

The Changing Puzzle...  
How do I fit into the new paradigm?

Parent Orientation 2020-2021



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*Family*

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# Overview

- When to step in and when to step back: Know when to step in to help your student and when to empower your student to take responsibility
- Signs of stress: You know your student best. Watch for the signs that may indicate that your student is under significant stress, is taking unhealthy risks, or is ill
- Life with your student at college: Parents' transition to the new normal

# Parent-to-Parent Advice

**Clear Expectations:** Setting clear clear expectations with your student lays a strong foundation for sound and timely decisions. It helps them understand when they need to make decisions on their own and when you expect them to let you know if they have a situation that they cannot manage? You may ask them to share what they're doing to deal with challenges, or request that they ask you for help when they're unsure what they should do next.

**Periodically Remind Them of Resources available on campus:** Here are a few ways to do this:

- “Remember, any you are unsure of how to complete an assignment, visit with your professor. If you pay close attention, you will find that Upperclassmen do this all the time.”
- “When you feel under the weather, make an online appointment at the health clinic so you can be seen immediately. Don't wait until you feel worse.”
- “Have you considered forming a study group? Or finding a tutor who can help you with your courses? Everyone has at least 1 or 2 difficult courses and finding peers to help can be a positive experience for everyone involved.”

# Parent-to-Parent Advice

**Take a Step Back:** This suggestion has never been easy!! Remind yourself that stepping back doesn't mean stepping out of the picture entirely. It can mean having the patience to listen/watch, wait and encourage your student to handle issues on their own first. Calling or emailing someone on campus to check on your student's progress may not go well in building trust. And, possibly run afoul of the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Students would be mortified to learn that their parent had called a faculty or staff member to ask about grades or advising or participation in activities, etc. Instead, coach your student to advocate for themselves.

**Know when to Step In:** Campus has policies and practices that help create a safe learning environment for students. These are often not popular, and we need parents to help us give students a consistent message. For example, policies that prohibit drinking or smoking on campus; or high impact practices like engaging in community service and student leadership opportunities; or seeking help through the student health center when faced with stressful situations.

**Stay Flexible:** Just because your student may have asked you to not interfere or step back, doesn't mean they will never need you. Always be prepared to step in when they need your advice or assistance. Even on those clear expectations that may have been set mutually. Adjusting expectations and remaining flexible is really the only way to be successful.

# Signs of Stress

How many of us, parents, can think back to our younger years - ate an abundance of crappy food, drank too much, didn't make exercise a priority, and was sleep-deprived most of the academic year? But this summer, with added concerns of COVID, we wish that our students would not make the same mistakes.

The BIG 3 for college health 2020:

- **Why is Sleep so Crucial?**

Sleep is the first self-care activity that suffers. Often, insufficient sleep experienced by college students has been linked to a myriad of health issues including weight gain and stress. Additionally, chronic sleep deprivation is associated with lower college GPA and that students who experienced sleep deprivation from their freshman to senior years had a lower chance of graduation than students who were not sleep deprived (study published in the *Journal of Preventive Medicine*). Remind your students to include time for adequate sleep when they chart their planners.

# Signs of Stress

- **Can Nutrition Affect Future Health?**

College students today have a decent understanding of what they *should* be eating and drinking, yet still make most of their nutrition choices based on convenience, taste and price, not on the health implications. Remind your students to make healthy choices even when they are on-the-go!

- **Yes! Exercise is Medicine**

Along with healthy sleep hygiene and good nutrition, exercise habits can also deteriorate during the college years. Getting regular exercise will be even more important for college students this year, as both a stress-relieving activity and as an immunity booster. Getting outside to exercise this fall, in the sunlight and fresh air, also means less time spent indoors around others and increased levels of Vitamin D, known to be critical for immune function. Cal Maritime is proud to support your student's exercise regimen by simply placing hundreds of steps between their residence halls and core campus!! Even so, remind your students to make room for exercise or athletics in their schedule.



# Transition

**You Did It!!!** Each parent and family member should feel a sense of accomplishment for a job well done – as a parent, supporter, mentor, role model, caregiver, provider, and all the other roles in which you may have served for your child.

But instead, you're left with a feeling of grief or loneliness. It's common that many parents and family members experience a sense of loss, loneliness, worry, and sadness when children leave for college.

And yet, some people experience a sense of relief! Don't be shy, I know you are out there. And you, look forward to this new phase of life full of opportunities for more personal freedom, leisure time, and deepening of relationships with a partner, friends, or other family. That's great!

