

May 2008

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 spring:

- ▲ **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**
- ▲ **Packing and 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.

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

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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.

- More personal emphasis on weaknesses, rather than strengths
- The “real world” still seems far away

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 on 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 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 how loans are going to be paid
- Worry about immediate costs such as insurance, car and living arrangements
- For some, realizing the credit debt that has piled up over the college years
- 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.

What Students Need from You During Finals

As students dig into their final academic push of the year, here is what they can use from you:

- ✓ **supportive comments**
 - ✓ **encouraging emails, cards and IMs**
 - ✓ **understanding if he/she doesn’t call you right back when you leave a message**
 - ✓ **not too much pressure about summer plans**
 - ✓ **useful, fun care packages**
 - ✓ **help in making arrangements for move out, summer storage, etc.**
- Students need to know that you believe in them and are there to support them as they go through this stressful, emotional time of year.**

Taking a Look at Ethics

So much growth happens in college. One area in which this is really noticeable is in the area of ethical development. Students may be pondering questions such as: What do I value and why? Why did my parents teach me to...? What should I do about...? What do I want to be and how does this relate to what's important to me in life? These questions are just a few of many that college students ask themselves during their college experience.

Karen Kitchener, a researcher who studies college students, offers five ethical principles as a framework for exploring values and making decisions:

Do No Harm—Make every effort to avoid psychological and physical harm of others, both intentional and unintentional.

Benefit Others—Aim to promote the personal growth of others and make a positive contribution to others' welfare.

Respect Autonomy—Remember that everyone has the right to think, choose and act, as long as their actions do not interfere with the welfare of others. They also have the right to privacy, confidentiality and informed consent.

Be Just—Demonstrate fair treatment of all individuals and fair distributions of goods, services and rewards.

Be Faithful—Keep promises and be truthful and loyal in all endeavors.

Ethical Decision Making

As students continue to explore their own personal value system and determine what they believe and why, here are some questions they can ask themselves when making decisions:

Will anyone be harmed as a result of my choice?

- Will my decision promote a win/win situation for all involved?
- Am I respecting myself and others with my choice?
- How will my decision make me feel about myself?
- How would I feel if my family knew about my choice?

Is my decision in conflict with any of my values?

Some of these values will evolve as student get older and experience more of the world. That's okay! But, as long as they keep Kitchener's principles in mind, they'll be on the road to making good, fair decisions.

Job Interview Prep

As summer job season arrives, you can help your student prepare in advance for these common interview questions:

Tell me about yourself. OK, this might seem like a no-brainer, since the interviewer is sitting with your life story (resume) in front of her. But the vagueness of the question is purposeful, since it gives the prospective employer the chance to evaluate your unrehearsed reaction to what is important in your life. So, what are your goals and personal priorities?

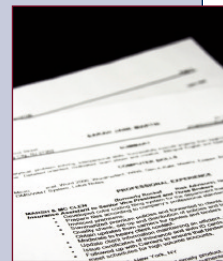
Why do you think you would like to work for this company? The answer to this question could/should be consistent with your answer to the previous one. In other words, the things that have motivated you and shaped you through life should be related to why you are knocking on this particular employer's door.

What sort of skills do you have? Be honest in your answer, since if you embellish your skills in the interview, the truth will become painfully evident once you start working. It will also make your adjustment to the company that much harder, since you will be dealing with greater expectations than you can deliver. You're better off being honest and open, and if there are critical skills you're lacking, showing a genuine interest in learning them.

Have you ever made a mistake at work or school, and how did you deal with it? You don't have to be too open with these kinds of questions, but it would be good for you to be able to share an example of how you learned a lesson "the hard way."

Is there anything else that you'd like to share about yourself? Here is a question that can help you hit a homerun during the interview, if you come prepared. Now is the time to elaborate on your skills, experiences and personal history that make you stand out from the rest of the crowd. For example, you can tell about your experiences with hall council or student government and how you were successful in helping other students bond. These types of skills are invaluable to an employer who needs to maintain peaceful relations between all people.

Whether your student is shopping for a summer job or a full-time gig after graduation, thinking about these questions ahead of time can help him feel better prepared.



Helping Students Stay Healthy During Summer Sports Season

We've all heard about someone who has "blown out their knee." Knee problems can strike anyone as they participate in active pursuits. Here are some of the most common injuries:

A Sprain: When your student stretches or tears a ligament, a sprain may occur. At the time of injury, he may hear a popping or snapping sound in the knee.

Movement will be painful and he probably won't be able to put weight on that leg. There will be swelling, fluid behind the kneecap and the knee will feel loose or unstable.

A Strain: When your student partially or completely tears a muscle or tendon, it can result in knee strain. The symptoms are similar to those of a sprain, plus there may be bruising around the injury.



Tendonitis: When your student irritates or inflames a tendon through overuse, tendonitis may occur. Symptoms include tenderness or pain when walking, bending, extending or lifting the leg.

Meniscal Tears: When your student participates in sports that involve sudden changes in speed or side-to-side movements, he may tear the menisci or extra pads of cartilage atop his shinbone (tibia). This often happens at the same time as a severe sprain. This injury can cause tenderness, swelling and tightness around the front of the knee.

Fractures & Dislocations: When your student cracks, breaks or shatters a bone that's a fracture. When the kneecap is knocked to the side of the knee joint, that's a dislocation. There will be a lot of pain, trouble moving the bone, swelling and an abnormal bulge on the side of the knee.

Treat Injuries with "RICE"

The RICE model includes:

Rest: Reduce or stop using the injured area for at least 48 hours. If you have a leg injury, you may need to stay off of it completely.

Ice: Put an ice pack on the injured area for 20 minutes at a time, 4 to 8 times per day. Use a cold pack, ice bag or a plastic bag filled with crushed ice that has been wrapped in a towel.

Compression: Encourage your student to ask his doctor about elastic wraps, air casts, special boots or splints that can be used to compress an injured ankle, knee or wrist to reduce swelling.

Elevation: Keep the injured area elevated above the level of the heart to help decrease swelling. Use a pillow to help elevate an injured limb.

Source: www.niams.nih.gov/hi/topics/childsports/child_sports.htm

Preventing Knee Injuries

Encourage students to take care of their knees by...

- Wearing protective equipment when playing sports, such as kneepads, shin guards, helmets and more.
- Wearing supportive shoes appropriate to your sport.
- Warming up and cooling down when doing activities.
- Stretching regularly to increase flexibility.
- Participating in strength-training to strengthen muscles.
- Bending the knees when landing after a jump.
- Crouching and bending at the knees and hips if a sport involves cutting laterally or pivoting frequently.
- Avoiding play when very tired or in pain.
- Reporting any pain, discomfort or questions to parents, coaches and doctors.



Knees need to last a good, long time so it's important to take proper knee health into consideration.

Sources: Nemours Foundation at http://kidshealth.org/teen/safety/first_aid/knee_injuries.html; National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases at www.niams.nih.gov/hi/topics/childsports/child_sports.htm

