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OF MARYLAND
UNIVERSITY

Wellness & Mental Health

Supporting Your College Student

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Starting college is amazing AND...

... can be challenging

- College is hard!
- It's a lot of endings and beginnings all at once
- It's going to be bumpy
- While you know your student best, please remember you aren't their only potential support - **they need experience developing support systems**

Other supports for NDMU Students

- Accessibility and Student Inclusion
- Dean of Students/Ass. Dean of Students
- Mission and Ministry
- Director of Student Success
- Public Safety
- Trailblazers
- Peer Support Programs
- Workshops and Events
- Campus Departments – Res Life, Academic Advising, Student Life
- Career Center
- Online Resources
- Coaches/Athletics Dept.

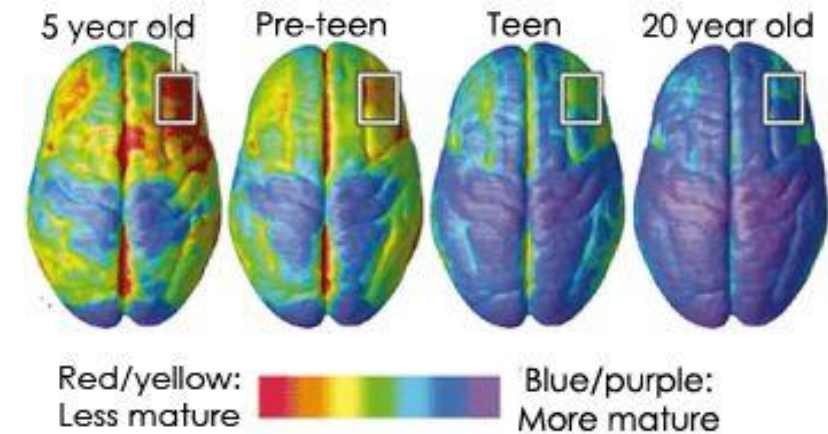


Challenges of Being a College Student

- Less structure (from highly scheduled) -- now manage time, set priorities on own
- Classes don't meet every day -- more independent work
- College level work - higher expectations
- Varying teaching styles among professors
- Decisions -- what courses, what activities? So many new choices!
- How to fit into campus life – clubs, organizations, athletics?
- Living in close quarters with a roommate if living on campus
- Values being challenged
- Managing finances
- Maintaining health and wellness and managing self care (often NOT ENOUGH sleep!)
- Developing, managing and maintaining old and new relationships

Developmental Tasks of the College Student

- Building sense of competence and self-efficacy
- Getting better at emotional regulation
- Moving toward increased independence and autonomy
- Exploration of identities, beliefs, values
- Clarifying purpose
- Developing more mature relationships



Challenges supporting a new college student

- Feelings of separation and loss
- Change in the relationship/routine and patterns
- Financial concerns
- Anxiety about student's adjustment to college
- Letting the student take responsibility
- Dealing with possible changes in student's attitude
- Independence; anxiety, stress
- Creating new expectations at home i.e. -curfew and chores during breaks or for commuter student?

