



Get Connected: Life Hacks for Adjusting to Life on Campus

Expect the rough patch.

Remind your teen that it can take a while to make friends and feel at home in a new environment. Remember that these thoughts and feelings are typical and normal.

Invite your child to watch the Emily Bergmann video.

This can help validate and normalize their experience. Make sure to debrief and talk about it together.

Encourage your child to text or call home when they need to- and especially when they don't.

Scheduling a weekly call helps structure a time where you both can share news and updates instead of just talking when there is a problem or crisis. While parents should be that sympathetic ear during tough times, it's important to talk about the positive stuff too! Feel free to ask, "tell me something good that happened this week," to break the pattern, redirect the conversation and get a real snapshot of how your child's college experience is going.

Work with your child to find their constant.

Having a "go-to thing" like a habit, hobby, practice or distraction that they can do on their own can comfort them and bring them back to center to feel normal, peaceful and safe.

Remind them to use a critical eye when looking at social media posts of their friends from home and other peers.

While most kids struggle with homesickness or loneliness for some period of time, they don't generally post a picture of themselves crying in their dorm room. Also, challenge them to limit time texting friends from home and social media to stay present and really experience the world around them where they actually are instead.

Advise students to spend as little time in their dorm room as possible.

Challenge them to take their laptop or book to a common area where they are more likely to interact with other students.

Encourage them to get involved by checking out the wide array of clubs, teams and activities offered on campus, or find an off-campus activity.

Joining something that they are genuinely interested in could provide a good source of connectedness and the basis of friendships.

Suggest they attend evening and weekend events.

Excursions, performances, volunteering opportunities are all good sources of social connection and an important cure for the unstructured time, which is often a real shock to the system for busy high school students.

Promote good and consistent self-care.

Rest, diet, exercise, meditation, yoga...whatever makes them feel healthy and strong.

Familiarize yourself with on campus resources.

Keep the list handy for when your child calls you with a problem. When you get a phone call, re-route your child to reach out to the appropriate department on campus. This helps students learn to advocate for themselves, be self-sufficient and feel more connected to their campus.

Remind them to seek help at the counseling center-that's what it's there for.

Many college campuses have increased resources for student support services, and it's very common for students to access them. Campus resources can be extensive and very helpful, but be prepared to identify outside resources off-campus if your child isn't able to get the help they need or if there's a long waiting list for services.

You are the *TRUSTED ADULT* for your child.

Empower them to advocate for themselves, but be ready to step in to advocate on their behalf if they don't feel heard or supported on campus.

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