



a newsletter for parents & families



May 2018

Students on High Alert

During this time of year-ending finals, goodbyes and other anxiety-inducing propositions, students may feel tense and emotional. It's very important to recognize some of the things that may be going through their minds...

- Needing to do well on final exams in order to pull their overall grades up
- Trying to finish those end-of-term projects that may significantly count toward their final grades
- Attempting to study when they have so many other concerns swirling around them
- Questioning their academic competence as they work to cross the finish line
- Being emotional about the friends and experiences they'll need to say goodbye to
- Having to deal with change in the upcoming year (living somewhere new, making new friends, taking on or leaving leadership positions, etc.)
- Finalizing plans for their summer work, internships or other experiences



- Figuring out transportation and moving logistics for their summer plans
- Determining how to re-integrate themselves into family life if moving back home for the summer
- Being worried about how old friendships and relationships will pan out after being away

By recognizing that they have a lot on their minds, you can better support them during this emotional, difficult time. Offer a listening ear, ask what they need to finish up well, and let them know that you support and care about them, always.

What You Can Offer...

- Unconditional support
- Encouraging texts
- Healthy care packages
- A listening ear
- Reminders of summer things to look forward to
- Understanding about why they're not in touch as regularly
- Not giving them other things to worry about
- Belief in your student





A Time of Goodbyes

This is the season when students will be saying goodbye – to people, places and experiences that meant a lot to them. Perhaps some close friends are graduating or transferring. Or maybe your student is leaving a positive residence hall community or leadership position that helped her grow.

And then there's the big one – graduating and saying goodbye to the college years.

All these goodbyes can be emotional for students, showing up in multiple ways...

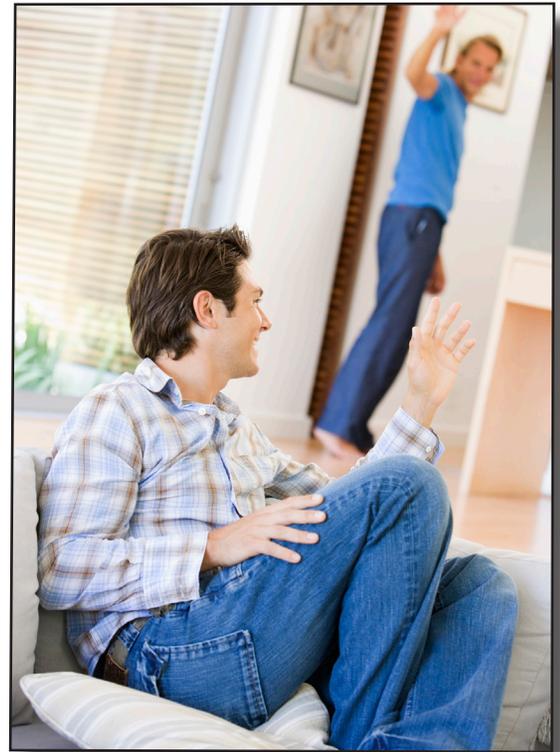
- Trying to cram in as much social time with people as possible
- Crying or getting choked up more regularly
- Avoiding those they'll be missing
- Engaging in high-risk drinking/partying to numb the pain
- Keeping themselves busy so they don't have to face the emotions

Helping Your Student

You can help your student deal with this emotional time by...

- Encouraging her to make time with friends before it's too late – so she doesn't have any regrets
- Listening when he wants to talk about what he's feeling
- Helping her look forward to what the summer and next year will bring
- Staying tuned in to his emotions – and offering to talk whenever he likes
- Speaking up if you hear her dealing with emotions in unhealthy ways

Also, be prepared if you're picking your student up after the school year has ended. He'll likely want to spend final moments saying goodbye to friends when you may be ready to drive home. Compromise and communicate in



this situation. Unfinished business in the arena of goodbyes can be damaging and grounds for regret. It's important for students to feel like they've wrapped up their important relationships in the best ways possible.

