



April 2011

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 can cause anxiety
- ▲ 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

What Students Need: Sending Care & Encouragement

Students are in the final stretch, as they wrap up the academic year. This means papers, projects, activities and much more. It can be a stressful time, and your support along the way can make a big difference.

Whether you're sending a care package or bits and pieces of encouragement along the way, your student is bound to appreciate your efforts! Some ideas include:

- **Notes of Encouragement.** Consider sending texts, emails or handwritten notes to encourage your student and let him know that you believe in him.
- **Healthy Snacks.** If you're putting together a care package, include some healthy snacks, like granola bars, dried fruit, yogurt-covered raisins and baked chips. That doesn't mean you can't include a few "guilty pleasures," too!
- **Photos.** Have the family dog pose for a portrait. Or have siblings do something goofy for the camera! Getting glimpses into family/friend life back home can give your student a needed break—and some laughs!
- **Cartoons & Quotes.** Send along that funny Far Side calendar

Care Package Food Safety

If you're giving or sending your student perishable food items, be sure to keep food safety in mind. Some helpful tips are available by heading to www.fsis.usda.gov, typing "college" in the search bar and clicking on "Food Safety Tips for College Students."

page that you think your student will appreciate. Or print out an inspirational quote that fits her and put it in a magnetized frame she can stick on her fridge.

- **Comfy Clothes.** A pair of comfy socks, lounge pants or a hometown T-shirt can give your student some comfort and care.
- **Food Coupons.** A gift card for a local restaurant or grocery store could be very welcomed indeed, as your student might need to get off campus for a break during this intense time.
- **Office Supplies.** A new pack of highlighters or pens could certainly be put to good use!

Just think about who your student is and what brings him comfort and care. That'll make all the difference!



Promoting Car Care

If your student has a car, does she know how to take care of it? Car care is a lifelong skill that will serve her well.

During April's National Car Care Month, encourage your student to visit www.carcare.org/car-care-guide to get a free electronic or print copy of their Car Care Guide. The guide includes:

- ▲ Tips on getting better gas mileage
- ▲ A car care checklist
- ▲ How to protect the environment through proper vehicle maintenance
- ▲ Descriptions of major vehicle systems and parts
- ▲ A maintenance log
- ▲ A list of questions to ask when repairs are being done

Another good resource is from the National Public Radio show "Car Talk" at www.cartalk.com. Their site includes:

- ▲ A test drive library
- ▲ A loan calculator
- ▲ The Car Talk auto advisor
- ▲ Info on hybrid vehicles
- ▲ How to sell your car
- ▲ Mechanic files
- ▲ Tips on how to keep your car running
- ▲ A roadside survival guide
- ▲ Safe driving tips for summer, winter and anytime
- ▲ Car cleaning tips from the pros

So, whether your student has a car or is thinking of buying one, learning to take care of that car is an important piece of the automotive puzzle!

Focusing on Heroes

When we talk about heroes, students have any number of people on their minds: from aunts to grandparents to sports stars to entertainers. Some opt for politically-minded folks while others are more drawn to humanitarians and non-profit figures.

Whatever the case may be, talking with your student about her heroes can stimulate some interesting conversation. Chances are that this past year of school has helped to form some of her opinions. And talking about heroes is another way to learn more about what holds meaning to your student.

As you embark on these discussions, consider people like Frank Buckles. He passed away on Feb. 27 as the last U.S. World War I veteran.

Buckles served as an Army ambulance driver in France during WWI and was then held as a prisoner of war for over three years during WWII. He also advocated for a national WWI monument in DC.

Frank Buckles is considered a hero by many. You and your student can learn more about him at www.frankbuckles.org.

Here's to our heroes!



"Toy Story 3": A Parenting Tale

Now that Oscar night has passed, we can look at the nominees clearly. One particularly poignant movie that earned accolades is "Toy Story 3."



This classic tale of a boy and the toys that love him grows up a bit, as the boy, "Andy," prepares to head to college. His toys are worried that they'll be forever forgotten. And his mother, despite being an animated character, tugs at every heartstring imaginable as she's hugging her boy goodbye.

"Toy Story 3" isn't just for kids. It's been the subject of Facebook and Twitter campaigns. Many traditional-aged college students who grew up with the original "Toy Story" movie in 1995 eagerly looked forward to the newest sequel. There was even a campus "cliffhanger" tour when the movie came out last year.

The storyline speaks to all of us, as we cling to the remembrances of childhood while navigating the adult world in front of us. It just might be a good summertime flick to share with your student.

Sources: The New York Times, 4/30/10; The Washington Post Campus Overload, 2/28/11



Move-Out Prep

For students living in the residence halls or in off-campus apartments, move-out will soon arrive. To help you and your student prepare, here are some important things to take into consideration:

Transport. How will your students get her belongings home? Will her car do the trick? Will she need to rent a van or truck?

Summer Storage. Since most residence halls don't have space to store student belongings, what are some other options? Does an off-campus landlord allow bigger items, like rugs, furniture and appliances, to be kept there over the summer? Is there a nearby storage space you could rent instead?

