



a newsletter for parents & families



March 2018

Overtired & Overwhelmed

Most adults 18 and older need between seven and nine hours of sleep, according to The National Sleep Foundation. Good, quality sleep can go a long way in making them sharper, healthier, happier and more in-control individuals. Yet, college students don't always make this a priority – and it impacts them. They get overtired, which can lead to stress and being overwhelmed.

Getting Quality Sleep

The experts suggest a few simple tactics that you can share with your student to help increase quality sleep...

- Get to bed around the same time each night so your body gets used to a regular sleeping schedule.
- Don't make the bed a key study space because then it'll be associated with stressful activity.
- Avoid watching the clock.
- Establish a relaxing routine about a half hour before bed, like taking a shower, reading or listening to music, plus turn off the TV and computer.
- Consider using "white noise" – like a fan – to help fall asleep.
- Try to make the bed as comfortable as possible.



- Finish eating about two hours before bed so your body won't be working on digestion.
- Avoid exercise right before bed, since a dropping body temperature is what the brain associates with sleep.

By trying to get sleeping patterns under control, students will be doing themselves

the ultimate favor. Many students are unaware that their sleep deprivation can cause them serious problems – they may be so used to being consistently sleepy that they don't realize their lack of sleep is unhealthy or abnormal. Encourage them to make sleep – and their well-being – a priority.

Sources: The Centers for Disease Control, www.cdc.gov; www.sleepfoundation.org; www.sleep-deprivation.com

Being Overtired Can Cause...

- Lack of concentration
- Moodiness
- Higher susceptibility to illness
- Lack of energy
- Stress
- Anger
- Motor vehicle and machinery-related accidents
- Difficulty retaining new information

Lack of adequate sleep often causes students' grades to drop – sometimes dramatically. And sleep-deprived all-nighters? They create a sleep debt that can be tough to overcome.

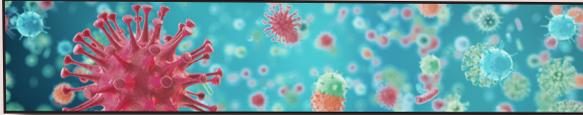


The 2018 Flu: Taking It Seriously

This year's flu is a bad one and we all want students to stay safe and healthy.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, the flu usually comes on suddenly and people often feel some or all of these symptoms...

- Fever or feeling feverish/chills (not everyone with flu will have a fever, however)
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose



Emergency Warning Signs of Flu in Adults

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Flu-like symptoms that improve but then return with fever and worse cough

- Muscle or body aches
- Headaches
- Fatigue
- Some may have vomiting and diarrhea (more common in children than adults)

It's important to get treatment right away so the flu doesn't develop into complications like pneumonia, bronchitis, sinus and ear infections, and more.

Source: CDC.gov

Planning Ahead

There are a number of things that your student needs to be planning for right about now, including...

- Where to live next year
- Registering for classes
- Applying for scholarships
- Studying toward final exams and projects
- Making arrangements for move-out at end of year
- Figuring out how to spend the summer (job, internship, etc.)
- Planning for graduation (for seniors)
- Declaring a major (for sophomores)

Encourage your student to check in with an academic advisor or other campus professional to make sure all the bases are covered!

Seasonal Student Issues

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

- Hidden conflicts between roommates and friends begin to arise
- 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
- Seniors are thinking about graduation
- Pledging begins for Greek organizations
- Making plans for next year – housing, classes and financial aid – becomes critical
- There's excitement or depression about Spring Break plans/lack of plans
- Changing or deciding on a major needs to happen, particularly for sophomores





Listening Skills from Afar

You have been listening to your student for quite a while now. However, when a student goes away to school and your relationship takes place primarily by text, Facetime or phone, it can impact how she talks to you – and how you need to listen in order to be supportive and understanding.

Faraway listening skills take some getting used to, so be sure to give yourself a break as you acclimate to this medium. Here are some tips on listening from afar in the most effective ways possible.

First, there are the basics, which include being encouraging by...

- Trying to convey interest, no matter how simplistic or mundane the topic is. If your student reached out, she wants to connect with you.
- Attempting not to agree or disagree with what is being shared, using neutral words and using varying voice intonations.
- Being patient and trying not to interrupt.



seem very upset” to reassure your student that you understand and support him.

And then summarize the facts that you’ve heard by...

- Asking open-ended questions such as, “Can you tell me more...?”

Then, reflect on what your student is saying by...

- Concentrating on the real feelings behind his words. What is the tone of voice telling you?
- Not assuming to fully understand. You can ask clarifying questions.
- Thinking about what is *not* being said.
- Helping your student evaluate his feelings by reflecting on what he shared.
- Making statements such as “You

- Restating the major ideas expressed, including feelings, to help your student establish an action plan.
- Helping your student sort out the important aspects of the conversation, without diminishing her feelings.
- Making statements such as, “These seem to be the key thoughts or feelings you expressed...”