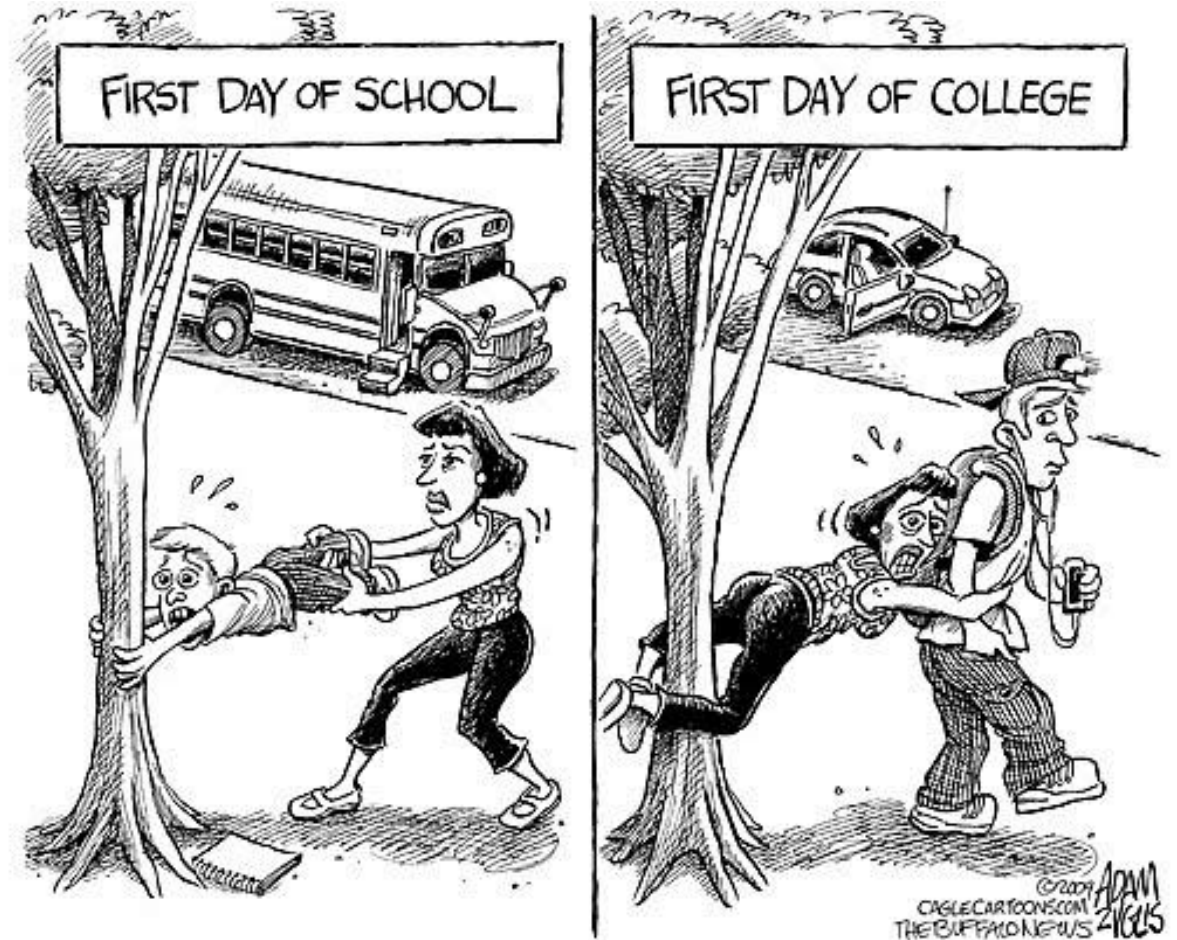
Tips for Managing the Transition

Departure is a joy and a loss!

- Fake it 'til you make it.
- Don't just drive away – hit that bucket list!

Pay attention to frequency of contact, looking for healthy separation --

- Tempting to keep in constant touch but read where your student is.
- Be an anchor and let them establish a frequency of contact while you convey trust and support independence.



More Tips for Managing the Transition

Listening and talking tips

- Build conversational scaffolding for them to walk across
 - In moments of concern try this framework
 - What you observe
 - What you made up about it
 - How you are reacting or how you feel
 - What you'd like to understand
 - Let go of controlling the outcome
- Talk about academic and financial expectations ahead of time
 - Be intentional, this isn't an area where anyone wants a surprise
- Let them know that you are there with small gestures
 - A text, a meme - don't have to have a convo but thinking of each other
- Know that they are venting to you and probably not presenting that way with others

More Tips for Managing the Transition

- Being a responsive listener: Help them hold what's happening.
 - Yes -- I understand, Oh no!, And then what?, Why do you think?, That sounds hard
 - No – You should, Just ..., At least ...
- Whatever the issue, **listen**.
 - Don't judge.
 - Realize it's complicated and there won't be an easy answer.
- Intentionally try to be more hands off
- Encourage adulting!
 - For example; suggest your student to talk with a faculty advisor to resolve class-related issues or confide in their resident assistant or other campus support system.
- Move from --
 - Problem solver to coach
 - Manager to anchor

More Tips for Managing the Transition

Set up supports ahead of time

- If your student is in counseling now, or on medication, discuss continuing that in college and make a plan ahead of time. If coming from out of state, may need to find new provider for medication (before it runs out).
- If your student has benefited from any other support services in the past (i.e. tutoring or accommodations), encourage them to use those same services on campus.