Seasonal Student Issues

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

- Anxiety and tension due to realizations that the year is ending and final exams are about to occur
- First-year students are feeling somewhat confident because they feel that they have made it through the first year (almost!)
- Senior panic about jobs, finances, etc.
- Good feelings are evident as summer is near
- Lots of cramming, studying and wrapping things up academically
- End of the year socialization, sometimes involving high-risk drinking
- Packing and checking out
- Saying goodbye to important people and putting closure on the year





Transitioning from the First to Second Year

Pretty soon, your new student will be a sophomore. Congratulations!

The second year of college can be filled with many questions and few immediate answers. As the summer progresses, you may observe your now-sophomore student considering what the coming year will bring. You can help by discussing issues with her such as...

- Fear that her initial success was just “lucky” and can’t be repeated
- Uncertainty about her future profession
- Experimenting with relationships that include different types of people
- Desire to experience new communities
- Decrease in friendships back home
- Use of finances for immediate gratification



- Lack of a long-term financial picture
- The search for purpose and meaning
- More personal emphasis on weaknesses, rather than strengths
- The “real world” still seeming far away

Common Second Year Reflections

- › Who am I?
- › Who are these people I am hanging out with?
- › What do my academic studies mean to me?
- › What am I going to do with the rest of my life?
- › How are my beliefs different than my parents’ beliefs?

Grad Gifts with Meaning

If your student is graduating this spring, here are some suggestions for meaningful gifts to consider...

- › A letter outlining why you are proud of her and what her graduation day means to you
- › A nice collage frame that he can use to put photos of college friends in as a remembrance
- › Arranging a trip for her to see an old friend or beloved family member
- › A donation to a cause that he believes in, in his name
- › A gift certificate to buy a few books in an area of interest to her
- › A bike and helmet so he can be more sustainable transportation-wise while also getting good exercise
- › A nice frame for her diploma
- › Shopping together for one professional outfit that he can wear on interviews or at work
- › Putting a certain amount of money into a college fund for a child in your student’s life, whether it’s a nephew, a daughter or a family friend, to symbolize the “circle of higher education”





Discussing Finances with Your Student

As you and your student ready for the summer ahead, it makes good sense to talk about money. You may want to discuss earning expectations during the summer, savings strategies or what's needed to make next year's tuition work.

Whatever the case may be, conversations about money can provide great growth opportunities for students. They become more aware and better understand where you are coming from, too. The key is keeping these conversations civil, caring and clear.

So, here are some things to take into consideration when discussing finances with your student...

The Emotions. Realize that money can become an emotional issue at times, since it's so tied into



one's sense of well-being and, at times, self-worth.

No Interruptions. Set aside uninterrupted time, with any paperwork spread out in front of you, so you can really delve into budgetary details with your student.

Stay Calm. If anyone gets frustrated or angry, disperse and come back when folks are calm. You may even want to try talking about what triggered the upset in the first place so you're all better aware.

Be Forthcoming. Recognize your tendency to want to protect your student from some financial realities, yet balance it with the importance of including her in these sometimes-difficult conversations – it's an important part of her maturation process.

Say "I." Use "I" statements as much as possible ("I feel like you are working so hard to help pay the bills that you're not able to get involved in some important parts of college life. Let's figure how we can alleviate some of that pressure on you...").

Be Realistic. Talk about realistic things you can all do to address the current financial situation – from where your student can cut back to loans you might consider – as part of an "all-hands-on-deck" collaborative approach.

Staying Safe While Socializing

End of the year socialization – from celebrating the end of classes to sending graduating friends off with good cheer – is often a part of what May is all about. You can help your student stay safe while still having fun by offering these gentle reminders...

- Always be with a group of trusted friends and look out for one another
- Don't get in a car with anyone who has been drinking
- Don't lose your inhibitions or ability to keep yourself safe
- Don't let anyone pressure you to drink or do drugs
- Wear sunscreen and stay hydrated when out in the sun
- Keep track of your phone and wallet at all times
- Contact someone if you or a friend is in trouble – don't wait!



Summertime!

Stressed out students can use some reminders of the summertime fun that awaits, such as...

- Spending time with old friends
- Digging into a job they feel competent at
- Having special family time
- Reading books for enjoyment
- Enjoying summer weather
- Being outdoors much of the time
- Swimming, tennis, disc golf and more
- Spending time with pets and kiddos
- Volunteering and making a difference
- Focusing on things that make life special