



April 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:

- ▲ Some students lose their motivation for the final push
- ▲ Spring fever hits and problems arise as students become restless
- ▲ Anticipating the end of the year
- ▲ Frustration and confusion develop because of class registration
- ▲ Papers and exams are piling up
- ▲ Summer job panic
- ▲ Feeling like they are no longer accountable for their actions—may turn to vandalism
- ▲ Sexual assault increases
- ▲ Concerns about moving home for the summer

Sustainability Striking a Chord with Students

We listen to students. They may not always think they are being heard, yet their voices resonate when it comes to causes they have a passion for. And, lately, creating a “green” campus with sustainable systems is a cause that is certainly striking a chord.

Sustainability refers to the ability to meet our needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs. With that in mind, it's no wonder that students are concerned! We're talking about their future and that of the children in their lives, along with a growing commitment to be better stewards of the earth. Students are taking action because they want to be part of a solution.

This action comes in many shapes and sizes. For instance:

- At Humboldt State University (CA), they fought for a sustainability coordinator to be hired.
- At Dickinson College (PA), students sewed cloth to-go bags to replace paper sacks and sold them outside of the Grab-and-Go food facility on campus.
- At Mt. Hood Community College (OR), work-study members of the Green Team sorted through campus recycling bins.
- At The Evergreen State College (WA), Central Oregon

Community College, the University of Kentucky and other schools, students voted by wide margins to pay additional fees to cover renewable energy purchases.

- At the University of Vermont, two students who researched paper purchasing patterns made a proposal to the president, resulting in a school-wide switch to post-consumer recycled, chlorine-free paper.

Talk with your student about what is happening on campus regarding sustainability. It's about raising awareness, getting involved, changing policies and educating communities while looking out for the environment. Tap into what it means individually to your student—the conversation can be enlightening!

Ways That Sustainability Can Show Up on Campus

Dining services choosing to serve more locally produced foods

Residence halls having recycling or energy-saving competitions

Events being “greened” through less paper use, offsetting carbon emissions and more

Campus community members biking instead of driving

Students opting to have a portion of their student fee go toward renewable energy sources

And more! It's an exciting time to be on today's increasingly-sustainable campuses.

Understanding Compulsive Overeating Disorder

Compulsive Eating Disorder or Binge Eating Disorder is defined as a “type of eating disorder not otherwise specified and is characterized by recurrent binge eating without the regular use of compensatory measures to counter the binge eating,” according to the National Eating Disorders Association (NEDA).

An article in *Psychology Today* explains that, “Compulsive overeating might be the most common eating disorder in the United States—where as many as 4 million adults struggle with this disorder, and the rates are said to be higher among the severely obese. Although most people with this problem are overweight to obese, binge eating disorder is a little more common in women than in men.”

Signs & Symptoms

Binge eaters tend to eat past the point of being full at a frenzied pace, says NEDA. They also eat secretly and feel ashamed after bingeing. Most binge eaters have low self-esteem, are depressed and/or lonely. Other symptoms may include:

- fear of not being able to control eating and, while eating, not being able to stop
- isolation—fear of eating around and with others
- vague or secretive eating patterns and hiding food in strange places (closets, cabinets, suitcases, under the bed) to eat at a later time

Binge eaters face many health risks if this disorder goes untreated, such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol levels, heart disease, diabetes and gallbladder disease.

If You Suspect Your Student is Struggling

NEDA offers some tips on how to caringly confront a student who may have an eating disorder:

1. Never assume someone has an eating disorder without speaking to him first. When you talk with him, make sure you schedule enough time so you both don't feel rushed during the conversation.
2. When talking with your student, be direct and have specific details to share so that she understands your concern. Use active listening skills since she may share personal information about her problems.
3. Be available to your student, but don't feel like it is your responsibility to serve as his “counselor.” Encourage him to tap into campus resources like the

counseling center where trained professionals can help him work through his eating concerns.

