



November 2009

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:

- ▲ Roommate problems and floor tension
- ▲ Academic pressures due to procrastination, workload and lack of ability
- ▲ Burnout
- ▲ Not feeling like they have the stamina to keep up the pace through finals
- ▲ Job search stress for holiday break
- ▲ Problems from increased alcohol consumption
- ▲ Lack of initiative to find new friends or activities because it seems social groups are already set up
- ▲ Concerns about going home at Thanksgiving time—whether it's concern about seeing changes among old friends, how things will be with family members or dealing with a romantic relationship

The Thanksgiving Transition

When your student comes home during the Thanksgiving break, it will be a time of transition. You may have lived separately, while your student enjoyed some newfound independence. This can be challenging to reconcile when you're living under the same roof. So, here are some things to keep in mind as you all lovingly make this transition work:

Discuss, Don't Order. A student who has been living independently for the past few months will naturally balk if ordered to do something. Have discussions instead, where there is give and take and you both listen to one another.

Consider Compromise. Where can you compromise so that you and your student can meet in the middle?

Prepare for Difference. As your student learns new things and experiences new people, chances are that some of her views will change. Be prepared for her to express different opinions and to discuss varied topics – it's all part of her learning curve.

Agree to Disagree. As you discuss new topics, you and your student may not always see eye to eye. This doesn't mean anything about whether he respects you or not. It's more about him testing his newfound knowledge and interests. So, agree to disagree on certain topics and to listen

to one another's different perspectives. You'll learn a good deal from one another!

Reintegrate Into Family Life. The student who has been away for a while may need time to reintegrate back into family life. Her sleep patterns may not jive with everyone else's. She may take some nudging to participate in household chores. And siblings will need to get used to one another again. Just be prepared that this reintegration won't happen automatically.

The Thanksgiving transition will be okay, as long as you prepare for changes and remain open to your student. Talk about things, make him feel welcomed and realize that this Thanksgiving test run will make the winter break even better!

When a Student Returns Home...

- She may sleep a lot initially
- He may be out, catching up with old friends
- She may talk about missing her life at school
- He may need to talk through decisions about finances and classes
- She may seem different at times

Communicate about what you're noticing and keep yourself open.

No “Butts” About It: Educating Students About Smoking

Smoking is bad for you. We all know this. But does your student know the real truth about smoking?

According to the American Cancer Society, approximately 443,600 people die each year in the U.S. from illnesses related to cigarette smoking. In fact, more Americans die from cigarettes than alcohol, car accidents, suicide, AIDS, homicide and illegal drugs combined! Here are some other statistics to share:

- Almost 90% of adult smokers first smoked at or before age 19.
- Research finds that smoking even as few as one to four cigarettes a day can lead to serious health outcomes like increased risk of heart disease and a greater chance of dying at a younger age.
- It's estimated that more than 43 million U.S. adults currently smoke cigarettes—22% of men and 17% of women.
- Close to 50,000 non-smoking people die each year in the U.S. from secondhand smoke.
- Tobacco use accounts for at least 30% of all cancer deaths in the U.S., including 87% of lung cancer deaths.
- Flavored tobacco has become popular lately, in the form of clove cigarettes (kreteks), bidis and hookahs, yet these substances hold many of the same risks as cigarettes and other tobacco products.
- Hand-rolled cigarettes are not safer than those sold in stores – they actually have been found to increase the risk of cancers of the voice box, esophagus, mouth and throat.
- Nicotine is an addictive drug, just like cocaine or heroin.

- Smoking is a major cause of heart disease, aneurysms, bronchitis, emphysema and stroke.
- Smoking contributes to the severity of pneumonia and asthma symptoms.
- Tobacco is associated with reduced fertility and a higher risk of miscarriage among women, as well as premature births, stillbirths, infant death and low birth weight in infants.
- Smoking has been linked to a variety of other health problems including gum disease, bone fractures, ulcers and cataracts.
- The Centers for Disease Control estimate that adult male smokers lose an average of 13.2 years of life.
- Smoking harms nearly every organ of the body.
- Smoking low-tar cigarettes is not any better for you than smoking regular cigarettes.
- Smoking early in life will affect you later in life.

It's time for students to start taking care of themselves! If you have a student who smokes or who wants to help a friend, encourage them to participate in the Great American Smokeout happening this month. If they don't want to quit the

habit, talk with them about putting preventive health care practices in place, including regular screenings and measures such as oral exams and paying attention to repeated respiratory conditions.

The good news is that people who stop smoking at younger ages experience the greatest health benefits from quitting. They can reduce the risk of getting lung cancer and other smoking-related illnesses.

Source: www.cancer.org

The Benefits of Quitting

The American Cancer Society's Great American Smokeout occurs on Nov. 19, encouraging smokers to quit and supporting them in their efforts. Kicking the habit results in benefits beyond improved health, such as:

- Food will taste better.
- Your sense of smell returns to normal.
- Your breath, hair and clothes smell better.
- Your teeth and fingernails stop yellowing.
- Ordinary activities leave you less out of breath (climbing stairs).

Source: www.cancer.org

November is Vegan Month

Vegans go one step beyond what vegetarians choose by not eating animals; they steer clear of all animal products.

What Does It Mean? Vegans avoid using or consuming animal products. This includes milk, cheese, eggs, leather, fur, wool, silk, down and products tested on animals (such as chemicals or cosmetics).

Students often choose to make a commitment to a vegetarian or vegan lifestyle during their college years. The reasons for this vary: their awareness is raised, they are able to talk with more people making similar choices, they are stirred to get active and this lifestyle choice is one part of it.

