

SUPPORTING WHILE LETTING GO

Helping your student transition to and be successful in college.

College is both exciting and overwhelming. Your student is about to begin a journey of learning to live independently and exploring the world around them. Here are a few things you can do to support your student during that process:

Call them often. Call and text your student often to let them know you are thinking about them and you support them.

Visit (but not too often). Your student may not admit it, but they usually appreciate it when their parents visit. This is a great opportunity for them to show you their other "world."

Write, even though they may not write back. Even though your student is probably enjoying their new independence, getting emails and letters is exciting and comforting.

Encourage them to get involved. Personal connections and friends are important. Encourage your student to get involved with campus events, organizations, and intramural sports.

Avoid the "These are the best years of your life" speech. While in the big scheme of things it may seem like college students "have it made," for many students college is much more challenging and difficult than imagined. Instead of telling your student these are the best years of your life, let them know you will love and support them no matter what.

Remember you may only hear from your student when things are not great. Parenting a college student can be pretty thankless. This is especially true when it seems like you only hear from your student when they are in distress. Remember that you play a valuable role in your student's success.

Communicate your expectations and stay informed. College is a big investment and it is entirely appropriate for you to have expectations for that investment. Communicate your expectations clearly, but also ask your student about classes too. Most students are eager to share about the classes they like and dislike and what they are learning.

Don't ask your student if they are homesick. While it is true that many students miss being at home, most are so busy in the first few weeks of school that they are doing just fine. That being said, even if they don't bring it up, you can rest assured that they probably miss you.

Expect your student to change. It is normal for students to change during college. For some, this change is gradual. For others, it is quick. Although the process may be confusing (and sometimes painful) the best thing you can do is be patient and remind yourself this is normal.

Trust them, but have the uncomfortable conversations. Talk with your student about what they can expect when they get to campus and, later, about what actually happened.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

Don't Tell Me What to Do, Just Send Money
by Helen Johnson & Christine Schelhas-Miller

Letting Go: A Parents' Guide to Understanding the College Years
by Karen Levin Coburn and Madge Lawrence Treeger

The Naked Roommate
by Harlan Cohen

When Kids Go to College
by Barbara M Newman & Philip R. Newman

Let the Journey Begin
by Jacqueline Kiernan MacKay & Wanda Johnson Ingram

Transition Year : Parent Edition
www.transitionyear.org

The Jed Foundation Parent Resources
www.jedfoundation.org/parents



Phone: 665.6245
Main Hall, Station 6245
www.montevallo.edu/counseling-services

COUNSELING SERVICES

learninggrowingbecoming

Whether this is your first semester on campus, you are preparing to graduate, or you are somewhere in between, college can be challenging. The Counseling Services office is here to help! Our staff understands the pressures of being a college student and is available to meet with you. All services are free and confidential and are available to currently enrolled, degree-seeking students.

Our services include individual and group counseling. These services can help you as you learn to deal with relationships, live away from home, balance a variety of responsibilities, and handle everyday life, among other things.

To schedule an appointment with a counselor, **stop by the lower level of Main Hall** or **call 665-6245**. For more information about our services, visit www.montevallo.edu/Counseling-Services.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is Counseling?

Many times in our life, problems arise that are not easy to solve or our usual ways of handling problems isn't working. Counseling gives you a chance to talk with a person who is trained to help you gain a better understanding of yourself, your feelings, and your relationships so you can better deal with the difficulties in your life.

When should you seek counseling?

Everyone has difficulties dealing with life from time to time. Many times those difficulties begin to interfere with everyday problems. You should seek counseling when those difficulties are interfering with everyday problems. Some good signs to watch out for are:

- You feel unhappy more days than you feel happy
- You have trouble sleeping
- You have trouble dealing with anger
- You experience significant life changes
- You feel that life has become overwhelming
- You have trouble keeping up with your normal responsibilities

What type of situations do people typically seek counseling for?

It would be impossible to make a list of all the situations that cause people to seek counseling, but some of the typical reasons that college students seek counseling are:

- Adapting to life transitions
- School stress
- Anxiety, depression or other mental illnesses
- Family and relationship issues
- Sexual abuse and dating violence
- Social and emotional difficulties related to disability and illness
- The death of a loved one

How long does counseling take?

The counseling process takes different amounts of time for different people. Ideally, counseling is terminated when the problem that you came to counseling for becomes more manageable or is resolved. Together with your counselor, you will set goals and develop a timeline for obtaining those goals.

Is everything I say really confidential?

Federal and state laws along with professional and ethical standards generally prohibit the counselor from disclosing any information you provide us unless we have your prior written consent. However, there are a couple of exceptions that require the counselor to break confidentiality. Those exceptions are:

- If you provide information indicating abuse of a child or dependent adult.
- If your counselor is court ordered to disclose information about you.
- If your counselor believes you or someone else identified needs protection from serious and foreseeable harm.