Extra Stuff. Recycling unwanted items takes some foresight so they don't just end up in the trash. Encourage your student to talk with a campus sustainability and/or recycling coordinator about options, as well as his residence hall staff. And then have him find out about donation and trash possibilities, too.

Will the community services office be collecting donated clothes, food and personal products? Is there an appropriate place to recycle paper, cardboard and other items? And where do big trash items go?

Packing Products. Since packing often gets left to the last minute, students don't always think about having adequate packing



Cleaning!

Once students start packing and moving things around, the giant dust bunnies are bound to make themselves known. Here are some cleaning tips to help make move-out go more smoothly:

- Encourage students to clean as they go so that they don't have a big mess to contend with when they're ready to check out.
- If your student has a rug held down with tape, have her ask the building staff what she should use to remove the sticky residue.
- Remind him that any furniture that was put in the closet or stored needs to be put back in place.
- Suggest that she get started on the tape residue on the walls, doors and windows that needs to be removed. This job always takes longer than you think and shouldn't be left until the final moment.
- Remind your student that leaving a room dirty is not only disrespectful to the kind cleaning staff, there is also a hefty charge associated with it.

materials. Trash bags, boxes, suitcases, duffel bags and plastic containers can all do the trick. Make sure your student is well-equipped before crunch time—those kinds of materials aren't generally available at the very last minute.

Final Goodbyes. Move-out time can be an emotional one for students, as they say goodbye to good friends, some of whom may be leaving for good. Be prepared for

move-out day to not just be about the tasky things. Seeking out friends for final goodbyes, hugs, meeting parents/siblings and more will all be part of it.

Thinking ahead to move-out day can help you and your student be prepared and efficient when the time comes. So, talk through these things now in order to get your ducks in a row and keep that last-minute stress at bay.

Share a Laugh

Life can be funny and April's National Humor Month is one way to recognize that. Even in the midst of your student's busy life these days, he needs to laugh.

So, consider sending along this link to Bravo's list of funniest movies of all time: www.boston.com/ae/movies/gallery/bravos_funniest/. Or make a list with your student of those movies that cause you to bust a gut. Remembering back to some shared laughter will likely give your student a smile and another connection to you.



Beating Stress: Tips to Share

Some folks are “stress resistant,” but at one time or another everyone will encounter a stressful situation. Your student is in the midst of a pretty stressful time, as the year winds to a close. Here are some stress busting tips to share:

Think & Plan Ahead.

Consider what you can do today to reduce your stress tomorrow. Maybe it's picking out your clothes the night before or planning your week's schedule in advance. Or it could involve organizing your computer desktop and filing papers quickly, so things are easy to find when you need them.

Assess the Situation. What causes you stress? Who causes you stress? If you can't turn the situation or relationship into a positive experience, then commit to avoiding it and/or changing your attitude toward that person or situation.

Tap into Your Support System. It's easier to be less stressed if you surround yourself with supportive, positive people. Which friends and family members serve this purpose for you? And how can you return the favor?

Just Say “No.” It's easy to say “yes” too many times, and get overwhelmed in the process. Saying “no” is fine too. It is okay to agree to help out or contribute to something, but only if you can fit it into your overall schedule. An occasional “no” can keep things on an even keel.

Steer Clear of Negative Talk. While it's easy to complain and dwell in negativity sometimes, it doesn't do a whole lot of good and can sap your energy. So, steer clear of those who want to engage

in “complaint fests” and be the most positive person you can be.

Laugh Regularly. Finding humor in everyday situations and taking every chance to laugh can do you an endless amount of good. They don't call laughter “internal jogging” for nothing! And your perspective is clearer and calmer when you're viewing some things through a filter of humor.

Use Nature as a Natural Stress Reliever. Take a stroll outside. Leave the library and do homework on a bench outdoors. Walk as you catch up with a friend. Just being outdoors will lower your stress and give you a new view on life.



Exercise and Eat Well. How you treat your body will determine how it responds when things aren't going well. Exercise regularly, choose a healthy diet and get enough sleep. If you do these things your body will cope with stress much more effectively.

Don't Try to Control the Uncontrollable. Things we have no control over sometimes cause stress. So practice accepting some things as they are and moving on. Analyzing how or why something

happened, that you couldn't and still can't change, will only increase stress levels.

Students don't need us to lecture them on releasing stress—that only causes more stress! Instead, gently remind your student of some simple stress relief techniques that can help her deal with specific issues. And if you see her turning to unhealthy coping mechanisms, like alcohol, other drugs and more, encourage her to check out the campus counseling center or to talk with another trusted adult on campus. Beating stress in healthy ways is possible.

Want to Stay Stressed?

- Eat anything you want
- Never exercise
- Personalize all criticism
- Break off all friendships
- View everything as extreme
- Make more promises than you can keep
- Never ask for help
- Forget your sense of humor
- Become a workaholic
- Discard all time management skills
- Get very little sleep
- Break all boundaries
- Procrastinate
- Worry about things you can't change
- Set impossible standards
- View all challenges as problems
- Never take time off