Encourage involvement*

- College is more than classes and homework. Experience with extracurricular activities as well as developing and maintaining relationships is extremely important during this time. Encourage your student get involved and check out what's going on around campus.

Don't make surprise visits to school

- When loved ones show up and the student has no idea they're coming, things get stressful. The idea is fun. It's like unexpected guests showing up at your house when you are really busy.

Gallant Gators Dance Team
 Asian Student Union
 Gator Reads
 Hispanic Latinx Union
 Philosophy Club
 Student Art Society
 Simply Knitting
 Christian Student Association
 Spectrum (LGBTQ+)
 Occupational Therapy Student Association
 Student Athletics Advisory Committee
 Psychology Club
 Student Association of Nurses
 Criminal Minds
 SGA
 Muslim Student Association
 Society of Women Engineers
 Student Leadership Alumni Council
 Caribbean Student Association
 Campus Activities Board
 Pre-Soma/Pre-Health Club
 International Student Organization
 Black Student Union
 African Student Association
 Gators Teach
 Business and Economics Society
 WHAT'S GOING ON AROUND CAMPUS?
 Student Leadership Alumni Council
 Runway Divas



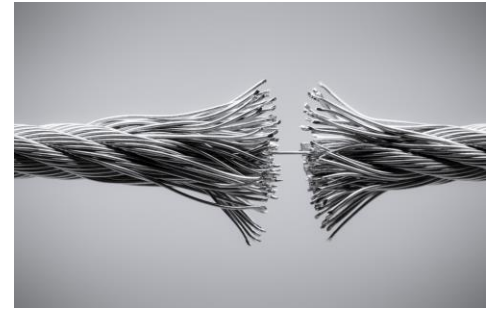
Student Involvement



Letting Go

You get:

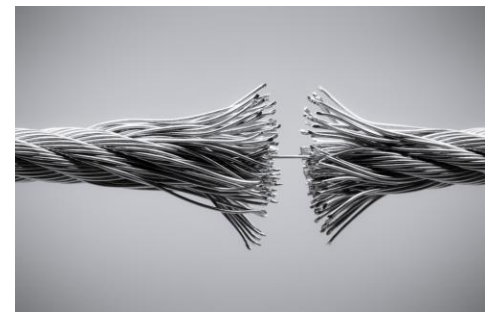
- Freedom and new opportunities?
- A new more adult relationship with your student
- Space and quiet maybe!
- Catalyst for new and necessary conversations and growth.
- See all your support of your student come to fruition!



New Role

- Ask about things other than academics
- Do provide support. This transition is hard. They may need help writing an email or knowing whom to seek out. Taper those kinds of supports.
- Anchor -- Share – provide updates on life outside of school – tell them about home and work and the fam. You are predictable and stable amid all the change.
- Accept that change happens. Trust the values you've instilled.
- Ground -- Sometimes it helps to ask yourself, "Will this matter in five years?"

Stress – the Hidden Risk Factor



Sacrificing self-care negatively impacts academic performance and overall wellbeing.

- Often the basics of self-care are forgotten as students are navigating their schoolwork and college life
- Unfortunately, the college environment doesn't always encourage self-care ("all nighters," midnight deadlines)

Many tend to minimize the impact of stress until it reaches crisis levels due to fear of being judged.

- If you're concerned, you can share gentle reminders about basics like the importance of sleep, eating, connection with others (not being isolated in room)
- Importance of focusing on overall experience (what student is learning, how they feel about classes, etc.) versus solely focusing on grades

Mental Health Concerns

It is common for symptoms of depression or anxiety to first present around the age of 18 years old – right when many students enter college.

