



a newsletter for parents & families



October 2017

When Homesickness Hits

“I’m Homesick.” These can be tough words to hear from students, yet it’s a reality that some may be missing home and the people who populate that part of their world. And homesickness can often hit during this month.

Here are a few ways to respond...

“Have you reached out?”

Sometimes one of the best ways for any of us to get outside of ourselves and our troubles is to reach out to others. For college students, this can be as simple as asking someone to lunch in the dining hall, saying hello in class or volunteering through the community service office.

“Who is a trusted faculty or staff person you can talk with about this?”

We all need sounding boards, especially those who understand what college students are going through and who *want* to help. Luckily, your student is surrounded by these folks, from coaches to professors to club advisors, residence hall staff, campus ministers, counselors and more.

“What have you been doing outside of class?”

Students who just go to class and don’t engage through other



activities will likely feel homesick because they haven’t developed a sense of campus belonging. It can start with little things: attending a club interest meeting, working on a service project, going to a concert, saying “yes” when an RA rounds up a group to go to dinner...

“Who and what is it that you are missing?”

Sometimes students just need to lay it all out there, to identify where their homesick

feelings are coming from so they can then address them. Asking a few questions in this vein can help your student get to that point, so you can then help her figure some ways to face the issues, head on!

There’s Help Available

If you suspect that your student is experiencing more than just homesickness – whether it’s anxiety, depression or something else – encourage him to seek help on campus. There are plenty of good people here who are *eager* to help.



Looking Outward

How to help students get out of their own heads

It can be easy for students to sometimes get stuck in their own internal worlds, especially as they struggle with issues like loneliness, stress, depression and more. And while there's no one solution, it's important for students who are struggling to seek assistance on campus from a counselor, coach, advisor or other trusted administrator. They are all here and glad to help!

You can help by prompting your student to look outward at times, too, so the external swirl doesn't become so all-encompassing. Here are a few suggestions to share...

Work on a Short Service

Project. An all-day affair may seem like too much, so why not suggest that your student start with a morning- or afternoon-long service project? Working with others *for* others can help them focus elsewhere while also feeling good about doing good.

Help Someone Else. Maybe there's a student on her floor who is super shy or someone in class who seems overwhelmed. By reaching out to offer a cup of coffee and a chat, your student can help someone else and get outside of himself at the same time.



Read About Someone's Story.

People's stories are everywhere – in magazines, online, in the newspaper and in books. Reading about what someone else is experiencing can help your student focus externally for a bit.

Join a Team Project. Digging in to work with others automatically requires a team mindset. This might involve joining an intramurals team, helping with a residence hall program or signing up for a weekend diversity training. These types of team-oriented activities can help students focus on their role as part of a whole.

Reaching out in simple ways can help some students shift their internal focus. However, as always, if you're concerned that your student is troubled and needs assistance, please encourage him to reach out to the many caring people who are available on campus. They are ready and willing to help your student make sense of what he's experiencing.

Seasonal Student Issues

There's a seasonal ebb and flow when it comes to student issues. Here are a few things your student may be experiencing this month...

- First-year students begin to realize college life is not as perfect as they were expecting it to be
- Diversity issues become very apparent as students begin interacting with others who are very different from them
- Conflicts between friends – both new and old – can occur as students settle into the rhythm of the new academic year
- Feeling behind in class work and wanting more contact with instructors
- Anticipating midterms and questioning their abilities
- People start to show their “true selves” – masks start to come off as students begin to feel more comfortable in their surroundings
- Job panic of mid-year graduates as the realization settles in that they will be graduating soon



Beloit Mindset List for Class of 2021

Today’s traditional-aged new students were typically born in 1999. And, as they do every year, the director emeritus of public affairs, a professor emeritus of English and a professor of sociology at Beloit College (WI) have created their Mindset List for the Class of 2021. They describe it as an effort to identify the cultural touchstones that shape the lives of traditional-aged students about to enter college.

Here is a sampling of the 60 entries on this year’s list...

- They are the last class to be born in the 1900s – the last of the Millennials
- They are the first generation for whom a “phone” has been primarily a video game, direction finder, electronic telegraph and research library
- There have always been emojis to cheer them up
- They have always been searching for Pokemon
- As toddlers, they may have dined on some of that canned food hoarded in case of Y2K
- Justin Timberlake has always been a solo act
- Bill Clinton has always been Hillary Clinton’s aging husband

“Members of this class have generally borrowed a lot of money to go to college, so expect them to think of themselves as consumers and not just as students. And they will also be concerned not just with what they need to learn but also who they are and to what group they genuinely belong.”

- Charles Westerberg, Brannon-Ballard Professor of Sociology and co-creator of the Beloit College Mindset List

- Globalization has always been both a powerful fact of life and a source of incessant protest
- The Latin music industry has always had its own Grammy Awards
- One out of four major league baseball players have always been born outside the U.S.
- Whatever the subject, there’s always been a blog for it

Source: www.beloit.edu/mindset/

9 Tips for Handling Roommate Conflicts

After living together for a few weeks, some roommates may butt heads or run into conflict. Here are some tips to share for handling those situations...

1. Identify what you want to say to your roommate and rehearse it
2. Don’t let things fester – address issues instead!
3. Go to your roommate first rather than dragging others into it
4. When discussing things, focus concisely on the problem at hand instead of drudging up old issues
5. Use “I” statements to show your concerns without assuming a blaming tone
6. Listen to what your roommate has to say
7. Don’t interrupt one another
8. Keep an open mind about how to resolve conflicts
9. Get help from a residence life staff member if you’re not able to reach an agreement

Avoidance, talking behind one another’s backs and assuming the worst will only make matters worse. Go into roommate discussions with an open mind and a willingness to work toward better conditions.





How NOT to Get in a Car with an Impaired Person

Helping your student stay safe

Both designated drivers and those who make smart decisions about not getting in the car of an impaired driver save thousands of lives each year. Unfortunately, many more lives are needlessly changed or lost when people make poor choices.

Help your student have the strength and knowledge to NOT get in the car with a driver under the influence of alcohol or other drugs. Thinking ahead may very well help her stay safe when an actual situation occurs.

Here are some tips to share...

- **Plan ahead by choosing a designated driver** whenever you are going to socialize at an event where alcohol is in the mix. Knowing who will take on this role ahead of time can put everyone's minds at ease.

Other Impairments

Two other impairments can make drivers *very* dangerous, too. Encourage your student not to ride with someone who is...

- › Texting as he/she drives
- › Sleep-deprived

- **Collect everyone's car keys at the start of an event** so there is no chance that someone will drive under the influence. Give them all to the designated driver to hold for safekeeping.
- **Be sure you have the phone numbers for local car or cab companies and/or bus and shuttle schedules** in your phone. You can also print them

out and put them in your wallet so you always have them with you.

- **Try to avoid a confrontation with the person under the influence.** Just be matter-of-fact about your choice to seek alternative transportation.
- **Don't be afraid to call for help.** Under no circumstance should you get in the car with someone under the influence. You can always call a friend or campus police if you need assistance. You're never a bother, especially when it comes to staying safe!

Remind your student that, no matter what, he should stand firm in his decision not to get in the car of a driver who is under the influence. His life isn't up for negotiation.

Midterm Encouragement

As students plunge into midterm exams this month, you can provide support and encouragement along the way...

Make care packages to ease the pain

Insert texts and notes along the way to give them a boost

Don't weigh them down with troubles from home

Tell them you believe in them and are rooting for them

Encourage them to prepare and do their best

Realize they may not be in touch as much as usual

Mix in some fun by sending Halloween or harvest greetings

Support them through the process and the end results