Sources: www.eatright.org; www.vegan.org; www.vrg.org

Dealing with Difficult People

Dealing with difficult people is something your student has faced and will likely face again. Here are some tips to share to keep this issue in perspective:

- ▲ Most people just want to be listened to. Are you practicing reflective listening when talking with individuals so that they know you are hearing and absorbing what they have to say?
- ▲ People are socialized in different ways. When someone does something that you consider rude, consider the fact that he may not have been socialized in the same way that you were. Your points of reference are likely different as a result of different upbringings.
- ▲ We all need attention. And some people may go about garnering that attention by being difficult. Perhaps you can turn the tides by recognizing them for positive attributes so they may not feel the need to solicit negative attention.
- ▲ Too much attention can backfire. When difficult people see that they're getting a rise out of you, this can reinforce their negative behaviors. Keep your reactions in check.
- ▲ We all need an outlet. Dealing with difficult folks can take its toll. That's why it's important to have a confidential sounding board at your disposal. Talk with a supervisor or advisor about the struggles you're facing. An objective party can often help you wade through hurt feelings, anger and frustration to come up with more effective ways to manage the turkeys trying to get you down.

Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

As the weather gets colder, carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning typically has more opportunities to occur. Share this fact checker with your student so he can easily recognize the symptoms of CO poisoning, should it occur.

What is carbon monoxide?

Carbon monoxide is an odorless, colorless gas that can cause sudden illness and death.

Where is CO found?

CO is found in combustion fumes, such as those produced by cars and trucks, small gasoline engines, stoves, lanterns, burning charcoal and wood, and gas ranges and heating systems. CO from these sources can build up in enclosed or semi-enclosed spaces. Breathing it can poison people and animals in these spaces.

What are the symptoms of CO poisoning?

The most common symptoms of CO poisoning are:

- Headache
- Dizziness
- Weakness
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Chest pain
- Confusion

High levels of CO inhalation can cause loss of consciousness and death. Unless suspected, CO poisoning can be difficult to diagnose

because the symptoms mimic other illnesses. People who are sleeping or intoxicated can die from CO poisoning before ever experiencing symptoms.

How does CO poisoning work?

Red blood cells pick up CO quicker than they pick up oxygen. If there is a lot of CO in the air, the body may replace oxygen in blood with CO. This blocks oxygen from getting into the body, which can damage tissues and result in death.

Source: www.cdc.gov

How can I avoid CO poisoning from my vehicle?

- Have a mechanic check the exhaust system of your car every year. A small leak in your car's exhaust system can lead to a build up of CO inside the car.
- Never run a car or truck in the garage with the garage door shut. CO can build up quickly while your car or truck is running in a closed garage. Never run your car or truck inside a garage that is attached to a house and always open the door to any garage to let in fresh air when running a car or truck inside the garage.
- If you drive a vehicle with a tailgate, when you open the tailgate, you also need to open vents or windows to make sure air is moving through your car. If only the tailgate is open CO from the exhaust will be pulled into the car.

Supporting Sick Students

Being sick stinks, whether it's the H1N1 flu, a stomach virus or a bad cold. And the season of sniffles is now upon us. There are some things you can do to help make students' sickbeds not quite so miserable, though:

- **Make Sick-Packs.** Include items such as a package of tissues, a can of soup, cough drops, some teabags, a magazine and Vitamin C drops, along with anything you know helps to make your student feel better.
- **Be Proactive.** Encourage hand washing, sneezing into the elbow, disinfecting doorknobs and light switches, keeping their room clean and more.
- **Encourage Academic Follow-Through.** Students who are sick may wonder if they can miss class or postpone assignments as a result. Encourage them to talk with their

professors and their academic advisors to find out what's possible so they're not putting themselves in hot water.



- **Push the Health Center.** Sick students don't just need to suffer—the health center is there for them to use. So, strongly suggest that they get assistance—and possibly a prescription—to help their illness go away sooner rather than later.
- **Keep in Touch.** When we're sick, we often crave the comforts of home. If your student is away, keep in touch and check in to let him know he's not alone.

H1N1 Signs & Symptoms

The signs and symptoms associated with the H1N1 flu are similar to seasonal flu. They include:

Fever	Headache
Cough	Chills
Sore throat	Fatigue
Runny or stuffy nose	Diarrhea
Body aches	Vomiting

Encourage your student to visit the health center if he's not feeling well.

Emergency warning signs in adults that require urgent medical attention include:

- ▲ Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- ▲ Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- ▲ Sudden dizziness
- ▲ Confusion
- ▲ Severe or persistent vomiting
- ▲ Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever & worse cough

Getting to Know Faculty & Staff

Simple tips for students

Sometimes students are so focused on the intent of their conversation with a faculty or staff member that they forget to take a few minutes to get to know more about that person.

To learn more about the faculty and staff in their lives, students can do things like:

- ▲ Ask about something that's hanging on their office wall ("That mask is really interesting—where did you get it?")
- ▲ Notice their diploma and ask what they liked about attending XYZ University
- ▲ Comment on their lunch ("Oh, Diet Dr. Pepper is one of my favorites, too.")
- ▲ Ask how long they've been at the institution and where they're originally from
- ▲ Comment on something mentioned in class ("In class last week you mentioned your dog—what kind do you have?" or "The story you told last week about veterans often having trouble with driving once they return from war intrigued me and I looked up more about it.")
- ▲ Notice a book on their bookshelf
- ▲ Ask if they have a favorite kind of music or if they've seen any good movies lately

Sometimes a few minutes of "get-to-know-you" talk can go a long way in helping your student develop a relationship with a professor or staff member on campus. And students need these people in their lives, as educators, challengers and advocates.