



a newsletter for parents & families



GEORGIA'S PUBLIC LIBERAL ARTS UNIVERSITY

University Housing

August 2020

## The Benefits of Inclusive Language

There's power in language. Being inclusive can help students truly get to know people. Using language that excludes others, however, is a sure way to alienate people.

So, here are a few things for students to keep in mind as they embrace the diversity of people they'll be interacting with this year...

- Don't assume that everyone comes from two parent households. And not everyone has both a mother and a father.
- Don't comment on people's bodies directly or indirectly. Someone may be struggling with body image issues.
- Ask about preferred pronouns rather than assuming anything about someone's gender identity.
- Don't assume that all romantic relationships are heterosexual. Figure out comfortable language that includes all relationships.
- Don't assume that an averted gaze is a sign of disinterest or disrespect. Direct eye contact is



- considered disrespectful by some cultures.
- Don't rely on "people-harming humor" to get an easy laugh.
- Don't just use student culture references that apply to 18-to-22-year-olds, as that can exclude adult student learners.
- Make sure that when you talk about siblings you also include only children.
- Use examples from a variety of religions and don't assume that everyone believes in a higher being.
- Use names from different cultural backgrounds when providing examples.
- Ask how to pronounce people's names if you're unsure.

Using inclusive language isn't about "political correctness" or pursuing some specific agenda. Instead, it's simply about including others – often who have different life experiences than your student – and getting to know them in the process.

Students will find other ways to be inclusive, too, as they get to know people as the unique individuals that they are. This starter list can raise awareness so inclusivity can become their mode of operation.



# A Focus on Values Can Lead to More Effective Decision-Making

When students attend college, their values will be tested. Decisions about a variety of things, from alcohol to intimacy to how to spend their time, will come up daily, as will decisions about handling pandemic-related concerns.

## Starting the Conversation

That's why talking about values now – and throughout the term – can help them feel more comfortable with their decision-making. To get the conversation going, you can ask them to consider their values regarding the following topics...

- Studying



- Academic integrity
- How to treat others
- Ways to spend time
- Family connections

- Financial matters
- Spirituality
- Attending religious services
- Health and wellness
- Intimacy and relationships
- Friendships
- Alcohol and other drugs
- Contributing to society

You may have other items to add to the list, too. Students won't always share their values about everything with you, yet if you can help them start thinking about what they might face at college through a values filter, they'll be better prepared to make healthy, solid decisions.

## Seasonal Student Issues

It's probably hitting students now... they're starting college in a few weeks. With that revelation will likely come some excitement – and some anxiety – regarding topics such as...

- Will people like me?
- What will the pandemic mean for my college experience?
- Will I find friends as good as the ones I have now?
- How can I reinvent myself?
- Will I be able to handle college academics?
- How will I find my way around campus?
- Who will I turn to if I'm struggling?
- Will I still be as connected to my family/friends?
- What if I don't get along with my roommate?
- Will people make fun of how I talk/dress/act?
- How will I get involved?
- Will I find a place to belong here?





# Memory Tricks for Remembering Names

It can be tough to remember names when you're meeting multiple people all at once. Add in face masks this year and the challenge compounds!

Here are some tricks to try as you and your student meet new people...

**Recall Unique Features.** Focus on something interesting about the person, from hair color to a unique interest they may have.

**Try Repetition.** During your first meeting, repeat the person's name out loud ("It's really nice to meet you, Fred!"). Also, say the name to yourself several times during that first encounter and when you say goodbye, too.

**Use Mnemonic Devices.** Try turning the person's name into a mental image. For instance, "Fred" sounds like "friend," so "Friend Fred" will remind you of him from now on.

**Associate People & Words.** While repeating the name, try to

associate the mnemonic with the person. Since "Fred" sounds like "friend," you can imagine him welcoming people and being surrounded by friends.

**Say a Purposeful Goodbye.** At the end of your initial encounter, repeat the person's name ("See you later, Fred!").

**Write it Down.** And if your memory needs a nudge, write that person's name in your phone or on a piece of paper. Sometimes just that action of repeating it in a different form can help the name stick in your mind a bit more easily.

Practice the name game and soon you'll be a pro, able to remember the friends, staff and professors that your student is talking about, as well as the people you meet on campus, too!

## 7 Ways to Strike Up a Campus Conversation

As students prepare to dig in and meet new people on campus, here are some simple ways they can strike up conversations with strangers...

1. Ask about the sports team or event listed on a person's T-shirt
2. Compliment someone on an insightful comment they made in class
3. Inquire what someone is studying/their major
4. Ask for directions
5. Show an interest in someone else's perspective
6. Follow up on something you heard them say in a group meeting
7. Simply say hello as you pass each other on the sidewalk – sometimes, that's all it takes!

"There is no social change fairy. There is only the change made by the hands of individuals."

~ Winona LaDuke

## The Racial Equity Habit-Building Challenge

In this time and space, many of us are examining our habits, beliefs and even our biases as societal events bring certain issues to light.

Social justice educator and writer Debby Irving offers a "21-Day Racial Equity Habit-Building Challenge," filled with suggestions for readings,

podcasts, videos, observations, and ways to form and deepen community connections.

Issues of power, privilege, oppression, supremacy, leadership and equity are the main focus. The challenge can be done individually, with friends and family, or with an organization.

To check out this challenge and all the available resources provided, go to the site at : <https://debbyirving.com/21-day-challenge/>.



# The Power of Naps

Ah, sleep! There's nothing like a comfy bed, beckoning you to nap. And that may not be such a bad thing, according to experts.

In a society where we often tend to be sleep-deprived, short naps are becoming one way to help improve mood, alertness and performance while reducing mistakes and accidents. They give us an opportunity to relax, rejuvenate and refocus.

So, as students establish their sleep patterns this fall, jumping in bed for a brief nap now and then could be a useful tool.

## Make the Most of That Nap

To get the most out of napping, the National Sleep Foundation offers the following tips...



**The Right Length.** Naps should be the right length, about 20-30 minutes, to maximize short-term alertness. This way, nappers won't get groggy or have a difficult time going to sleep that night.

**The Right Environment.** Naps should be in the right environment,

where the temperature is comfortable, noise is limited and little light is filtering in.

**The Right Time.** Naps shouldn't be too late in the day, when they could affect nappers' nighttime sleep, or too early in the day, when their bodies might not be ready for more sleep.

Getting good, consistent sleep is important for all students, as being overtired can cause moodiness, a lack of energy, stress, anger and a higher susceptibility to illness. Plus, it can result in difficulty retaining new information and a lack of concentration, two very essential skills that will help your student succeed academically. If tossing a nap into the mix sometimes helps, then it could be time to hit the pillow.

## Missing Those Furry Friends

For some college students, one of the hardest things about going away to college is missing their pets. Our furry companions provide us with love, devotion, humor and friendship. It can be difficult for students to fill that void while they're away from home.

### What You Can Do

Recognizing the struggle students may be facing means that you are validating their feelings. Just allowing them to talk about their emotions without feeling like they are dumb or strange will help them work through this aspect of being homesick.

You can also help keep students connected with their pets. Here are a few ideas to consider...

- Send a postcard or an e-card each week from the animal to your student.
- If you are close enough, surprise your student with a visit. You may not be able to bring the animal into the residence hall, but outside on campus grounds or a local park could work.
- Text new pictures of the animal each week or post them on Instagram so your student can see the latest and greatest.
- If the pet will cooperate, get a print of his paw using washable paint. Put his name and the date on it. Then, frame it and send it to your student as a keepsake.

