

Supporting Your Student During their Transition to College

Office of the Dean of Students
Division of Student Affairs
University of North Carolina Wilmington

UNCW's Philosophy

UNCW expects that its students will independently manage their environment while accessing appropriate UNCW and local resources. "*Independent management*" means tending to medical/mental health and other health care issues, engaging in proper eating and sleeping habits, making good decisions associated with one's health and well-being, etc.



Why you are so important:

Parents and family members are in an important position to identify and help students who are in crisis or distress. This may be more so true for students who cannot or will not turn to faculty or friends or for those students who live off campus.

You may be the first to notice changes or hear about early signs of distress. Students are apt to turn to you, especially if they perceive you as available, willing to listen and not likely to trivialize their problems. Your expression of interest and concern may be a critical factor in saving your student's academic career or even his/her life.

Why you are so important:

UNCW students may experience various stressors during their academic and co-curricular experience.

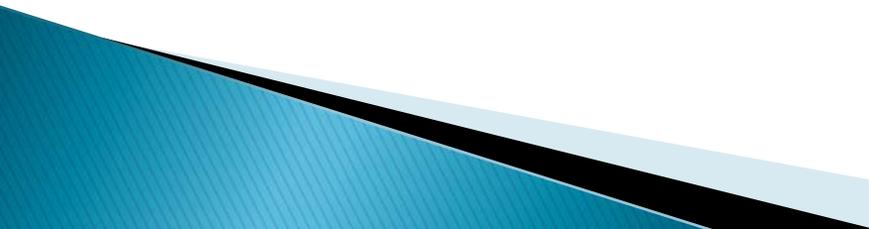
These may include challenges based on the transition to college, changes to the family makeup and/or difficulty managing other dynamics. Although many students respond successfully there are times when a student may encounter reduced academic and problem solving skills.



How you can help:

Monitoring your student from afar is challenging, but using your parental intuition about how they are doing will typically serve you well. This, coupled with observing them in person when they are home for visits, can help provide you periodic updates on how your student is doing.

Questions to consider:

- ▶ As you speak to them by phone or visit with them in person, do they seem happy?
 - ▶ Are they taking care of themselves?
 - ▶ Are they engaging with others on campus and getting involved?
 - ▶ Do they describe a plan for their future?
 - ▶ If they are supposed to be engaged in medical treatments or therapy or are supposed to be following a medication regimen, are they doing so?
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Examples of Academic Distress:

- ▶ Marked changes in academic performance
 - ▶ Pending academic warning, probation or dismissal
 - ▶ Reports of infrequent attendance and missed assignments
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Examples of Physical Distress:

- ▶ Abrupt or marked changes in behavior and/or appearance
 - ▶ Exaggerated personality traits or behaviors including withdrawal, exhaustion and lack of apparent emotion
 - ▶ Uncharacteristic levels of irritability and overwhelming anxiety
 - ▶ Noticeable or alleged alcohol and/or drug use
 - ▶ Isolation
 - ▶ Communicating a sense of hopelessness or finality
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Ways to Help:

- ▶ Speak with your student without judging or criticizing
 - ▶ Listen carefully and intently
 - ▶ Share your concerns with staff in the Office of the Dean of Students, 910-962-3119
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Imminent Danger or Harm:

- ▶ Suicidal behavior, attempt or explicit statements
- ▶ Medical emergency
- ▶ Victim of violence or stalking
- ▶ Victim of sexual assault

Contact University Police at 910-962-2222



UNCW Resources:

- ▶ Office of the Dean of Students (910) 962-3119
 - ▶ Abrons Student Health Center (910) 962-3280
 - ▶ University Counseling Center (910) 962-3746
 - ▶ Campus Police (910) 962-2222
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