The Challenges of Parenting from a Distance

PRESENTED BY
COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES (CAPS)

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Introduction

• Presenters/CAPS
• Overview
  o Common challenges to adjusting to college
  o Developmental factors on adjustment
  o Tips for effective parenting from afar
  o Resources
Common Adjustment Problems for Parents and Children

- What are some challenges you have faced as your child adjusts to college?
- What are some problems you anticipate?
- How have you found your parenting approach differ since they went to college?
- Empty nest?

Common Adjustment Problems for Students

- Homesickness
- New demands of time and effort
- Establish new friendships
- Disturbances in sleeping and eating
- Roommate conflict
- Increased exposure to alcohol and drugs
- Conflict between managing new freedom and responsibility
Adjustment Problems for Parents

- Letting go, redefining the parent-child relationship
- Empty Nest Syndrome
  - Best described as a profound sense of loss
  - May involve feelings of sadness and worry
  - Increases vulnerability to depression, alcohol abuse, identity confusion, and marital conflicts
  - Provides an opportunity to rekindle previous interest in activities that you have lacked time for and to better develop your relationship with your partner

Developmental Impact on Adjustment

- The brain and adolescence
- Frontal Lobe Development
  - Judgment
  - Decision Making
  - Problem Solving
  - Impulses
  - Incomplete until mid-20's
The Stages of Development

- **Erikson’s Stages of Development**
- **Identity vs. Role Confusion** (ages 12-18)
  - personal identity and role in the world, and entering a period of their lives focused on Intimacy.
- **Intimacy vs. Isolation** (age 19-40)
  - developing intimate, loving relationships with other people

Parenting Tips from Afar

- Calm parent, calm student
- Flexible parent, flexible student
- Curiosity vs. Inquisition (ask open ended questions)
- Parental oversharng re:stressors at home can be harmful for the student
- Midterm grades can be a wakeup call
- When they stumble try to stay solution focused
Parenting Tips from Afar

- Prepare for unanswered correspondence
- "crisis" calls are normal
- Trust them and convey that trust to them
- Set boundaries
- Know campus resources, direct them to handle their own administrative issues
- Advise sparingly and ask what they think
- Check your motives
- Healthy communication ("I feel _____ statements")

Warning Signs

- Sometimes more serious adjustment/ mental health issues can immerge during this stressful transition period
  - Poor class attendance
  - Anhedonia- loss of interest in usual activities
  - Hopelessness
  - Self-injurious behaviors
  - Legal problems related to substances
  - Spending excessive $ on alcohol/drugs
  - Significant weight changes
### The Parent Role Shift

#### High School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child Behavior</th>
<th>Parental Reaction</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stays out late</td>
<td>Grounding, takes away cell phone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skips class</td>
<td>Detention, take privilege away</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low grades</td>
<td>Mandatory study time, grounding</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

#### College

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### Resources

- Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)
  - Individual and Couples’ Counseling
  - Group Therapy
  - Outreach Events
  - Assessment
  - Psychiatric Services
Resources

- Campus Services- x8870
- Res Life- x4500
- Student Health- x8078
- Campus Security- x8111
- Financial Aid- x8070
- Student Affairs- x8080
- All Faiths Center- x8045

(All Florida Tech numbers begin (321) 674-xxxx)

Resources

- http://collegetipsforparents.org/
- http://www.limestone.edu/helpful-tips
- http://family.pepperdine.edu/relationshipsiq/articles/parents-adjustment/tips-for-parents.htm
- http://web.centre.edu/parentprograms/parentadvice.htm