

When They Leave The Nest

Changes YOU Can Expect...

Even though adults often joke that they will be dancing for joy when their child leaves for college, the void will quickly hit almost every parent as soon as their child packs his or her bags. Some parents are more affected than others by the absence of their children.

Consider The Following Tips:

- Acknowledge your mixed emotions. Feelings of pain and loss are normal when separated from loved ones. It is also normal to experience a sense of relief and look forward to some time alone, with your significant other or with your younger children.
- Allow yourself to feel whatever emotions that come up during this adjustment period. Develop and maintain your own support systems. Friends who have already gone through this experience and know how you are feeling can help a great deal.
- Embrace the opportunity to spend time and energy on something you are interested in but previously were too busy to consider.
- Make sure you trust your child and his or her ability to make decisions. When they know you trust them their experience will be better and you will worry less.
- Focus on the accomplishment, both your child's and yours! This can be an exciting time for students and parents alike.

Supporting Your Child...

- Despite needs and wants of your son or daughter to become more autonomous, it is important that they know you are still available for them to talk about issues that may arise.
- Maintain regular contact with your child but allow space for your child to contact you and set the agenda for some of your conversations. Accept that it is normal for them to seek your help one day and reject it the next. This can be frustrating and confusing but also a perfect time for you to rely on your own support systems.
- Be realistic and specific about your expectations and boundaries regarding finances, academic performance and trips home.
- Family issues will arise. Refrain from burdening your son or daughter with problems at home that they have no control over and can do

When They Leave The Nest

nothing about. Do be honest with them regarding issues that they need to know such as family illnesses, deaths, etc.

- Support efforts to join organizations and make one or two friends. Validate the awkwardness and difficulty as well as the reality that the more they feel a part of campus life the less homesick they will feel.
- Encourage them to remain on campus for the weekends. This is a great time to get to know people and participate in campus events.
- Challenge them to do things for themselves. Whether its laundry, writing a check or buying groceries. Independence can increase self-confidence and help them to believe they are capable of handling any situation.

Services Available for Your Student

Any enrolled student is eligible for mental/emotional health counseling from the University. Counseling Services offers, at no charge, individual, group, and couples counseling, as well as referral to local providers as needed. Except in case of crises, students are seen by appointment, often within the same week of scheduling.

How to Initiate Counseling

Counseling Services encourages students to schedule appointment themselves. This not only helps the student take responsibility, it also contributes to ownership and motivation in the counseling process. Parents can help by talking with their student about specific concerns, advise of availability of counseling and encourage students to call for the appointment. Consultation with a counselor is available for parents to explore if counseling would be appropriate or beneficial to their child.

Reasons Why Students Seek Counseling

College students pursue counseling for many reasons, from dealing with a longstanding problem to enhancing personal growth. Students come in to discuss relationships, adjustment to college, homesickness, depression, anxiety, grief, or eating disorders, just to name a few.

When They Leave The Nest

Instances when counseling might be recommended include:

- Changes in personal relationships - such as death of loved one, divorce or separation in the family, pregnancy, or break up.
- Family concerns - such as alcoholism, separation from parents.
- Significant changes in mood or behaviors - such as withdrawal from others, unexplained crying, or anger outbursts.
- References to suicide - judgments about the seriousness of a situation is best made in consultation with a mental health professional
- Anxiety and depression - two of the more common issues which can significantly impair a student's functioning.
- Psychosomatic symptoms - such as tension headaches, loss of appetite or excessive eating, insomnia, or excessive sleeping.

Confidentiality

Counseling often involves the disclosure of sensitive personal information. Any information a client shares with Counseling Services staff members is protected by professional ethics and by Ohio law. Counseling information is not released except upon a student's written permission, in circumstances which would result in clear danger to the student or others, or as may be required by law.

It is understandable that parents might want to be involved in their child's counseling, but the law does not permit such involvement without the consent of the adult student. Often the best source of information for parents about their student's counseling is the student. Beyond that, if more information is desired, the student must sign a written release specifically permitting us to communicate with parents.