Not every person who overeats or is overweight has an eating disorder. It's just important to know about a variety of issues, including compulsive overeating disorder, so you can tune into what your student and/or her friends may be experiencing.

Sources: Adapted from an RA Manager article (February, 2008) by Kelly Espy, Emory & Henry College; The NEDA website at www.NationalEatingDisorders.org, Michael Levine, PhD and Linda Smolak, PhD.; *Psychology Today*, Oct. 12, 2005

Students' Heroes: Who Are They and Why?

Amidst the wide possibilities, from Spiderman to firefighters, students in a recent poll still named their parents as their top pick for the title of “heroes.”

When the Associated Press and MTV asked 1,280 students between the ages of 13 and 24 years old to list their heroes, parents got top billing. Mothers were chosen by 29% of those surveyed, fathers were named by 21% and parents (without designation) by 16%.

Perhaps that helps explain why many of today's students have such a connection with their parents—they like and admire them!

Other heroes listed by participants included grandmothers, brothers, friends, God, teachers/professors, military members, coaches and police officers. Among famous people, Martin Luther King, Jr. was mentioned by 4%, with people like Al Gore, Oprah Winfrey, Tiger Woods, President Bush and Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-NY) each garnering 1%. Lest we forget superheroes, Spiderman and Superman also won a mention by 1% of those polled.

It looks like many students consider you to be a superhero, too!

Source: The Associated Press, as reported in the *Houston Chronicle* (8/20/07)



Sibling Connections

National Sibling Day is April 10. Here are some ways for college students and their siblings to stay connected:

- **A “My Life” Photo Shoot—with a Special Guest!** Your college student can go on a “photo shoot” of her life at school, incorporating a certain stuffed animal or other small item into each picture. Then, when she sends them via a photo-sharing site (i.e. Snapfish, Kodak Gallery), her sibling can look at each photo, trying to find the small item. And the sibling at home can do the same for her sibling at college!
- **The Tune Share.** Siblings can share good music from their iPods with one another by swapping playlists. They’ll stay connected and learn more about one another’s developing musical tastes.
- **The Great Postcard Pass.** Since it’s great fun to get “real” mail, encourage siblings to share wacky postcards with one another, from local sites to ones that they make on their own. You can give each sibling a bunch of postcard stamps to help facilitate this process.
- **Blog a Bunch.** Siblings can swap stories through an online journal blog.
- **The Same Thing.** Siblings can get two notebooks, pens or folders that are exactly the same and share them. That way, they can think of one another using the same notebook in class, even if many miles separate them.
- **Plan-a-Date.** Encourage the younger sibling to plan a special day to share with his college sibling this summer. It might be



going to a water park, taking a hike, visiting a friend or whatever. This will give them both something to look forward to!

- **Continuous Stories or Drawings.** One sibling can start a story online and then email it to her sibling to add her own twist. This can go back and forth for a long time and will result in something mighty interesting! Or siblings can swap an ongoing drawing via regular mail.
 - **Book It.** Siblings can read the same book in their respective places so they can then compare notes. Or, an older sibling can read favorite kid’s books on tape so younger siblings at home can enjoy bedtime stories from afar.
 - **Monk-E-Mail.** They can send goofy monkey emails for free through www.careerbuilder.com/monk-e-mail/. It’s a hoot!
 - **Back & Forth.** A very fun connection is finding a crazy item, like a paper mache head or a wacky knick-knack, which siblings can stealthily swap with one another when they least expect it. For instance, it might end up in a visiting sibling’s suitcase one time while another instance may see it left in a glove compartment or sent through the mail.
 - **Handprint Hellos.** Encourage siblings still at home to trace their hands monthly and write one thing they did that month in each finger space. Then it can be sent to the college sibling to keep him up on activities at home. Your college student may want to return the favor, too!
- Staying connected doesn’t have to be hard and it’s vitally important for siblings to still feel like a part of one another’s lives. Hopefully some of these ideas will spark that connection!

