



Potsdam
The State University of New York

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Seasonal Student Issues

There's a seasonal ebb and flow when it comes to student issues. Here are a few things your student may be experiencing this month:

- ▲ Anxiety and tension due to realizations that the year is ending and final exams are about to occur
- ▲ Senior panic about jobs, finances, etc.
- ▲ First-year students are feeling somewhat confident because they believe that they have made it through the first year (almost!)
- ▲ Good feelings are evident as summer is near
- ▲ Lots of cramming, studying and wrapping things up academically
- ▲ End of the year socialization, sometimes involving dangerous drinking
- ▲ Packing & checking out
- ▲ Saying goodbye to important people and putting closure on the year

One "Transition" Year Older

At the start of the summer, your student may be celebrating a "birthday" of sorts! The completion of the academic year may signify students' growth and development into the next year of their college journey. Whether your student is transitioning from her first year and preparing for her second year in college, or is entering her final year of college and preparing her resume, congratulations. You now have a student who is one "transition" year older in her college career.

What can you do to support your student with her transition over the summer and into the next academic year? Consider some of these tips:

From freshman to sophomore

The second year of college can be filled with many questions and few immediate answers. As the summer progresses you may observe your now sophomore student considering what the coming year will bring.

The Language of Transition

As you refer to your student this summer, ask her if she minds you telling people, "Ari is a sophomore now." This allows her to look forward rather than dwelling on the year just passed.

Common Second Year Reflections

- Who am I?
- Who are these people I am hanging out with?
- What do my academic studies mean to me?
- What am I going to do with the rest of my life?
- How are my beliefs different than my parents?

Common Second Year Issues

- Fear that initial success was just "lucky" and can't be repeated
- Uncertainty about future profession
- Experimenting with relationships that include different types of people
- Desire to experience new communities
- Decrease in friendships back home
- Use of finances for immediate gratification
- Lack of a long-term financial picture
- Begin the search for purpose and meaning
- More personal emphasis on weaknesses, rather than strengths
- The "real world" still seems far away

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One "Transition" Year Older

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Sophomore to Junior

Ah, junior year, when you know the ropes and he knows the ropes. Nothing unpredictable or new, no worries! However, it can be an exciting and productive year if a student takes intentional steps to start preparing early for his final year and all that comes with it.

Common Junior Year Reflections

- What are my goals for next year?
- What are some new challenges I want to take on?
- What do I want to do with my major?
- Do I want to start a career, or go to graduate school, after graduation?

Common Junior Year Issues

- Starting to seriously consider career options related to major
- May spend time conducting initial search of professions and graduate school programs
- Confident and comfortable with academic expectations—know faculty, the classroom routine and study habits
- Develop trusting and comfortable friendships and more mature relationship with parents
- Less need to go home for summers and breaks
- Confidence and ability to have philosophical conversations with family and friends regarding deeper issues such as: politics, spirituality, academic studies and controversial subjects
- Start to think about starting salaries for career options
- If living off campus, may experience new financial responsibility with costs related to food, rent, transportation and bills.
- Explore purpose in life and spirituality

- Seek new experiences and opportunities
- Confidence in making personal decisions and choices

Junior to Senior

He is officially a senior! Only one more year—you hope—and you will be celebrating his graduation. You may think your support is no longer needed, nor desired, but you can rest assured he still will be looking to you for guidance as he takes the final steps of his college career.

Common Senior Year Reflections

- Many of the questions seniors reflect on during their final year are similar to the questions they will be asked in job interviews or in graduate school applications
- What do I want out of this life?
- What's important to me—what I am doing, or how much I am making?
- Why did I decide to pursue this major and career field?
- Do I want, or need, to continue my college education? When and how?

Common Senior Year Issues

- Take the first step in job or graduate school search

- Renewed awareness of academic strengths and weaknesses
- Priority on developing relationships with professors for purpose of career advising and job referencing in the coming year
- Fear of leaving the comfort and stability of college relationships
- Redefine relationship with family
- Feel a sense of "job search" competition with peers
- Anxiety about paying loans
- Worry about immediate costs such as insurance, car and living arrangements
- For some, realizing the credit debt that has piled up
- Realizing that maybe what he wanted to do when he started college isn't necessarily what he wants to do now
- Pressure of living up to expectations of parents, family, peers or faculty

Each student is unique and each student transition is different. However, you now know some of the feelings, experiences, challenges and rewards your student may be experiencing as he transitions from one year to the next.

10 Things Your Student Needs to Hear During Finals Week

1. "We're behind you."
2. "Do your best and show them what you've got."
3. "Sleep, fresh air and eating well are important, too. You can't study ALL the time!"
4. "Call if you need to talk."
5. "We believe in you."
6. "Focus during these last few weeks and summer break will feel even more worthwhile."
7. "I KNOW you've got it in you!"
8. "We're looking forward to having you home."
9. "We'll celebrate when you're done!"
10. "You can do this. I know you can."

