



March 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 month:

- ▲ Low energy levels and restlessness
- ▲ Mid-semester slump and sickness
- ▲ Making plans for next year—housing, classes and financial aid
- ▲ Hidden conflicts between roommates and friends begin to arise
- ▲ Drug and alcohol use may increase
- ▲ Mid-term anxiety
- ▲ Seniors thinking about graduation
- ▲ Excitement or depression about Spring Break plans
- ▲ Pledging begins for Greek organizations
- ▲ Changing or deciding on a major

It's not just for seniors!

Getting Resume-Ready

No matter what year your student is, there's no need to put off the creation of a resume! Developing and then tweaking a resume annually, if not more frequently, is a smart task because it allows students to explore their accomplishments and their goals. Plus, they'll be ready to apply as soon as that desirable job, leadership position or internship comes along!

You can help your student consider his resume by posing questions such as:

- What is your objective? (i.e. to gain an internship within a particular field, to gain a summer job, etc.)
- What jobs have you held thus far?
- What leadership positions or involvements would you like to highlight to show various skills? (i.e. played soccer, publicity coordinator for hall government, volunteered with local arts council, etc.)
- What special skills might you spotlight? (i.e. speaking another language, knowing how to create a webpage, etc.)
- Do you have samples of your work to get a portfolio started? (i.e. publications, lesson plans, flyers for events, etc.)
- Who would you trust to serve as a reference, should you be asked for

one? (consider supervisors, coaches, advisors, teachers, etc.)

Putting all of this info, along with any samples for a possible portfolio and contact details, in one place—such as a hanging file box—can help your student stay organized, too.

Then, for help putting his resume together in a concise, professional manner, your student can visit the career services center. He doesn't have to be a senior to get help! Matter of fact, the career center welcomes students who want to get a jump on their career exploration process. While he's there, he can take career inventories, talk with a well-informed counselor and get valuable guidance.

Getting resume-ready... it's not just for seniors anymore!

Rounding Up Details

Half the battle when creating a resume is remembering specifics. Encourage your student to jot down details now about:

- ✓ jobs/leadership positions held
- ✓ time frames
- ✓ employer/advisor contacts

Digging up this info years after the fact can be frustrating. Having it all in one place makes the whole resume process much, much simpler.



Watching Water Waste

March 22 is the World Day for Water. In these eco-conscious times, we can all be more aware of our water use and abuse. Here are some simple tips to share with your student:

- **Check for leaks.** A simple faucet drip or leak in the toilet can add up to 15 gallons of water a day, or 105 gallons a week, or 5,475 gallons of wasted water a year!
- **Take shorter showers.** Cutting back on shower time will save gallons of water each day. To soak, take a partially filled bath, which uses much less water.
- **Don't use the toilet as a wastebasket.** Flushing tissues or other pieces of garbage wastes water.

- **Turn off the water while brushing your teeth or shaving.** You can save three to five gallons per minute while grooming.
- **Don't defrost food by running it under hot water.** Defrost frozen food in the refrigerator or microwave.
- **Keep cold drinking water in the refrigerator.** Don't let the water run while you wait for it to get cold enough to drink.
- **Don't run the dishwasher when it is only partially filled.** Wait until you have a full load.
- **Select the proper load level when doing laundry.** You'll save water by using the right setting and not filling the washer up more than necessary.
- **Water the lawn only when necessary.** If you step on grass and it springs back when you move your foot, it doesn't need watering.
- **Mow as infrequently as possible.** The more you mow, the more you have to water.
- **Get rid of your weeds.** They soak up more water than regular plants.
- **Don't water in the wind or sun.** It will dry up the water faster and move it to places it's not needed. Water during early mornings or late evenings.
- **Don't let the water run while washing your car.** You'll save gallons of water.

Spring Care Package Ideas

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It's almost time for spring to be sprung! So, consider putting together a spring-themed care package for your student. Include:

- a packaged seed & soil kit so he can grow herbs or flowers on his windowsill
- a Frisbee
- those squishy, bird-shaped, marshmallow Peeps candies
- a Slinky (it looks like a "spring")
- a baseball cap for all the sun they'll be facing
- flower-shaped post-it notes
- a stuffed baby animal like a chick or bunny
- a new book or magazine to read outside
- trail mix to munch on during her next hike with friends

When it comes to spring, the possibilities are plentiful!

St. Patrick's Day & Spring Break

Fun times that can turn dangerous

By now, we all know the tragic story of Natalee Holloway, the U.S. student who went missing during a spring break trip to Aruba. It serves as a cautionary tale on a variety of scores that we can reinforce with students as they head out on their own spring break adventures:

- don't go off with people you don't know
- use the buddy system with friends you trust
- don't accept drinks from people you don't know (whether they're alcoholic or not—a colorless, flavorless drug could have been slipped in)
- don't become intoxicated so your judgment is impaired
- never stop thinking "it could happen to me"



Some of these warnings hold true for another March rite that can turn dangerous: the out-of-control St. Patrick's Day celebration. Green beer, group gatherings, letting down their guard... this can be an awful combination, leading to poor decision-making and possible harm.

Parents can help by having honest conversations with their students before anything can happen. Discuss underage drinking, the importance of staying clear-headed, simple ways to stay safe while still having fun and more. This way, your student will enter into decisions with some clear thoughts. You can't control what he ends up doing, yet you can show your concern and care—and that's likely to creep into his head when he's deciding how to act.