Signs to look for -

- Social withdrawal or isolation
- Listlessness, lack of energy, or falling asleep in class
- Marked change in mood, personality, or personal hygiene; high level of irritability
- Impaired speech or garbled, disjointed thoughts
- Suicidal thoughts, referring to suicide as an option, hopelessness
- Inability to make decisions despite your repeated attempts to clarify and encourage

Recommend your Student Reach out for Support When:

- There is significant academic or personal distress.
- You feel their distress is beyond the scope of your abilities to help.
- You notice behavior of concern or any behavior on the previous slide.
 - Pay attention to how you feel around the student; are you frightened by their behavior, drained after talking to them?
- Please note the Counseling Center can also assist with off-campus referrals and resources if the need arises.
- A reminder there are numerous staff and offices at NDMU here to support your student, including the Counseling Center.
 - If your student is reluctant to reach out for counseling but has a staff or faculty member they seem to like, encourage them to start there.
 - It's better to reach out to someone than no one, and NDMU staff/faculty will assist them from there.

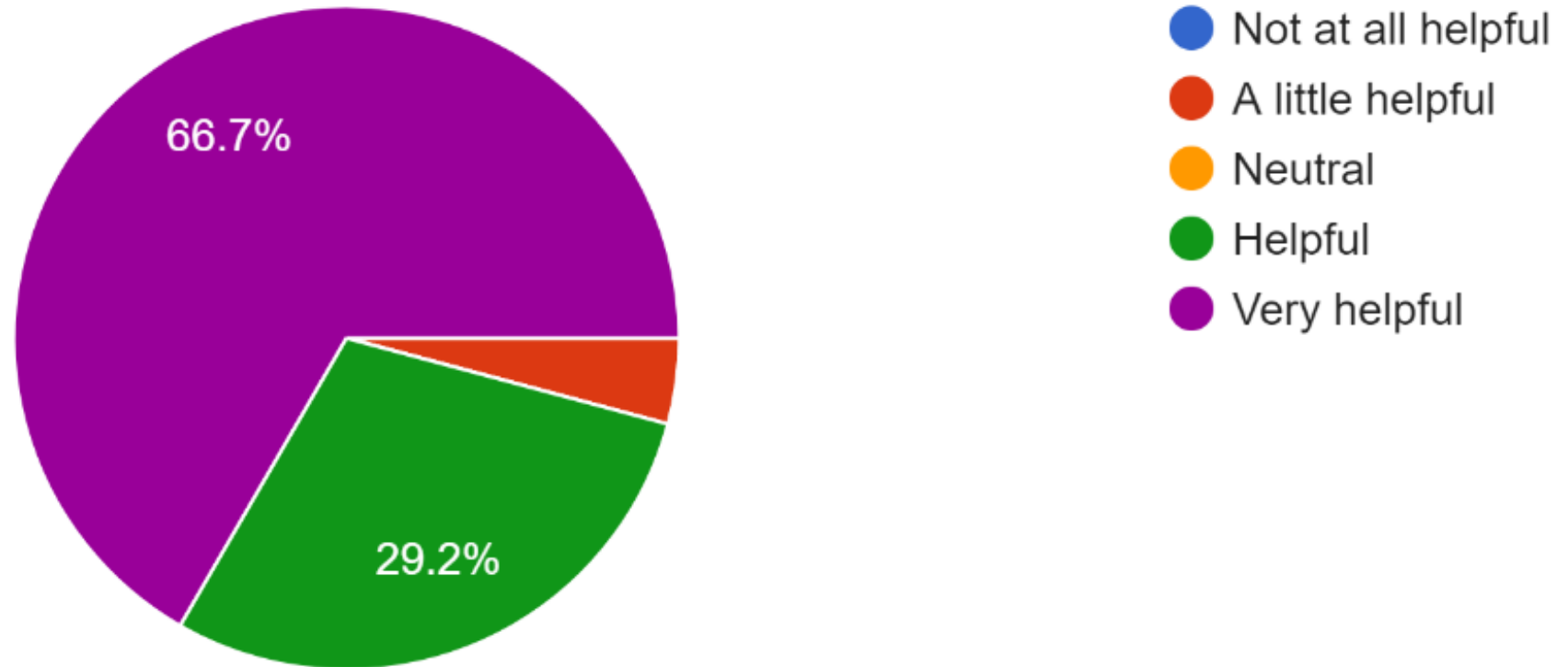
Students appreciate the support



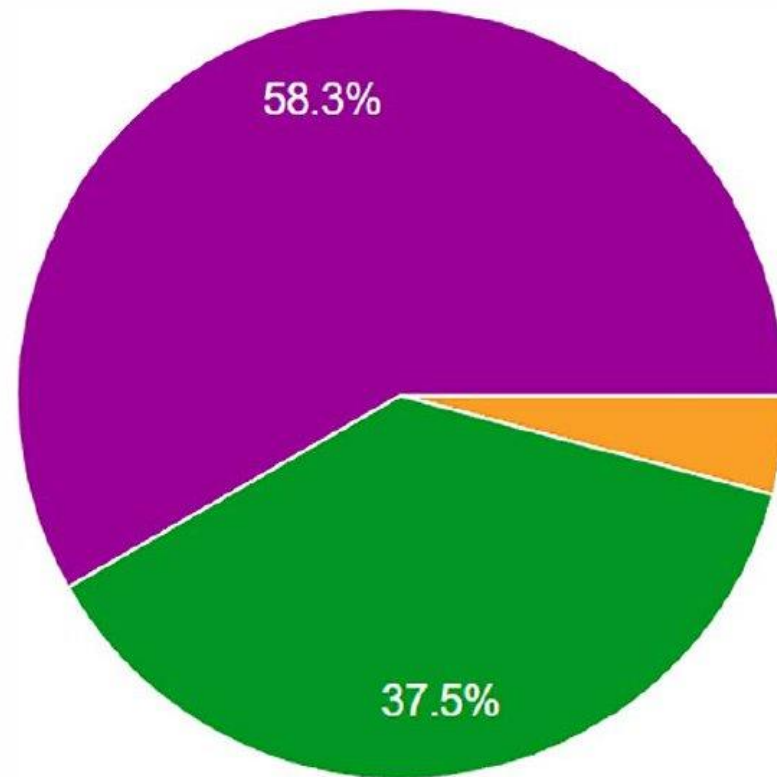
- 75% of students gave highest level or endorsement to their counseling experience, 25% second highest
