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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:

- ▲ Much panic, fear and cramming as finals and paper deadlines approach
- ▲ High temper as stress mounts
- ▲ The realization that some friends may not be returning next semester
- ▲ Increased pressure to participate in sexual activity because of the approach of vacation and extended separation
- ▲ Financial strain due to holiday gifts and travel costs
- ▲ Religious conflicts as he gets ready to return home after a semester of gaining new perspectives
- ▲ Excitement/anxiety about returning home
- ▲ Increased use of alcohol and drugs

It's the "Finals" Showdown Quick Stress-Busting Tips You Can Offer

There's nothing like finals to make students panic and stress. Unfortunately, the more anxious students are about finals, the harder it is for them to do well. Here are some quick and easy "stress-busting" solutions you can offer to your student as he prepares to prove all that he's learned this semester:

- Head to the campus recreation center to sweat or swim that stress away. Go running, join in on a yoga class or play some impromptu hoops. Balance your mind, body and spirit and you'll be better prepared.
- Snack on healthier choices, instead of fatty fixes. Yogurt, a piece of fruit or a granola bar are all quick and easy to grab while you are studying.
- Have a 5-minute dance party in your room—by yourself or with a few friends. There is nothing like moving your body and feeling good doing it!



- Treat yourself to a pedicure or a new haircut, trade massages with a friend or buy a special skin care product to calm yourself the night before one of your big tests.
- Take some time out to get some holiday shopping done. The change of scenery will feel good and so will finding gifts for the ones you love.
- Take advantage of free resources in the community such as an ice rink or a live band at a local coffee shop for some de-stressing fun. This is a great way to get recharged and ready to ace exams.
- Get enough sleep! Students often skimp on sleep, which is the one area that you shouldn't skimp on. Making sure you are well rested will ensure that you can think with your best self.

Encouraging your student to keep his anxiety level down will help him keep things in perspective too. Finals aren't the end-all, be-all. Although it can be tough to consider, there are many other important aspects of college and life. Remind your student that taking good care of himself during this time is what's most important, so he can put his best foot forward and feel good about his performance.



What Will My Student Choose to Do? Making Career Choices

For many college students, the pressure to determine a future career weighs heavily on their minds. And this economy sure isn't helping. Even though we know that the majority of people change careers several times throughout their lifetime, students still experience substantial stress as they try to figure out what they want to do with the "rest" of their lives.

Luckily, internships and co-op opportunities allow students to "try out" a career through hands-on experience. Job shadowing through the alumni or career office can be a great way to gain practical knowledge, too. Encourage your student to visit the career center on campus now—they offer plenty of opportunities that your student may never have considered!

Although nothing beats real-life experience, online tools are also available to help students examine their career possibilities. One website, TheCareerProject.org, is a free resource that disseminates practical career advice—directly from the people who work in the careers shared. It includes profiles, detailed interviews, statistics and an hour-by-hour account of a typical workday.

The campus career center site can also provide tools for students to use—and for parents/families to peruse. As you and your student are using these resources, consider asking questions such as "What types of jobs can I/my student pursue with a major in _____?" and "What are some ways I/my student can better prepare for work within the _____ field?"

How to Help Your Student Explore Career Options

- ▲ Support your student as she chooses to take a variety of classes. This is what college is all about. You never know what might spark a student's interest and lead to a career choice in the future.
- ▲ Talk, listen and suggest options. Many students go through several years of college before deciding what they want to do. This is normal. Encourage your student to take advantage of internships and other practicum opportunities to try out potential career areas. The more exposure your student has to different arenas, the better.
- ▲ Keep the panicking to a minimum. This is an important developmental step in your student's life. Remind him to take advantage of campus resources like career fairs, the career center and more. You might even consider visiting the career center's website yourself to get tips and explore resources.
- ▲ Share your wisdom. Many students don't consider the values and lifestyle choices associated with making a career decision. What have you learned along the way? What might you have done the same or differently? Share openly but just remember that your student's values might be different than your own at this point in his life.

Care Package Ideas for Finals

Your student will likely be doing a great deal of studying this month! Consider sending a thoughtful care package to let her know you are sending love and good luck vibes her way. You could include:

- ◆ Hot cocoa or tea and a festive mug
- ◆ A gift card to download some new inspirational songs
- ◆ Candy
- ◆ Homemade treats
- ◆ Vitamin C drops
- ◆ A good luck note
- ◆ A recorded MP3 audio clip or DVD video offering fun tips and advice from the folks at home
- ◆ A comfy pillow, slippers or sweatshirt for late-night studying



Beloit Mindset List for Class of 2014

Today's traditional-aged new students were born in 1992. And, as they do every year, Ron Nief, the director of public affairs at Beloit College (WI) and Tom McBride, a professor of the humanities and English at Beloit have created their Mindset List for the Class of 2014.

According to the website (www.beloit.edu/mindset/) the Beloit College Mindset List was "initially a witty way of saying 'watch your references,' and has turned into a globally reported and utilized guide to the intelligent but unprepared adolescent consciousness." The List is requested by thousands of readers, reprinted in hundreds of print and electronic publications, and used for a wide variety of purposes. The name is now licensed to a higher education group in New Zealand that produces its own list each year.

