



a newsletter for parents & families



GEORGIA'S PUBLIC LIBERAL ARTS UNIVERSITY

University Housing

March 2017

Dealing with Midterm Anxiety

As midterm exams creep ever closer, you may notice that your student's anxiety levels are rising. There is understandable pressure to do well, as midterms often constitute a significant portion of students' grades. And some students may be feeling behind and under-prepared as they ready for their exams.

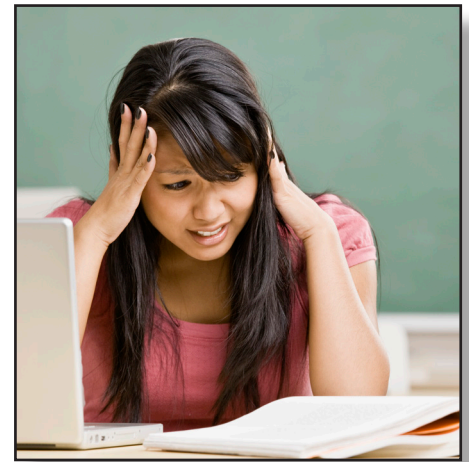
You can help alleviate some of this anxiety by...

Encouraging Academic Help-Seeking. Your student could benefit from academic assistance, which is available from a variety of sources, including the learning center, instructors and more.

Encourage him to seek these out to get an academic assist.

Encouraging Personal Help-Seeking. Students sometimes tie themselves into knots over midterms. They can certainly benefit from talking through their anxieties with a counselor or advisor so they're in a better mental and emotional state to face their exams. Remind your student that these good folks are ready and willing to help!

Not Contributing to the Pressure. Chances are that your student is already putting enough pressure on herself to do well during midterms. So, if you're able to



keep big family issues and "you'd better do well" pressures off her plate for the time being, that can be very helpful.

Listening with Care. Your student may need to talk through his anxieties in order to put them in their place. Having you as a sounding board, to listen without judgment and reflect things back, can be invaluable!

Letting It Be Known That You Believe in Your Student. And then there's what students often need most of all: the knowledge that those they care about believe in them and their abilities. Encourage, support and verbalize this belief so your student knows that you are in her corner, rooting her on.

Signs That Your Student May be Anxious about Midterms

- ▶ Having a short fuse
- ▶ Weepy
- ▶ Overwhelmed
- ▶ Stressed out
- ▶ Not very talkative
- ▶ Lack of time

If you're concerned that your student may need assistance, please know that there are staff and counselors throughout campus who would be more than happy to help!



Mediation

For many students, living with a roommate in college is the first time they've shared their living space with another person. The compromise, the unknown, dealing with difference... all can be quite a shock to their systems.

Sometimes, conflicts that arise are too difficult for the parties involved to solve themselves.

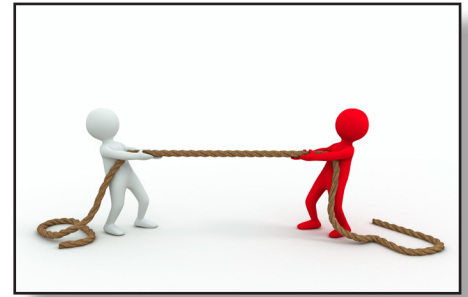
Home is generally one's escape. For those living on a college campus, their residence hall *is* their home away from home. If they are experiencing conflict in that environment, it can become overwhelming. Luckily, there are residence life staff members who are ready to assist – and mediation may be one of the tools to try.

What is Mediation?

Mediation is a flexible, educational process that provides a safe forum for disputing parties to express themselves and resolve differences.

During a mediation, a neutral third party (generally a residence life staffer) facilitates a conversation between roommates. The people involved choose to be there; mediation is a voluntary experience where the disputing parties come to communicate their feelings and negotiate a mutually acceptable resolution.

The person or team serving as the mediating party ensures that each person has equal opportunity to voice perspectives, clarify issues and explore options for resolution.



Mediators do not act as judges and they do not take sides. Their goal is to facilitate, guide and encourage an exchange where the disputants come to their own conclusions. The mediation process is typically confidential and takes place in a neutral location.

So, if your student is going through some difficult times with a roommate and has tried addressing the issues in person without success, she can turn to her residence life staff for assistance. Help is most definitely available!

This Month's Student Issues

Here are a few things your student may be experiencing this March, as we hit the halfway mark of the term:

- Low energy levels and restlessness kick in
- The mid-semester slump and sickness often take hold
- Drug and alcohol use may increase
- Students get anxious about midterms
- Making plans for next year – housing, classes and financial aid – becomes critical
- Hidden conflicts between roommates and friends begin to arise
- Seniors are thinking about graduation
- There's excitement or depression about Spring Break plans/lack of plans
- Pledging begins for Greek organizations
- Changing or deciding on a major needs to happen, particularly for sophomores

A Care Package to Celebrate Spring

It's almost time for spring! March 20th we celebrate the arrival of springtime after a long winter. Why not send your student a fun spring package that might include items such as...

- A packaged seed & soil kit to grow herbs or flowers on the windowsill
- A new book or magazine to read outside
- Trail mix to munch on during a hike with friends
- Those squishy marshmallow Peeps candies
- A Slinky (it looks like a "spring")
- A Frisbee
- A baseball cap for all the sun they'll be facing
- Flower-shaped post-it notes
- A stuffed baby animal like a chick or bunny

Spring has sprung and the possibilities are plentiful!



