HOW TO SUPPORT YOUR CHILD: A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES
University of Pennsylvania

215-989-7021
(Office hours: Monday through Friday, 9 AM to 5 PM)
3624 MARKET STREET, FIRST FLOOR WEST
Philadelphia, PA 19104

www.vpul.upenn.edu/caps

Understanding the Transition to College

The transition to college is a time of excitement for families. Your child is experiencing newfound autonomy. College offers intellectual stimulation, a wealth of choices, and countless ways to explore new relationships and experiences. Most families adjust fairly well, but for some families, the transition also involves feelings of ambivalence or concern.

What You Can Do to Support Your Child

Your child may be testing new independence, but he/she needs to know that you are available to talk about routine events and difficult issues.

Talk about and establish expectations.

Determine jointly when and how best to stay in touch (balancing email, texting, calls, letters) and address ongoing issues such as money or academics. A family communications plan can help you maintain meaningful interaction during a challenging time.

Discuss Experiences & Allow Space.

Conflicts are a part of the parent-child relationship. Prioritize what is really important and allow yourself to let go of some issues. Promote healthy conflicts, discussions, decision-making, coping, and resilience.

The University of Pennsylvania has a wide variety of academic and wellness support systems available for all students to utilize. Remind your child that seeking help is a sign of strength.

Pick Your Battles.

Endorse Your Child’s Use of UPHS Resources.

How to Talk to Your Child If You Think There Is a Problem

Tell your child why you are concerned.

Focus on your child and validate their feelings.

Establish a mutual understanding of the situation. When your child feels understood, they’re more receptive to advice and ideas.

Don’t judge, even if your child asks your opinion. Negative can push your child away and close off communication.

Promote healthy values, discussions, decision-making, coping, and resilience.

Your child has a history of mental health treatment, is taking medication prescribed by a psychiatrists, or if you think that he/she may benefit from counseling, CAPS can help your child establish a relationship with a community provider.

Parents and students must agree that something is seriously wrong or encountered situations where outside help is essential. Examples include:

- Disengaging from family and activities
- Spending more money without explanation
- Appearing/reporting feeling depressed, agitated, anxious, etc.
- Trouble coping with academic challenges or failure

Penn Professionals are here to help your family in any of these situations. Please encourage them to seek out these resources:

- College House Dean, RA, or GA
- CAPS or Student Health Service counselor
- Academic Advisor/cultural resource center staff
- University Chaplain or other religious figure

CAPS welcomes conversations with parents. However, due to state and federal law regarding confidentiality, as well as professional ethics, clinicians are able to talk specifically about your child unless your child provides consent to completing a CAPS Release of Information Form. If your child has a history of mental health treatment, is taking medication prescribed by a psychiatrist, or if you think that he/she may benefit from counseling, CAPS clinicians can help your child establish a relationship with a community provider.

Penn RESOURCES

CAPS (including nights/weekends) (215-989-7022)
Office of the Chaplain
215-989-8456

Help Line
215-989-HELP (4357)

Dial Line
(Reach A Person, 999 – LAMS)
215-573-2220 (2727)

Special Services
215-989-6600

Student Health Service
215-746-3555

Office of the Vice President for University Life
215-989-6061

Student Interventions Services
215-989-6061

Weingarten Learning Resources Center
215-573-9235

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