



a newsletter for parents & families



GEORGIA'S PUBLIC LIBERAL ARTS UNIVERSITY

University Housing

March 2020

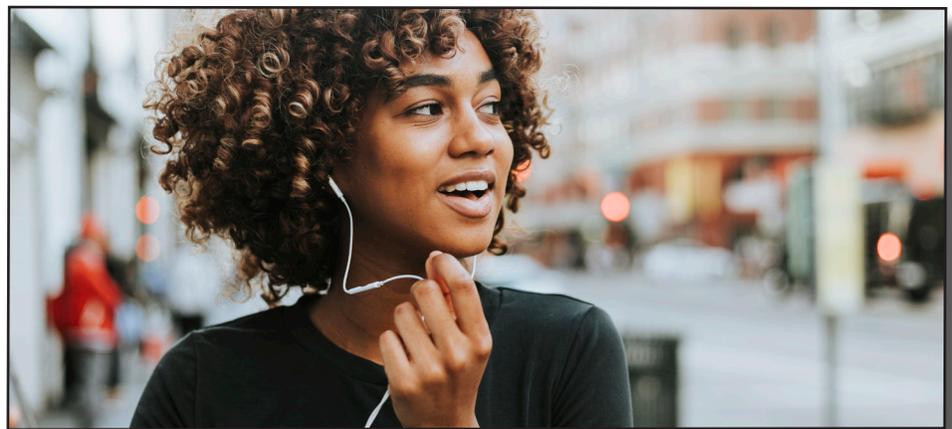
Listening to Your Student from Afar

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 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.

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

- Trying to convey interest, no matter what the topic is. If your student reached out, she wants to connect with you.
- Being patient and trying not to interrupt.
- Attempting not to agree or disagree with what is being shared, using neutral words and varying your voice intonations.
- 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 seem very upset” to reassure your student that you hear him.

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

- 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.

- Acknowledge the value of your student’s feelings.
- Try to keep your own emotions from interfering with your ability to listen openly.
- Express appreciation for your student’s efforts and actions.
- Say things like, “I’m happy you reached out to talk this through.”



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

Ask Around!

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 multiple recommendations!



- Helping with lights or sound during a variety show, concert or theatrical event
- 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
- Assisting with a hall council bake sale
- 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.

Seasonal Student Issues

Here are a few things your student may be experiencing this month...

- 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
- Making plans for next year – housing, classes and financial aid – becomes critical
- Drug and alcohol use may increase
- Students get anxious about midterms
- Seniors are thinking about graduation
- There's excitement or depression about Spring Break plans or a lack of plans
- Pledging begins for Greek organizations
- Changing or deciding on a major needs to happen, particularly for sophomores





5 Ways to Energize for the Final Stretch

Feeling a bit sluggish and slumped is natural in March, as students emerge from hibernation and the past busy 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 thoughts 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 peers 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!

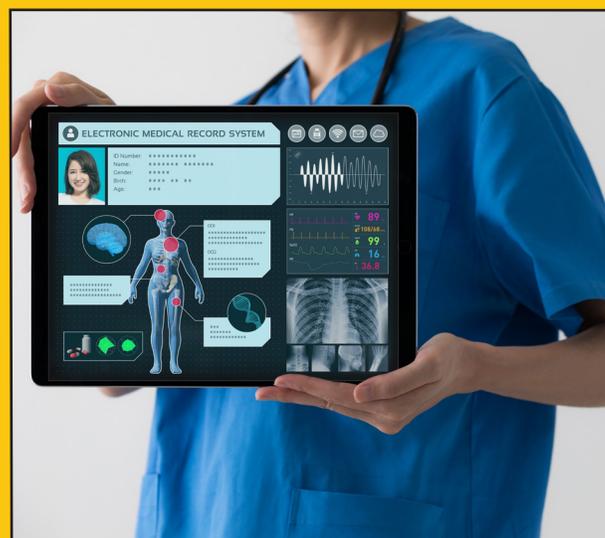
Developing a Medical File: Promoting Health Responsibility

Students can often get so caught up in their busy lives that they forget to make appointments to visit the dentist, doctor or other medical professionals. Unfortunately, this is a bad short-term practice that can become a bad lifetime habit, as your student fails to put her well-being first.

So, consider working with her to create a medical file that contains the following...

- A list of up-to-date vaccinations
- What medications she is on
- Dates of last doctor visits
- Contact info, including websites, addresses and phone numbers, of medical professionals she has an established relationship with
- Health insurance ID numbers
- Any other details that could be helpful to know

Helping her create a file, complete with all the medical details, allows her to take stock of her medical history – and to take responsibility for what she must do next as she takes these steps into adulthood. Here's to your student's health!





Inexpensive 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. Here are some much less expensive options that can still increase your student's sunny outlook.

Free!

- Offer to walk a friend or neighbor's dog for a dose of animal adoration
- Take a nap, whenever you feel like it!
- Sit in a patch of sun or under a sunlamp



- Get permission to read to an elementary school class and experience the wonder and creativity of wee ones
- Get an awesome book from the library and lose yourself in it

Under \$7

- 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
- Tap into Netflix or Hulu, pop some popcorn and invite friends over for the latest zombie saga

- Head to an arcade and play air hockey with wild abandon
- Buy a few postcards and send out "Wish You Were Here" notes to friends

No Steep Price Tag

- Swim at the local Y
- Get a chair massage at the farmer's market
- Play volleyball or badminton
- Go dancing
- Visit a butterfly sanctuary

Under \$10

- Ice skate with friends
- Host a potluck where no one can spend over \$10 on their dish to pass
- 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

Planning Ahead

There are multiple things that your student needs to be planning for right about now. So, make sure they remain on your radar, too. They include...

- Where to live next year
- Registering for classes
- Applying for scholarships
- Studying toward final exams and projects
- Making arrangements for move-out once the term is over
- 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 trusted campus professional, too, to make sure all the bases are covered!