Some “I Don’t Have Money to Go on Spring Break!” Options

It’s natural to have visions of warm, sunny beaches dancing in our heads as we zip up our parkas and try to keep track of our mittens. Yet, the reality is that many students can’t afford to take a Spring Break trip. That’s why we’ve rounded up some much less expensive options that can still increase your student’s sunny outlook.

Spring Break Fun without the Steep Price Tag

- Swim at the local Y
- Get a chair massage at the farmer’s market
- Try a tube of sunless bronzing lotion
- Play volleyball or badminton
- Go dancing
- Visit a local butterfly or bird sanctuary

Free!

- Offer to walk a friend or neighbor’s dog for some animal love
- Take a nap whenever you like!
- Get permission to read to an elementary school class and experience the wonder and creativity of wee ones
- Sit in a patch of sun
- Get an awesome book from the library and lose yourself in it

Under \$5

- Take an old teacher, friend or family member out for coffee and a chat
- Go snowshoeing at a local park or golf course and then out for hot chocolate afterwards
- Live stream a movie, pop popcorn & invite friends over
- Head to an arcade and play air hockey with wild abandon



- Buy a few postcards and send “Wish You Were Here” notes

Under \$10

- Ice skate with friends
- Host a potluck where no one can spend over \$10 on their dish
- Hit up a matinee of that movie you’ve been wanting to see
- Go to a local planetarium to learn about the night sky
- Meet friends at a restaurant where you all order an appetizer as your meal and share

5 Ways to Kick That Energy Up a Notch

Feeling a bit sluggish and slumped is natural in March, as students emerge from hibernation and the busy past few months. Their energy levels may be low and they may be feeling restless. Here are some simple ways they can kick their energy up a notch for the final haul!

1. **Get Out and Play.** Frisbee golf, intramural volleyball, doubles tennis or cartwheels in the quad – all have an element of play that can be refreshing and revitalizing, as students start moving their bodies more and having fun.
2. **Spend Time with Positive Friends.** We often gather positive energy from positive people in our lives. So, encourage your student to seek out his most positive friends and spend quality time with them.
3. **Take Up a New Interest.** Learning something new and exciting can stimulate positive thought and energy. Urge students to get curious and to try new opportunities on campus. They are plentiful!
4. **Eat Food That Fuels.** Comfort food is an easy reach during the winter months. So, as spring approaches, students can fuel their bodies with nutritious foods that reenergize them, from whole grains to protein to plenty of fruits and vegetables. Don’t forget the water, either.
5. **Reach Out.** When we’re feeling internally focused, sometimes a simple reach-out can do wonders, whether it’s inviting some floor-mates to dinner, having coffee with a classmate or participating in a morning of community service. Encourage your student to reach out and reenergize in the process!



Seeking Out Leadership Opportunities

Some students don't get involved beyond their classwork right away. And that's okay, as everyone moves at their own pace. However, students who participate in the life of their campus somehow, through involvements of all shapes and sizes, tend to feel more connected to their institution. Plus, they often tend to do better academically, too!

It's never too late for students to dip their toes into leadership opportunities. Matter-of-fact, there are plentiful behind-the-scenes options they can try to test the waters.

These may include...

- Learning to run the board for the campus radio station

- Doing graphic design for an emerging club trying to make an impact
- Helping with lights or sound during a variety show, concert or theatrical event
- Assisting with a hall council bake sale
- Being the social media mastermind for an organization trying to connect with students in multiple ways

- Using organizational and computer skills to help a group put together an end-of-the-year report
- Adding analytical skills into the mix as a club is developing their budget for the coming year

Encourage your student to try a leadership opportunity now, before the year is over. As a result, he'll be ready to plunge into meaningful involvements when the new term begins in the fall.

Getting References in Place

If your student had a dream job or internship pop up today, would he know who to put down as references? If not, it's a good idea for him to get those folks lined up now, just in case.

Encourage him to think about...

- Coaches
- Former or current employers
- Work study supervisors
- Advisors
- Instructors
- Residence life staff



Having references at the ready can sometimes make all the difference when great opportunities come up!

If your student isn't sure where to look for involvement opportunities, encourage him/her to talk with a residence life staff member, another student who is involved, a trusted coach or advisor, peer counselors and other connected folks. They're bound to have a wealth of recommendations!

When Students Click into a Clique

As students search for people to hang out with and a sense of belonging, it can be easy for them to get sucked into a clique. This is a group of people who is often exclusionary and the tunnel vision that can accompany clique membership may make it difficult for your student to see other positive people around her.

So, here are a few things to discuss with your student when it comes

to clique control...

- Why this group holds such meaning to her
- Other places she could seek out positive interactions with peers
- If she is afraid to stand up to members of the clique
- What she feels she might be missing because she's spending so much time with this one group

- What types of limits your student feels others in the clique impose on her (e.g. how to act, who to spend time with, etc.)

Students within cliques often don't see that their behaviors may be exclusionary or that they're limiting their other options. Gently discuss this with your student to raise her awareness and, hopefully, get cliques under control.