



a newsletter for parents & families



GEORGIA'S PUBLIC LIBERAL ARTS UNIVERSITY

University Housing

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## Finding Purpose

For students, finding their purpose is one of the key elements in living an authentic, fulfilled life. According to the charitable organization Discovering My Purpose (DMP), “When youth identify a purpose, they make better life choices and avoid many of life’s

challenges such as depression, crushing anxiety, substance abuse and suicide.”

Purpose is grounding, DMP says, with studies showing that it greatly impacts individual’s well-being.

So, to work toward discovering that purpose, students can start by asking themselves or discussing questions with you such as...

- What contributions do I bring to the world?
- What do I want to accomplish in life?
- What is important to me?

“Find out who you are and do it on purpose.”

– Dolly Parton

- What is something I’m currently doing that feels inauthentic – like it’s “not me”?

Broaching this topic can help students explore what it is that they believe, do and bring to the world. They may find they are on their way to discovering their purpose or they may find that they need to do some additional work. Individuals and organizations on campus can help them explore their purpose, in work and in life.

**Source:** Discovering My Purpose, [discoveringmypurpose.org](http://discoveringmypurpose.org)

### The Benefits of Purpose

According to Discovering My Purpose, the benefits include...

**Physical Benefits** - less heart disease, less substance abuse and lower incidence of Alzheimer’s. Purposeful people also live longer!

**Mental Benefits** - increased resilience and persistence. This is a magical combination because resilience and persistence are the two key components that lead to success.

**Emotional Benefits** - less depression and anxiety. People who live lives of purpose are likely to be happier.”





# Academic Success Strategies

Here are some simple academic success strategies to share with your student...

**Connect with Faculty.** Sit in front (if in person), come prepared, get to know professors, use office hours and be engaged in class discussion.

**Use Academic Support Services.** Try the learning center, tutoring, writing center, counseling center, learning disabilities support and more.

**Manage Time Wisely.** Make good use of waiting times. Schedule study time and try not to leave academics for late at night.



**Find Study Spots.** Discover spots where you feel comfortable studying and can get into the learning groove.

**Break Tasks into Chunks.** Tackle

big academic tasks, piece by piece, rather than all at once.

**Get Organized.** Organize online files, supplies and papers. And avoid clutter.

**Treat Your Body Well.** Eat healthfully, move around, drink water and sleep.

**Say “No.”** Recognize when you’re in over your head!

“No matter how good teaching may be, each student must take the responsibility for his [her/their] own education.”

– John Carolus, S.J.

## 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...

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





# What a Panic Attack May Look Like

When intense fear strikes without warning, someone may be experiencing a panic attack. Amid enhanced pressures and the uncertainty of a pandemic, panic attacks may show up more frequently among students.

Here are some panic attack facts for you and your student to be aware of...

- They seem to come out of nowhere
- They start abruptly and often last about 10 minutes
- They impact about 1 in 75 adults
- They usually first occur between the ages of 20 and 30

## Panic Attack Symptoms

They may include...

- › Feelings of unreality
- › A fear of dying
- › Dizziness
- › Abdominal distress
- › Heart palpitations
- › Chest pain
- › Shortness of breath

- They can be stimulated by certain triggers

- Some people who have a panic attack will not have another one
- Other people may develop Panic Disorder (which causes frequent attacks)

If students notice a pattern of frequent attacks, it's good to seek professional counseling assistance as soon as possible to learn about how to handle triggers through breathing, relaxation techniques and other highly successful methods.

**Sources:** [www.mayoclinic.com/health/panic-attacks/DS00338](http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/panic-attacks/DS00338); [www.anxietypanic.com/](http://www.anxietypanic.com/); [www.apa.org/topics/anxietyqanda.html](http://www.apa.org/topics/anxietyqanda.html); [www.panicattacks.com.au/anxdis/sa.html](http://www.panicattacks.com.au/anxdis/sa.html); [www.nimh.gov](http://www.nimh.gov)

## Knowing When to Disengage

When emotions run high and opinions run deep, as they often do during political debates, it's important to assess situations. Are we responding as our best selves? Is someone coming after us? Or are we experiencing a surprise attack?

In these types of scenarios, it's often better to disengage before things go wrong...

- › If someone is acting threatening
- › If you're angry and could lash out
- › If you feel in physical danger
- › If you don't have time for a proper discussion because you're rushing to another commitment
- › If someone is verbally attacking you and/or your beliefs
- › If you're concerned that you might say something you'll regret
- › If you're not able to respond as your best self

Please understand, this isn't about running away or being "chicken" about engaging in political discussions. It's more about being able to read the temperature of a situation so you don't get into verbal or physical trouble.

Discussing this with your student can be eye-opening. Some questions to ponder together may include...

- › Where do you fall when it comes to engagement or disengagement?
- › Why is that?
- › Where would you like to be?
- › What can you do to get there?





# Engaging in Honorable Activism

*“To be a good citizen, it’s important to be able to put yourself in other people’s shoes and see the big picture. If everything you see is rooted in your own identity, that becomes difficult or impossible.”*

– Eli Pariser

For students, getting involved in causes they feel strongly about is a true sign of an engaged, caring citizen. It means they don’t want to sit back and let the world go by, complaining about things but not acting. However, they also don’t want to go over the line and become pushy, agitated or threatening when it comes to championing their cause.

So, what defines *Honorable Activism* then? This is something good for them to think about, especially during this election season, so they can work to be the best version of their activist self.



Characteristics may include...

- Not pushing, manipulating, guiltling or shaming anyone into compliance
- Listening to other points of view and being open to adjusting theirs, if it makes sense
- Being willing to explain their “why” to others in open, caring ways

What else might they add to this list? They can consider activist examples and role models who they feel “do things right,” as well as their own values and actions.

By pledging to engage in Honorable Activism, chances are that students will feel like the best version of themselves and that others will hear their message even more effectively!

## Being a Good Citizen

Ask questions

Give time

Offer assistance

Open your mind

Dialogue about issues

Care about community

Involve yourself

Talk with others

Inform the public

Zestfully participate

Engage helpfully

Nurture conversations

## Make Time to Vote!

To offer safer voting options amid the pandemic, many states are expanding absentee and early voting. And it’s important that college students get involved in the process!

For a state-by-state guide that can help answer specific questions that you or your student may have, head to the website: [www.campusvoteproject.org](http://www.campusvoteproject.org).

Encourage students to engage quickly, as voter registration and postmark deadlines for absentee ballots are fast approaching. Political engagement is a key arena for student involvement, as they vote to make their voices heard, express their views and make a difference in society. It’s how they can help form the world they want to live in.