Being a good listener, no matter the medium, can help your student feel more comfortable reaching out and bridging the distance.

Time for Spring Cleaning

It’s almost springtime! And students can spruce up their spaces with some simple spring cleaning tips...

- Disinfecting items that get a lot of use – and germs – such as phones, doorknobs, handles and more
- Moving furniture to do a thorough sweep and vacuum
- Thinning out their winter clothes as they realize what they haven’t been wearing this season, so they can donate those pieces
- Wading through collected papers so they can shred certain items, file others and recycle the rest
- Washing their blankets and comforters
- Scrubbing out their wastebaskets
- Thoroughly cleaning bathrooms (if they have their own)
- Getting reacquainted with the top of their desk!



Supporting Busy Students

March can be a busy month when students may not be in touch with you as often as you're used to. The reasons are plentiful...

- Midterm exams and papers are fast approaching
- They've made more friends on campus and are spending time with them
- Student organizations they've joined are busy planning end-of-the-term activities
- They are knee-deep in job searching for the summer or after graduation
- Community service involvements have deepened, as folks learn how reliable and competent they are

Try not to take it personally, as being busy and engaged is what helps many students stay – and succeed – in school. Reach out to let your student know that you're there and interested in hearing about his busy life. He'll likely have tales to tell!

But, Are They TOO Busy?

Many students are guilty of holding “I had less sleep than you did” or “I'm SO busy!” contests. This tends to be a particular phenomenon among student leaders. They swap tales of all-nighters, crammed schedules and three-page To Do lists, almost as a badge of honor, to prove that they are in demand and working hard. Yet, this approach really isn't good for them. After all, it's *NOT* a contest!

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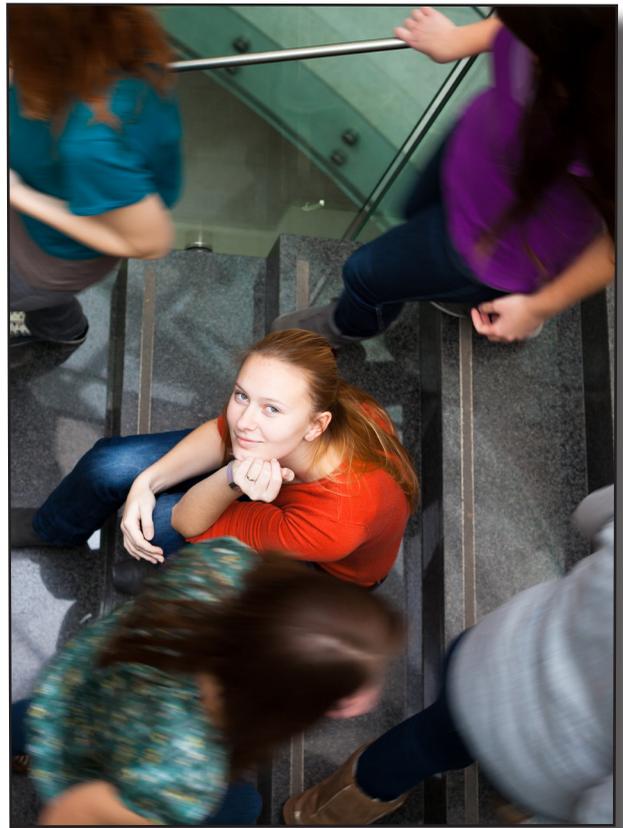
If your student seems caught up in this type of frenzy, there are a few discussion points you can tap into to help him assess what is really going on. For instance...

Reasons. What drives him to do all that he is doing? Interest? Fear of life after college? Competition? An inability to say “no”? By getting deep into the “why” behind his actions, you can help him break it down into a healthier approach.

Enjoyment. What does she enjoy about certain involvements? And does the negative-speak you hear about others (i.e. when she complains about the inefficiency of her student group) indicate that maybe that's not a healthy use of her time and energy?

Feeling Valued. How does he feel valued by others, whether it's you, his siblings, his professors, his advisors or his fellow students? Is he looking for approval or trying to meet perceived expectations?

Reactions. What are her reactions when someone else talks about being so busy? Admiration? Thinking that they're showing off? Empathy? Feeling bad for them and offering to help? Help her examine WHY she might have those reactions.



Working Smart. Is he “working smart” to manage time and tasks? Maybe he needs assistance with time management to juggle the multiple things on his plate.

Life. Does she feel that anything in her life is suffering due to her hectic schedule? Sleep? Grades? Making new friends? Time to exercise? Help her look at her overall life to see what's good and what might be missing.

By addressing this with your busy student before she crashes and burns out, you can help her determine how she wants to spend her time and the healthiest ways to accomplish that. Involvement and experiencing all that college has to offer is wise; acting like you're in a “busy contest” is not. You can help her see the difference.