Parents as Partners

Some Guidelines for How to Support Your Student

The freshman year is a time of significant change and stress for students, as they now must assume greater responsibility for all aspects of their life (e.g., academic, personal, social, financial, spiritual, etc.). Problems and struggles are almost inevitable, especially during "crunch" times like mid-terms and finals.

It is common for incoming students and their parents to look upon college as a "new beginning" and hope that past issues and problems will disappear with the move to campus. Unfortunately, experience suggests that the opposite is more likely to be true. Given the changes and stresses facing new students, challenges and struggles are almost inevitable.

Signs of Distress to look for:

Academic/Work signs:
- Deterioration in quality of work
- Missing assignments or appointments
- Not attending classes

Physical or Emotional Signs:
- Tearfulness, sadness, anxiety
- Changes in eating or sleeping habits
- Withdrawing from friends and/or social activities
- Loss of interest in hobbies, work, school
- Feelings of emptiness/hopelessness
- Increased use of alcohol/drugs
- Anger, irritability
- Physical ailments: headaches, nausea, abdominal pain
- Emails or phone conversations that have themes of hopelessness, social isolation, rage or despair.

Get Help Immediately If You Notice your Student:
- Acting out of control or excessively confused and flustered
- Talking openly about wanting to die
- Taking unnecessary or life threatening risks

If your student needs help or is feeling unsafe, please contact one of the following:
- Call 911 or University Police 715-425-3133
- UW-River Falls Counseling Services 715-425-3884

Other Helpful Phone Numbers
- Student Health Services 715-425-3293
- Residence Life 715-425-4555
- Academic Success Center 715-425-3531
- Financial Aid Office 715-425-3141
- Ability Services Office 715-425-0740

Student Health and Counseling Services, Division of Student Affairs | 211 Hagestad Hall
Student Health: 715-425-3293 | Counseling: 715-425-3884 | M-F, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
www.uwrf.edu/StudentHealthAndCounseling
Here’s how you can help:

Be honest and express your concerns. Talk about the changes you have seen in your student. Listen and offer emotional support, understanding and patience. Sometimes talking about the distress and experiencing acceptance from parents and other sources of support can make a significant difference.

- Convey the message that the student’s distress is real
- Offer to help them get assistance.
- Maintain regular contact
- Help them contact UWRF Counseling Services at 715-425-3884 or a helping professional in your community if needed. See our website for more information.
- It can be difficult to see your loved one in distress, but talking to your student shows that you care even if your student has difficulty accepting your concern.

General Dos & Don'ts

There are no easy or specific answers for parents wanting to help their college student. However, some general guidelines can be identified:

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<th>Do</th>
<th>Don't</th>
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<td>Listen</td>
<td>Lecture</td>
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<td>Ask questions</td>
<td>Give unsolicited answers</td>
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<td>Acknowledge and communicate feelings</td>
<td>Avoid emotions</td>
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<td>Express your opinion</td>
<td>Make demands</td>
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<td>Point out consequences of the behavior</td>
<td>Threaten</td>
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<td>Be supportive</td>
<td>Take responsibility</td>
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<td>Be specific about behaviors</td>
<td>Be vague or generalize</td>
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<td>Encourage help-seeking, such as contacting Counseling Services</td>
<td>Try to force, deceive, or trick the student into counseling</td>
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<td>Manage expectations</td>
<td>Expect dramatic immediate changes, even after seeking help</td>
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<td>Strive for mutual respect</td>
<td>Demand submission</td>
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<td>Let go a little</td>
<td>Give up completely</td>
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<td>Deal with problems calmly and openly</td>
<td>Ignore or exaggerate problems</td>
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<td>Allow mistakes for BOTH of you</td>
<td>Expect perfection</td>
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Counseling Services provides consultations to parents on such issues as how to help a student in distress, how to refer a student to counseling, and how to locate appropriate treatment or mental health care for your student. Please feel free to consult with one of our counselors by contacting Counseling Services at 715-425-3884.

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Tips to Help Your Student Regarding Student Health Services

- All students should have health insurance and have a card or a copy of the front and back of the card. You may want to check with your plan regarding coverage while your student is in college.
- Student Health Services contracts clinical health services for students at Vibrant Health Family Clinic in River Falls (715-425-6701) and Pierce County Reproductive Health Services (715-425-8803), and many basic common services are covered by Student Health Services at these locations. However, whatever is not covered is the responsibility of the student. For more information, see our brochure on our web page.
- Appointments at the Vibrant Health Family Clinic in River Falls are to be scheduled in advance (715-425-6701) and students can call the Clinic directly. Students also need to call to schedule same day appointments to be seen for an illness or injury.
  Hours:
  - Monday - Thursday 8:00 am to 8:00 pm
  - Friday 8:00 am to 5:00 pm
  - Saturday 8:00 am to 12:00 noon
  - Sunday 10:00 am to 2:00 pm (walk in only)
- Students should also call ahead to Pierce County Reproductive Health Services for appointments (715-425-8003).
- The River Falls Taxi (715-425-7878) provides free transportation to and from Vibrant Health Family Clinic in River Falls and Pierce County Reproductive Health Services. A valid student ID must be presented each time.
- Students may call Vibrant Health Family Clinic in River Falls after clinic hours to talk to a health care provider (715-425-6701). Emergency Medical Care is provided after clinic office hours at the River Falls Area Hospital (715-307-6000), which is adjacent to Vibrant Health Family Clinic in River Falls. This care is NOT covered by Student Health Services and so all charges for care are the student’s responsibility.
- If it is likely services beyond what is covered by Student Health Services will be needed, and Vibrant Health Family Clinic in River Falls is not within your insurance provider network, it may benefit your student to seek care from a clinic in your network rather than incurring charges not covered by Student Health Services.
- Student Health Services does not provide excuses for absences from class. Students who have missed classes, exams, quizzes or assignments due to illness or injury need to notify their faculty and make arrangements for make-up work. Medical excuses will not be written by staff or providers at Vibrant Health Family Clinic in River Falls or by Student Health Services staff.
- Information about recommended immunizations and how to obtain them are available on our web page. Immunization records do NOT need to be submitted to Student Health Services.
- Student Health Services staff are always willing to consult with parents who are concerned about their student in regard to a health issue. Please feel free to consult with one of our health staff by contacting Student Health Services at 715-425-3293.