# Transition

**If you feel an overwhelming sense of urgency to keep parenting and catch yourself giving into –**

- Frequently calling and/or texting
- delivering meals
- scheduling appointments
- focusing your anxiety on your kid
- wondering about your kid's sleeping and hygiene habits

**It may be time to unpack some of the sentiments as you transition from your 24/7 support role.**



# Transition

First, you will have to reconnect with yourself. Here are some questions that can help you make that connection and be prepared to find answering these questions difficult:

- What would bring me a greater sense of meaning or joy?
- If I were to invest the same level of energy into taking care of myself as I did with my child, what would I do?
- How can I prioritize the things I want to do to support myself emotionally? Physically? Spiritually?
- With whom do I want to spend time?

# Transition

**So, how else can you do to prepare yourself for this new normal. Look and you shall find enjoyment in things other than parenthood:**

- 1. Structure your days** - Just as you may be advising you college student to do, schedule out your day, including scheduling in time for yourself. Make the day purposeful.
- 2. Go Solo** - join a new class, design a fitness plan, or plan a vacation. This may be the best time to commit to new hobbies!
- 3. Connect with others** – remember the ‘new parent group’ you joined many years ago, find or start a new group. Go on a date. Or plan a ‘nite-out’ with buddies.

# Transition

**4. Slow and steady** – no need to become a new person overnight. Take it slow.

Here's how:

- Rest - the first thing you should do is nothing at all
- Seek out support – one common mistake is to attempt doing it alone. Instead of trying to stay 'strong' on your own, find support from family and friends. Embrace your emotions and share them with others who have gone through the same experience.
- Stay positive!!

**Finally, I saved the most important tip for last, so it stays with you. Set a schedule for communication - frequency and method.**

- Commitment to being flexible is key. Do not fear that your 'little bird' has flown away permanently. Or off the face of the planet. Agree on a mutually reasonable frequency of texts and calls but remain flexible!

Recommended reading: Amy Morin, LCSW, psychotherapist, and the author of the bestselling [13 Things Mentally Strong People Don't Do](#). "***Not only will they experience less contact and interaction with their children, they may also experience an identity crisis of sorts.***"

# Due to COVID

How Parents can help:

- **Show empathy.** We are all experiencing very real losses and young people may not be as equipped with handling them as well. We must empathize with them.
- **Create structure.** It has been well established that a daily schedule can give everyone a needed sense of control. And as we have heard before - "Action is the antidote for anxiety and depression". Help your student create a calendar and stick to it as much as possible.
- **Limit screen time.** While we find ways to fill our days, many are spending more on social media and video games. Both can deepen loneliness. Instead, interactive zoom calls with friends and activities with family at home are a much better.

# FAQs

- How often will the campus reach out to parents about their student's progress?

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) restrictions limit that Campus' ability to share student information with parents/family. Please communicate with your student regularly on their progress. We will not be reaching out to parents. Your student may sign a FERPA waiver. Your student can find this form online.

- How will we get COVID updates?

Campus is continually updating the [COVID webpage](#) and parents should visit it regularly.

## Note from Parent:

*“Much of the rhetoric that I am used to hearing from schools is not to interfere because the kids need to be responsible and schools really don't want to hear from the parent or have the parent emailing or calling the college to ask questions. It would be good to understand if, because of the unique nature of the Maritime program, there are places where you hope parents will step in to help if needed because most schools send the message for us to stay out of it.”*

Remember FERPA from the previous slide. However, we want you to partner with us in our messaging to students on critical issues.

# Contd:

## Here are some tips:

- Students approach their independence in different ways, impart your best advice without preaching. Start a candid conversation – not a lecture –
  - Alcohol and drug use: consider what your student is likely to encounter and be clear about how they might best behave in those situations; handle safety issues; and transportation. You might ask: What do you plan to do if you're at a party and realize your friends are drinking too much, or you've reached the point where you've had enough?
  - It's also vital to make sure students understand what it means to have a healthy relationship and the concept of consent. Talking through some bystander intervention skills. Ask them how can they make sure they have consent? Or that one has to give consent? Not only should both parties make sure they have explicit permission, but ideally, before any encounter, they should wait until they are sober, thereby lowering the risk of any misunderstanding
- Practice active listening and be supportive without opening an escape hatch. Constantly talking and texting with your student to problem-solve may only make matters worse. On the other hand, active listening can lead to recognizing signs of stress that may well require action.



# Questions



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Thank you for reviewing the Presentation



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