

HOW TO HELP YOUR STUDENT TRANSITION TO COLLEGE

DISCUSS THE FOLLOWING PRIOR TO YOUR STUDENT LEAVING FOR COLLEGE, AND THEN CHECK IN WITH THEM ABOUT THESE ITEMS THROUGHOUT THEIR COLLEGE CAREER

MENTAL HEALTH

- If your student has already experienced mental health concerns, what is the plan for seeking counseling?
- If they are currently on medications, how will they get refills and who will they follow up with if they have concerns?
- Do you have a family history of mental health that your child should be aware of? (Mental health tends to emerge during adolescence or early adulthood)
- What would be signs that they are starting to get overwhelmed, and what can they do once that happens?
- What coping skills can they use when needed?
- Ask what you can do as a parent to support them when they call and are stressed out.
- What circumstances would lead your child to ask for help?

FINANCES

- Who will be paying for things such as tuition, books, clothes, electronics, vehicle expenses, activities, etc?
- What are the student's plans regarding work?
- Will any forms of credit/debit cards be used and how?

HEALTH

- Are there any medical conditions that will require follow up and who will they see?
- If they have a diagnosed disability and plan to utilize accommodations, make sure to make contact with the Disability Services office about the process (IEP plans from high school will not automatically roll over; the responsibility is on the student to get everything in place each semester).
- Make sure your student has a copy of their insurance card and understands what the benefits are, how it works, what providers are covered, etc.
- Who will be responsible for any medical bills?

SUBSTANCE USE

- What are their plans regarding alcohol and drug use?
- Do they have a family history of addiction that they should be aware of prior to making high risk choices? (Individuals with a parent, grandparent or sibling with addiction to alcohol or drugs are 4x more likely to develop problems themselves)
- Explore potential consequences of high risk choices.

RELATIONSHIPS

- How often and what methods do they plan to use to maintain contact with you?
- How often will they visit home/will you visit them at college?
- What can they do to maintain friendships from home?
- How do they plan to make friends at college?

- How will they handle roommate disputes?
- What decisions do you expect your child to make for themselves and which to consult you about?
- What kind of things do you expect to know about your student and what are their expectations about these items? (Grades, romantic relationships, travel off campus, finances, substance use)
- What are your student's thoughts and plans regarding romantic relationships and sex?
- Do they know how to define consent and get consent for sexual behavior?

TRANSITION, HOMESICKNESS, LONELINESS & ANXIETY

- Get involved. Encourage them to pick only 1 or 2 activities they are passionate about to be involved with on campus. Much more and they will burn themselves out.
- What types of self-care activities can they participate in regularly?
- What is their plan for studying? (Where, how often, likely much more than high school is needed)
- Homesickness is normal: what can you do to support them if they are missing home? Encourage them to stay on campus, even if it is hard. Refer them to Student Life or LCCS if homesickness persists after 8 weeks.
- Review campus resources with them, how to access, and when they would know to seek help from them.
- Remind them they are responsible for their success in college. Many resources are available, but they have to seek them out on their own; asking for help is key for personal and academic success.
- Review assertive communication skills to use when discussing concerns with professors.
- Encourage them to share their feelings.
- Find friends "the old-fashioned way". Social media is great for connecting quickly and finding out what is happening on campus. First-year students need on-campus friends with whom they can share meals, laughter, conversation and tears.
- Temper expectations. College is great and stressful. Students who are able to acknowledge the tough realities are better equipped to handle the many challenges.

WHAT DO I DO WHEN I AM CONCERNED ABOUT MY STUDENT?

Counseling Service can provide consultation to discuss the situation and how you might proceed. If you are concerned about a student's imminent safety and feel that someone needs to check on them ASAP, you can contact the Student Life office at 563-387-1020 or Campus Safety & Security at 563-387-2111.

HOW TO SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT WITH LUTHER COLLEGE COUNSELING SERVICE

- Counseling Services are available whenever classes are in session. Students can contact our office to set up an appointment beginning on the first day of classes in the Fall.
- Students can also schedule a consultation with a counselor if they are concerned about a friend and want to talk through how to approach the situation.
- Please visit our website for other resources or questions.

