

Helping Your College Student Through the COVID-19 Pandemic



These are challenging times for students, parents, and families. The “normal” college experience has changed for everyone and anxiety and stress is high for many reasons. Here are some helpful hints to promote mental and physical health; supporting your student can also promote the well-being of your entire family.



- 1. Be patient, kind, and compassionate** — Remember everyone is experiencing a wealth of emotions right now. When emotions are high, rational thought is low. Give yourself time to think through thoughts and manage your reactions. Identify how you are handling the negative emotions you may be feeling. Remember students are adjusting to living at home and feeling “trapped” just as you may be flooded with your own emotions and disruption to your daily routine.
- 2. Individual and Shared space** — Try to identify where each person will do their work without interruption. Having personal space and privacy during this transition can be important. Students need personal space to do their schoolwork and connect with friends through social media. This is also a time for families to reconnect with each other and get back to a simpler life. It may be a time to share movie nights, game nights or cooking together to create positive and comforting feelings.
- 3. Managing Time** — Our time-filled commitments have temporarily slowed down. How are you going to fill this time? It may be a good time to start that exercise program, learn a new hobby or connect virtually with friends you have not connected with in a while. It may also be a time to simply learn the art of relaxing with meditation or yoga. Many of our daily pleasures are on hold. However, happiness can be found in many ways such as — going outside for a walk or jog, connecting with friends on-line, engaging in music, or reading.
- 4. Structure** — It is easy to get out of routine when commitments have changed. Make sure everyone stays in a routine. This includes a sleep schedule and going through their normal daily care routines such as showering, getting dressed and being productive. Being in a routine gives us a sense of purpose and affects our moods in positive ways.
- 5. Stay Positive** — It is easy in times like this to focus on the negatives or the disappointments you are feeling. Help your student stay positive by limiting watching the news, correcting any misinformation they may be sharing, and talking about other happy events occurring in your lives. Being positive does not mean you should ignore feeling sad, disappointed, and uncertain; work to create a balance that allows you and your family to look forward with a renewed energy and sense of shared purpose.

These are disruptive and tough times. Our lives have changed. However, we know this will end at some point. Not knowing when makes this hard but control what you can control. Do what you can to bring happiness into your and your family’s lives, reduce stress and enjoy the fact that your family is together, getting through this together.

Stay positive, stay strong, and stay healthy.

Links for further reading:

Helping College Students Cope with COVID-19: These 4 tips will help your college student weather the coronavirus storm

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/college-wellness/202003/helping-college-students-cope-covid-19>

Supporting our Quaranteens During the COVID-19 Crisis

<https://www.collegiateparent.com/parent-view/supporting-our-quaranteens-during-covid-19-crisis/>