Choosing Athletic Shoes This Spring

Putting your best foot forward” is always a good idea, especially when it comes to exercise. So, whether students are hitting the streets, doing treadmill time or trying any number of active pursuits this spring, there’s no need to get hurt. They just need to consider their feet and the athletic shoes that fit them best.

Getting To Know Their Feet

Before deciding upon footwear, it’s important for them to get to know their own feet.



They can start off with the “wet foot” test to determine the shape of their arch. It takes wetting their foot and stepping onto a brown paper bag. They may find:

- A slight, thin imprint means they have a high arch. This may cause their feet to roll outward or underpronate. As a result, they’ll need shoes with adequate arch support that are well cushioned and soft, according to the Association for Fitness

Professionals. The shoe form or “last” should also be curved.

- A full footprint means they have a low arch or flat foot. Their feet may roll inward or overpronate. They’ll need shoes with moderate arch support that are firm and have motion-control features. A last that is straight also works best.

Shoe Shopping Tips

Various fitness associations and shoe manufacturers offer the following tips to consider as students shop for the best fitting athletic shoes:

- For proper fit, make sure that there’s a thumbnail’s width between the end of the shoe and the longest toe. The heel shouldn’t slip and the wearer should be able to wiggle his toes.
- Consult with a podiatrist to assess which shoes will be most beneficial if the wearer suffered previous foot injuries.
- Avoid shoes that bend in the center of the arch or behind the ball of the foot, suggests the American Fitness Professionals and Associates. The human foot is not designed to bend here and neither should shoes!



- Shop for shoes toward the end of the day when feet are most swollen. After all, exercising will cause feet to swell. And wear the same socks intended for use during workouts.
- Don’t rush and don’t feel pressured. If a student’s primary activity involves lunging, she should do some right there in the shoe store! She’ll want to move around to see how the shoes really feel.
- Take the shoe off and squeeze the heel to check how firm it is.
- Set the shoe on a flat surface to make sure it doesn’t tilt to one side or the other. Tilting may be a sign of poor workmanship.
- And remember that athletic shoes do not need to be “broken in” like some other shoes do. They should feel comfortable when they’re being tried on in the store.

Nothing kills the resolve to workout like the pain and blisters that poor-fitting shoes may cause. Students can invest some time now to ensure that their athletic shoes will provide the necessary comfort and support. Their grateful, healthy feet will carry them away!

Determining Fitness Needs

Is your student a workout warrior or a multi-sport athlete? This makes a difference when she is looking at shoes. Lloyd Smith of the American Academy of Podiatric Sports Medicine offers these tips:

- The lateral, side-to-side support of a cross-training shoe is best for occasional activities such as tennis, basketball, racquetball and some aerobics classes.
- The built-in front-to-back support found in other cross training shoes works best for casual walkers, joggers, and cyclists.
- Sports-specific shoes for things such as running, aerobics, and more are the best bet if students participate in that activity more than once a week.



Planning the Summer Transition

The approaching summertime can provide challenges for students and their families, especially if they've been away from one another this year. Here are some questions your student may ask as you work together to make the summer transition smoother and much more pleasant:

Expectations:

- What are your expectations for curfew?
- What are your expectations for my going to bed/getting up in the morning?
- What am I allowed to do/not allowed to do that is different than before I left college?
- How can I contribute to the daily "home" operations?

Finances:

- How much money do I need to save this summer?
- How many hours a week do you expect me to be working?
- Will I get an allowance?
- What are you expecting me to pay for as far as my expenses go

Other Transitions

Your student may not be spending all or part of the summer at home due to an internship, volunteer opportunity, travel, working back at school and more. Talk about this transition, too, as it may be a different situation for all of you this summer.

- ▲ How will you stay in touch?
- ▲ Will you travel or will they travel for a visit?
- ▲ Are there any important family gatherings for your student to factor into his schedule?
- ▲ How will you handle finances? Transportation? Food? Housing?

over the summer?

Family Responsibilities:

- Are there specific "chores" you are expecting me to complete?
- Are there any new family obligations/traditions I should be aware of?
- What dates can I put on my calendar now (i.e. brother's graduation, aunt's baby shower, etc.), so I can try to schedule work and social obligations accordingly?

Transportation:

- Will I have access to a car?
- If I will have access to a car, what will I be responsible for regarding maintenance, insurance and gas?
- If I won't have access to a car, how will we work out my getting to work and/or other obligations?

Shared Space:

- Do I still have my own bedroom (remaining as I left it)?
- Should I plan to do my own laundry? If not, what can I do to limit any impact?
- Are you expecting me to be at family meals?
- Where can I store my stuff?

Visitors:

- Can I have friends over?
- Can I have friends visit overnight?
- Am I allowed to throw any parties?
- What are we/are we not allowed to do?

Although some of these questions sound basic, they can be the cause of a great deal of strife when emotions are running high. Talking through the transition ahead of time can alleviate big problems in the long run.

Helping students take responsibility for their health

Making a Medical File

Students can often get so caught up in their busy lives that they forget to make appointments to visit the dentist, doctor or other medical professionals. Unfortunately, this is a bad practice that can become a bad lifetime habit, as your student fails to put her well being first.

So, consider creating a medical file for her that contains the following:

- a list of up-to-date vaccinations
- what medications she is on
- dates of last doctor visits
- contact info, including websites, addresses and phone numbers, of medical professionals she has an established relationship with
- health insurance ID numbers
- any other details that could be helpful to know

You won't do this for your child forever, yet giving her a file with all the details allows her to take stock of her medical history—and to take responsibility for what she has to do next as she takes these steps into adulthood. Here's to your student's health!

