Dates to Remember:

- * Monday, September 1—Labor Day / College Closed
- * Wednesday, September 10—Time Management Workshop
- * Friday, September 12—CSM’s Birthday! Cake served on campus
- * Monday, September 15—Opening Convocation
- * Thursday, September 18—Heritage Week Picnic
- * Saturday, September 20—Powder Puff Football Game
- * Monday, September 22—Test Taking Workshop
- * Tuesday, September 23—Study Abroad Fair
- * Thursday, September 25—Tackling Your Text book Workshop
- * Monday, September 29—Critical Thinking Workshop



Greetings from the Vice President for Student Development!

Dear Parents and Families,

As a parent, you play a very important and critical role in helping your daughter handle issues she faces by providing suggestions and offering guidance. Our newsletter, sent each month, will offer resources for you to use during these important conversations, as well as current information about campus events and deadlines. Have a great Labor Day weekend!

Sincerely,

Tara Knudson Carl, Ph.D.