Making Move-Out Day Easier

Here are a few tips to make move-out day less frustrating for

everyone involved, whether your student is moving out of an off-campus house or an on-campus room:



- plan ahead to have enough boxes—many stores will give you some, if you just ask—or consider purchasing some plastic bins with lids that can be reused time and time again
- pack according to what will be needed during the summer—nothing’s more frustrating than digging through all the “college boxes” to find the item you need
- drink water while you’re working—it’s easy to get overheated and dehydrated
- think about what will fit in the available vehicle—just because your student’s belongings fit in the family van in September, it doesn’t mean they haven’t expanded!
- check into storage possibilities in town, if needed—think ahead about whether storing the rug, the fridge and other larger items in a storage unit makes more sense than lugging them back and forth
- ask your student to be packed by the time you arrive—too many packers can lead to chaos
- be prepared for the amount of time the “after-packing clean-up” will take—just because all the boxes are in the car, it doesn’t mean that the work is done because room/house cleaning is

an important part of the process—students can lose their deposits and/or be charged if they don’t do a good job sweeping, removing tape residue, taking out trash and more

- know where to put trash—have your student find out where to dump trash and recyclables

And leave time for good-byes. Your student will likely want to see her friends before she goes and, although you may be chomping at the bit to hit the road, this wrap-up time is important. Students are transitioning from one of their worlds to the other during move-out. Some things just can’t be rushed.

Supplies to Have on Hand

- boxes or plastic bins
- packing tape
- a few thick markers
- car carrier (in case everything doesn’t fit inside the vehicle)
- broom
- dustpan
- dusting rags
- window cleaner
- paper towels
- water (don’t count on vending machines as they can run out when lots of folks are around)
- a fan (if it’s really warm)
- patience

Encourage Your Student to Spring Into Action!

As students get into the spirit of spring weather and the school year coming to a close, they often get more lax with their personal belongings. Unfortunately, thieves count on this mentality to make their move. End of the year thefts can be easily prevented with a few simple precautions:

Textbooks. By writing his name near the binding of a certain page in each textbook, a student can tell public safety what to look for if a book is stolen.

Locking Doors. For both personal and property safety, encourage students to keep doors locked. Thieves become familiar with people’s patterns.

Unattended Goods. Leaving a book bag on the study table or failing to lock it up during a workout increases the chances of it walking away.

Laptops. These are BIG targets. Does your student have a laptop safety device? Is the computer engraved with an ID number? These precautions can help track down laptop thieves more easily.

Cash. It’s never a good idea to have large amounts of cash on hand.

Gently remind students that the end of the year is one of the hottest times for thieves to strike. By taking some simple precautions, they can avoid some complex headaches.

Stalking Awareness & Safety

People aged 18-24 years old—prime college age—experience the highest rate of stalking, according to the Stalking Resource Center. The fact is that 3.4 million people are stalked every year in the U.S. Given this, the topic is an important one that you can talk with your student about to raise her awareness both for herself and her peers.

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The onset of technology, from email to instant messaging to social networking, has added another layer to stalking situations. A quarter of victims report being stalked through the use of some form of technology. Ten percent of victims report being monitored via global positioning systems and 8 percent through video or digital cameras, or listening devices.

While women are three times more likely than men to be stalked, women do stalk men or other women, too. All victims need to be

Victims can call 1-800-FYI-CALL for help in making a safety plan, learning about their legal rights and finding local help.

What Do Stalkers Do?

Stalking behaviors come in all shapes and sizes. Some stalkers repeatedly call their victims or show up wherever they are. Others monitor their victim's phone or computer use, or find out about their victims by accessing public records, doing online searches, digging through the trash, contacting friend/family/neighbors and more.

Threats to the victim, her pets, family and friends may also occur. Stalkers will do drive-bys or damage a victim's home, car or other property.

For a comprehensive brochure called, "Are You Being Stalked?" from the Stalking Resource Center, head to www.ncvc.org/src.

assured of their safety and that there is help available.

Talk with your student about this important issue today. Encourage him to trust his instincts and not downplay the danger. Also suggest he take threats seriously and let him know that it's important to keep evidence of stalking behaviors and to let others around him know about the stalking so they can get support. Stalking victims are much more likely to suffer from insomnia, social dysfunction, severe depression, eating problems and anxiety than others. If your student, or someone he knows, is worried about potential stalking behavior, helping them know that they are not alone and that help is available can be crucial.

Source: The National Center for Victim of Crimes' Stalking Resource Center, www.ncvc.org/src

Oh...The Possibilities of Summer

Since your student is in the academic mindset, talking about a "summer curriculum" might make a lot of sense to her. This just means being intentional about the things she'd like to learn and experience this summer.

Maybe she's been talking about how she misses reading "real" books because she always has reading to do for class. This can go on her curriculum. Or maybe she's hoping to learn how to kayak or knit or ride a horse... put it on the curriculum!

And make it a partnership by suggesting that the whole family write out your summer curriculums. Then share them so you can support one another in pursuit of these goals. Here's to a summer filled with learning!

Low-Cost Ideas for Summer Learning



Summer involvement doesn't have to be costly! Encourage your student to take advantage of:

- continuing education classes
- library, garden center or home improvement workshops
- free events happening at local colleges

- websites such as about.com or ehow.com to learn how to do something new

- cooking demonstrations at grocery stores

- volunteer opportunities with local shelters, agencies and organizations

- town sports and recreation leagues such as kickball, basketball, volleyball and more

