

Helping Your Student Transition to Adulthood

It can be a scary thing sending your student off to college for the first time, but helping them successfully transition to this next phase of their life is a very rewarding experience. Teaching them how to take care of things on their own will help prepare them for life after college. While we want you to be their coach as they learn these skills; having them make their own appointments and call on their own if they have questions or concerns about their care teaches them adult responsibilities that are an integral part of this transition.

Transitioning to Life as a College Student

Starting college and transitioning to a new school can be challenging on many different levels. First, the transition from being a high school student to assuming a college student identity with all of its new demands and responsibilities may be challenging. Secondly, the transition to a new school with a new set of relationships, expectations, and culture may pose some difficulties. Finally, students between the ages of 18 and 25 are developmentally vulnerable to developing some mental health-related issues. All of these adjustment demands on our students may cause a well-adjusted, healthy, good student to have a hard time fulfilling his or her potential. When such challenges occur, it is critical to be able to detect the issues at hand in a timely manner, and be aware of strategies and resources available to help our students work through them.



What Do I Need To Know?

In order to detect concerns in a timely manner, it would be helpful to know what to pay attention to:

Appearance:

- Deterioration in grooming and hygiene
- Bloodshot/swollen eyes
- Dramatic weight gain/loss
- Changes in clothing that are not consistent with changes in temperature

Behaviors and Emotions:

- Poor, erratic attendance or tardiness to class
- Seeming anxious, depressed, irritable, angry, or sad
- Lethargic or perpetually tired
- Lack of interest in meeting class requirements
- Indications of hopelessness/helplessness
- Marked changes in habits
- Sleeping in class
- Marked withdrawal in a normally outgoing person
- Uncharacteristically poor work
- Repeated requests for special consideration
- Excessive anxiety about class performance or evaluation
- Inappropriate tearfulness or intense emotion (e.g. hostile and/or dramatic behaviors, excessive and/or rapid speech)
 - Evidence of self-destructive behaviors (e.g. signs of self-mutilation, substance abuse, etc.)
 - Verbal and/or written expressions of harm to self or others
 - Reports of suicidal/homicidal thoughts
 - Verbal and/or written expressions of harm to self or others

Cognitive Functioning:

- Difficulty concentrating
- Obsessing over an event/issue
- Disjointed/confused thoughts
- Thoughts out of touch with reality

Interpersonal Functioning:

- Dependency on professor/mentor/tutor/parent
- Avoidance of professor/mentor/tutor/peers/parent
- Poor relational boundaries (e.g. inappropriate disclosure to professor/tutor/mentor)
- Disruptive behaviors in class (or other learning environments)
- Seemingly unusual comments or behaviors
- Complaints from peers, faculty or staff



What do I do?

Not every observed change should alarm you, because many students show some changes in many of the listed areas above as they try to find their individual identity, style and values. The first step is to have a discussion with your student about the observed changes. If these changes do not have serious consequences/risks, they would probably benefit from your support as they develop into who they will be. On the other hand, if they are concerning you, please give us a call. We can discuss the concerns you have, make plans to help you assist your student, follow up with them directly, and provide services as needed.

Important Conversations to Have

- *Adult Relationships* Talk with them about what it means to be in a serious relationship and what their expectations are around such relationships.
- *Alcohol and Marijuana* Talk about how they plan to respond to possible peer pressure when they are living away from home. While we don't condone the illegal use of alcohol or marijuana, national statistics report that 76% of students have tried alcohol and 39% have used marijuana. So talk about what it means to be responsible around alcohol and marijuana use.
- *Safety* We recommend female students take the Never a Victim (NAV) class offered free each semester. Talk about a safety plan should they get into a situation they are not comfortable in.
- *Medications* We recommend students taking medications to help manage depression and anxiety avoid weaning off of those medications unless under the direct supervision of their medical provider.
- Discuss important items to consider having on-hand in their room: thermometer, band-aids, antibiotic ointment, hand sanitizer, reusable cold pack, cough drops, over-the-counter cold and pain relief medications.

Confidentiality

Services provided at the Wellness Center are not covered under the FERPA release that your student signs with the school. If your student is 18 years of age or older, healthcare providers and clinicians cannot release information to anyone without the student's signed consent. If your student is under 18, there are certain physical and mental health treatments that do not require parent consent. Please know that we do take your child's care seriously and will work with them to obtain a release if it is in their best interest to have a parent notified or involved with their care.

Immunization Requirements

Colorado Law mandates that all students provide proof of two Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (MMR) vaccines. All students planning to live in on-campus Housing must also submit proof of a Meningococcal A,C,W,Y vaccine given within the past five years, or sign the Mandatory Meningococcal Disease Waiver form prior to move-in. Students that do not comply with these requirements by census date will have a hold placed on their student account preventing them from future class registration. We also recommend Housing students talk with their provider about the Meningococcal B vaccine, but this vaccine is not required by law.

Health Insurance

Although UCCS is not a mandatory insurance campus, we do recommend that all students have insurance coverage. If your student does have an insurance plan, now is a great time to talk with them about what the policy covers, what co-pays, co-insurance and deductibles are, and where they can receive services in an emergency situation. Encourage your student to have a copy of their insurance card with them at all healthcare visits.

Contact Information

The Wellness Center is located in the Gallogly Recreation and Wellness Center

Email: wellness@uccs.edu

Phone: 719.255.4444

Website: uccs.edu/recwellness

Assisting
your student
as they
transition to



Life
as a
College Student

UCCS

University of Colorado
Colorado Springs