Here is a sampling of the 75 entries for the Class of 2014...

- The Post Office has always been going broke.
- Few in the class know how to write in cursive.
- Email is just too slow, and they seldom if ever use snail mail.
- The nation has never approved of the job Congress is doing.
- Second-hand smoke has always been an official carcinogen.
- Once they got through security, going to the airport has always resembled going to the mall.
- Adhesive strips have always been available in varying skin tones.
- The U.S., Canada, and Mexico have always agreed to trade freely.
- Having hundreds of cable channels but nothing to watch has always been routine.
- Beethoven has always been a dog.
- Russians and Americans have always been living together in space.
- Computers have never lacked a CD-ROM disk drive.
- They never twisted the coiled handset wire aimlessly around their wrists while chatting on the phone.
- A quarter of the class has at least one immigrant parent, and the immigration debate is not a big priority...unless it involves "real" aliens from another planet.
- "Caramel macchiato" and "venti half-caf vanilla latte" have always been street corner lingo.



Read the whole fascinating list at www.beloit.edu/mindset/.

Preparing to Have Your Student Home for the Holidays

Part of you may be thrilled to have your student around for the holidays. Yet, it's okay if there's another part of you that is apprehensive. Reuniting with your student during the holiday break is your first chance to spend extensive time together since the summer. And it can be an adjustment!

To help you all manage the transition positively, keep a few things in mind:

Don't Overplan Your Student. You may want to go shopping, visit relatives, bake, golf and go to the movies with your stu-

dent. Nothing wrong with that! Just be sure to leave some wiggle time for him to spend with friends and to recoup from the semester, too.

Make Commitments Known Ahead of Time. Let your student in on what's been planned so far so that she knows what to expect. That way she'll feel a part of the family while still feeling like her time is her own, too.

Find Out Schedules. Some students stay up until 3 am and sleep until noon. Consider asking your student about her sleeping schedule so you're not expecting her at 9 am every morning!

Talk About "House Rules." Will your student still have a curfew? Can he have friends stay overnight? Talk now so you can come up with the rules together and avoid arguments.

Be Prepared for Change. Some of your student's views may have altered because of things she learned in a class or actions she experienced through a campus organization. It's all part of the college experience as she comes into her own. Change can be good—and, oh, the interesting conversations you're bound to have! Be open to it.



Meningitis: The Facts

What is meningitis?

Meningococcal meningitis is an infection that causes inflammation of the membranes covering the brain and spinal cord. The inflammation is usually caused by bacteria or viruses.

What is the difference between bacterial and viral meningitis?

Many of the bacteria or viruses that can cause meningitis are fairly common and are more often associated with other everyday illnesses. Sometimes, however, they spread to the meninges from an infection in another part of the body. The infection can start anywhere, including in the skin, gastrointestinal tract or urinary system, but the most common source is the respiratory tract. From there the microorganisms can enter the bloodstream, travel through the body and enter the central nervous system.



Viral Meningitis is relatively common and far less serious than bacterial meningitis. It often remains undiagnosed because its symptoms are similar to those of the common flu. The frequency of viral meningitis increases slightly in the summer and fall months because people are more often exposed to common viral agents during those seasons.

Bacterial Meningitis occurs in people of all ages but is more common in the very young (infants and young children) and the elderly

(people above age 60). Teenagers and college students are also slightly more at risk for the disease because of time spent in close contact with many of their peers. Bacterial meningitis is less common than viral meningitis but is usually much more serious and can be life-threatening, if not treated promptly.

Meningitis Symptoms

- Rash, pinpoint red spots
- Purple, bruise-like areas
- High fever
- Severe headache
- Severe malaise
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Stiff neck
- Sensitivity to light
- Mental status changes

If your student notices potential symptoms of meningitis, if symptoms worsen or do not improve with treatment, or if he thinks he has been exposed to someone with meningitis, he should go to the campus health center immediately. Meningitis can quickly become life-threatening and it's not worth taking any chances.

How is meningitis treated?

Early diagnosis and treatment is extremely important to prevent serious illness or death.

Antibiotics are prescribed and given by an IV (intravenous line). Other medicines may be used to treat the complications due to increased spinal fluid pressure.

Some information was adapted from the National Institutes of Health and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Great Gift Ideas for College Students

Not sure what to get for your college student this year? Here are a few suggestions:

- Magazine/newspaper subscriptions
- iPod
- Books to read for fun
- Galoshes
- Flash drive
- Goofy retro decorations for his room
- Board games
- Gift cards
- Tickets to a show or sporting event (with an extra one to take a friend)
- Portable DVD player
- Movies
- A digital picture frame
- \$\$ toward Spring Break travels
- Comfortable desk chair
- High thread count sheets or flannel sheets
- Comfy or fun slippers
- Active wear like Under Armour
- A universal remote control
- Cool PJs
- Fun flip-flops
- A good dictionary or thesaurus
- A gift certificate to the school book store for spring semester books and supplies
- Warm gloves
- A laptop
- A sturdy travel coffee mug or water bottle
- A bicycle (and a lock)
- A subscription to Netflix or a similar service
- A gift certificate for digital music downloads