How to Stay Stressed

As one of the most stressful times of year arrives—those last few weeks before finals and move-out—remind your student that there are plenty of ways to keep himself stressed, such as:

- Eat anything you want
- Never exercise
- Personalize all criticism
- Break off friendships
- View everything as extreme

Make more promises than you can keep



- Forget your sense of humor
- Never ask for help
- Become a workaholic
- Discard all time management skills
- Get very little sleep
- Break all boundaries
- Procrastinate

Worry about things you can’t control

- Set impossible standards
- View all challenges as problems
- Never take time off

Once that’s out of the way, he’ll be better able to assess his own level of stress and how he is managing—or mismanaging—it. You’re providing a valuable mirror to help him reflect on and, hopefully, improve his quality of life.



Checkout Prep

If your student lives in the residence halls, he or she will be going through the room check-out process before leaving. Since that time is right around the corner, here are a few tips to share with your student to ensure that the process is smooth as can be:



- **Go to Informational Meetings and Read Flyers.** The residence hall staff will pass out information about checkout and the process students need to follow. Encourage your student to go to informational meetings and to

read the materials. Plus, he can ask questions of the hall staff, too—they'll welcome the interest!

- **Don't Ignore It.** It's important to note that the checkout process isn't optional—failure to comply with hall policies will likely result in an improper checkout charge. Students need to turn in their keys and sign out of their rooms officially. Ignoring the process just makes the aftermath messy—and expensive.
- **Make a Checkout Appointment with Your RA.** Students should take a look at their final exam schedule and plan when they'll go home accordingly. RAs are students, too, going through finals while also trying to close the building so, students are often asked to make an appointment with their RA to check out. Encourage them to stick to this timeframe

out of respect for the staff's schedule—and to make sure that, when they're ready to help. Otherwise, they may have to wait awhile when all they want to do is hit the road for the summer!

- **Clean the Room!** Once students start packing and moving things around, the giant dust bunnies are bound to make themselves known. Encourage students to clean as they go so that they don't have a big mess to contend with when they're ready for checkout. And leaving a room filthy is not only disrespectful to the kind cleaning staff who have helped your student all year, there is also a hefty charge associated with it.
- **Contend with Rug Residue.** If your student is holding his rug in place with duct tape, there will likely be sticky residue when he pulls it up. Have him ask the building staff what he should use to clean that up. Again, if left behind, he will be charged for floor cleaning.
- **Think About Other "Little Things."** Furniture that was in the closet all year needs to be put back on the floor. Tape residue on the walls and doors needs to be removed. These "little things" add up.
- **Know What You're Signing.** Once the room condition has been assessed, your student will probably be asked to sign her room contract, saying that she agrees with the assessment. Make sure that she pays attention to what it is that she's signing so there are no surprises over the summer!

Other Move-Out Considerations

- ▲ **The Way Home.** How will your student get home? In his own vehicle? Will you borrow a truck or van to pick her up?
- ▲ **Storing Belongings.** Most residence halls don't allow students to store items over the summer. So, if your student is moving off campus, can he leave some bigger items—carpets, furniture, etc.—in that space, even if he isn't yet paying rent? Or will you need to rent a storage space?
- ▲ **Having Enough Containers.** Boxes, trash bags and other containers are often at a premium during the end of the year. Make sure your student is well-equipped to start packing so that doesn't need to happen on the actual move-out day! Consider using suitcases and duffel bags, too.
- ▲ **Stuff Disposal.** It's important that students find out how to discard and recycle unwanted items within the halls. They can't just leave items in their room or the hall so, encourage your student to talk with residence hall staff ahead of time.
- ▲ **Emotions May Surface.** Saying goodbye to friends and moving on can be emotional for many students. Be prepared that move-out day won't be all about the tasky things—it'll likely involve seeking out friends, swapping addresses and more.

