If You Know Your Child Needs Help

There may be situations where outside help is essential. Some examples include, but certainly are not limited to:

- Your child has been acting differently, such as not engaging in usual activities, spending more money, or appearing depressed, agitated, and/or anxious.
- Your child reports increased physical problems or academic difficulties.
- You sense that something is different or seriously amiss.
- There are professionals on Penn campus to whom your child can turn when this type of situation arises. These individuals include your child’s House Dean, RA or GA, or a CAPS clinician. It is important to know that you are helping your child by encouraging him/her to seek help from a campus professional. The knowledge and experience of various campus professionals can help your child get the support and help needed.

CAPS

Counseling and Psychological Services offers free and confidential counseling services to all University of Pennsylvania students. Services offered include group and brief individual counseling and referrals to known clinicians in the community. CAPS clinicians welcome conversations with parents. However, due to state and federal law regarding confidentiality, as well as professional ethics, clinicians are unable to talk to you specifically about your child unless your child provides his or her consent by completing a CAPS Release of Information Form.

If your child has a history of treatment issues, is taking medication prescribed by a psychiatrist, or if you think that he/she may benefit from long- term or specialized support during the time he/she is a Penn student, CAPS clinicians can help your child establish a relationship with a community provider.

Emergency After Hours
215-349-5490

Resources

CAPS
215-898-7021

CAPS Emergency Number AFTER Hours
215-349-5490

Ask for the CAPS Clinician On-Call

Student Health Services / Office of Health Promotion & Education
215-746-3535

Penn Police
511 - Campus Phone
215-573-3333

Academic Support Programs
215-898-0809

Career Services
215-898-7531

Weingarten Learning Resource Center & Student Disability Services
215-573-9235

Office of the Chaplain
215-898-8456

How to Support Your Child at Penn

Counseling and Psychological Services
215-898-7021

Hours
Monday, Tuesday, Friday 9am – 5pm
Wednesday and Thursday 9am – 7pm

3624 Market Street
First Floor, West

www.upenn.edu/caps

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Understanding the Transition to College

The transition to college is a time of excitement in the life of your son or daughter. He or she will experience greater autonomy, intellectual stimulation, increased choices, and new explorations and relationships. For some families, a sense of excitement about the transition also brings feelings of ambivalence and concern. Most families adjust to the transition period fairly well. This brochure offers you both general and specific suggestions to help your child succeed in a college setting. In addition to the support you can provide, there is also professional support services available to students on campus through Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS). CAPS offers free and confidential counseling to all students at the University of Pennsylvania. CAPS staff is also available to consult with you about providing your child with the help that she or he may need.

Emergency After Hours
215-349-5490

What You Can Do To Support Your Child

Stay in touch
Even though your child may express the need to be independent, he or she still needs to know that you are available to talk about routine or typical events as well as difficult issues.

Allow space
Discuss a reasonable plan with your child concerning how to stay in touch on a regular basis. This may mean email, text messaging, phone conversations or letter writing.

Discuss expectations
Set up some time to talk to your child and agree on expectations such as how often you may be speaking, money matters, etc. Negotiate a realistic plan through discussion.

Be realistic about college life
College life is quite hectic and most students find their time is at a premium because of numerous academic and social obligations. Plan in advance so that communication opportunities with your child are meaningful. A balanced college experience is essential. Take the time to remind your child to pay attention to self-care, physically and emotionally.

Pick your battles
Conflicts are a part of the parent-child relationship. However, you may want to prioritize what is really important to you and what issues you are willing to let go. Encourage healthy independence and decision-making.

Encourage your child to make use of Penn’s campus resources
The University of Pennsylvania has a wide variety of academic and emotional support systems including Counseling and Psychological Services, Academic Support Programs, Learning Resources/Student Disabilities Services, and Career Services.

How to Talk to Your Child if You Think There is a Problem

Sometimes it can be difficult to figure out how to talk about concerns you may have. Here are some general suggestions:

Be specific about why you are concerned. Tell your child what you have observed and why you are concerned.

Listen attentively to your child and validate their concerns.

Clarify statements that are unclear so there is a mutual understanding of the situation. Once you have listened and your child feels understood by you, he or she may be more receptive to hearing your advice or ideas.

Avoid judging, evaluating and criticizing your child even if he or she asks for your opinion. A negative response is likely going to push your child away and close communication pathways.

Avoid minimizing the problem that your child is having by telling him or her not to worry about it. Your child’s concerns should be respected and acknowledged.

Develop options with your child. Brainstorming with your child to find solutions may help solve the problem at hand and can also build trust between you and your child.

Without continual growth and progress, such words as improvement, achievement, and success have no meaning.
Benjamin Franklin

CAPS
215-898-7021

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