- Same numbers for feeling understood by their counselor
- 87.5% highest endorsement for care their counselor showed them
- 92% highest endorsement for privacy maintenance
- 79% highest endorsement for progress they made, 12.5% second highest, 8% neutral

How much did having emotional support help you to be a better student?

24 responses



Think back to how you were feeling before you came in for counseling. How did you change overall?



- I got much worse
- I got somewhat worse
- I stayed the same
- I got somewhat better
- I got a lot better

Mental Health Resources

- Counseling Center: to request an appointment, the student fill out the online request form at <https://www.ndm.edu/content/counseling-center-appointment-request>
- If you're concerned about your student, you can reach out to NDMU's Case Manager who can reach out to students who are struggling, <https://www.ndm.edu/student-life/case-management/when-refer-student-concern>; online referral form that supporters can complete is included on the page
- NDMU Public Safety: ext. 6666 or 410-435-0100
- In an off-campus emergency, call 911
- National Suicide Hotline: 988
- Crisis Text Line: 741741
- Baltimore Crisis Response hotline 410-433-5175



Additional resources

- Letting Go: A Parent's Guide to Understand the College Years (2016), Coburn & Treeger
- College is not the 13th Grade: (2017), Drummer and Frisina
- Electronic Resources
 - www.settogo.org
 - www.collegeparentcentral.com
 - www.grownandflown.com

Questions?

