The transition to college is a time of excitement for students. Your child is experiencing newfound autonomy. College offers intellectual stimulation, a wealth of choices, and countless ways to explore new relationships and experiences. Most families adjust fairly well, but for some families, the transition also ushers in some issues. Promote healthy independence, but he/she needs to eat well, and exercise.

Conflicts are a part of the parent-child relationship. Prioritize what is really important and allow yourself to let go of some issues. The University of Pennsylvania has a wide variety of academic and wellness support systems available for all students to utilize. Remind your child that seeking counseling helps build resilience.

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Understand the transition to college

Student House Dean, RA, or GA
CAPS or Student Health Service clinician
College House Dean, RA, or GA
CAPS or Student Health Service clinician
University Chaplain or other religious figure

- THINGS TO LOOK FOR
  - Experiencing sleep disturbance
  - Reporting anxiety or depression
  - Substantial change in eating pattern
  - Increased alcohol or drug use
  - Self-harm or suicidal thoughts
  - Significant change in academic performance
  - Disengaging from family and activities
  - Spending more money without explanation
  - Appearing/reporting feeling depressed, agitated, anxious
  - Trouble coping with academic challenge or failure
  - Disengaging from friends


to your child

How to talk to your child

Be specific. Tell your child why you are concerned.

Listen attentively. Focus on your child and validate their feelings.

Clarify statements. Establish a mutual understanding of the situation.

Avoid criticizing. Don’t judge, even if your child asks your opinion.

Respect and acknowledge. Validate your child’s concerns. Don’t minimize the problem or tell them not to worry.

Develop options together. Brainstorming solutions can build trust between you and your child and may help solve the problem.

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Be realistic. College life is hectic and students often take on many academic and social obligations. Balance is essential. Remind your child to make time to sleep, relax, eat well, and exercise.

Encourage your child to make use of Penn’s resources.

RESOURCES

- The Office of the Vice Provost for University Life
- Office of the Assistant Vice Provost for University Life
- Student Intervention Services
- CAPS (Including nights/weekends to reach CAPS counselor on call)

IF YOU KNOW YOUR CHILD NEEDS HELP

Penn Professionals are here to help your family in any of these situations. Please encourage your child to seek out these resources:

- College House Dean, RA, or GA
- CAPS or Student Health Service clinician
- Academic Advisor/cultural resource center staff
- University Chaplain or other religious figure

CAPS welcomes conversations with parents. However, due to state and federal law regarding confidentiality, as well as professional ethics, clinicians are unable to talk specifically about your child unless your child provides consent by completing a CAPS Release of Information Form.

Your child or the child of a family member may be testing new independence, but he/she needs to know that you are available to talk about routine events and difficult issues. Talk about and establish expectations. Determine jointly when and how best to stay in touch (balancing email, texting, calls, letter) and address ongoing issues such as money or academics. A family communications plan can help you maintain meaningful interaction during a challenging time.

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To make time to sleep, relax, eat well, and exercise.

This brochure offers general and specific suggestions to help your child succeed in a college setting. Parents seeking assistance in supporting their children may want to consult with the staff at Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS). CAPS offers free and confidential professional counseling to all students at the University of Pennsylvania.

Conflicts are a part of the parent-child relationship. Prioritize what is really important and allow yourself to let go of some issues. Promote healthy independence, decision-making, coping, and resilience.

The University of Pennsylvania has a wide variety of academic and wellness support systems available for all students to utilize. Remind your child that seeking help is a sign of strength.