

questions answer problems new experiences listening talking support anxiety emotions confidentiality

Staff at the Emory University Counseling

Center are aware that sending a child to

college can be exciting and nerve-wracking

for parents and their children. We hope the

information in this guide will help make the

transition as smooth as possible. Many, many

people at Emory University are working hard

to make your child's educational experience

a positive time for learning and growth.

We have included contact information in case

you have specific questions or concerns.

WHAT TO EXPECT

WHAT CAN I EXPECT FROM MY CHILD? Your son or daughter will very likely be experiencing a range of emotions as he or she leaves for college. Remember that these emotions, such as joy, anxiety, excitement, and sadness are perfectly normal. During the college years your child will be continuing a process of independence yet also establishing new and intimate connections with friends, faculty, and other mentors. He or she will be exposed to many new ideas and may experiment with new ways of being with friends and with you. Remember that many of these changes are a normal part of growing up. Also remember that every child is different and has their own experiences of adjusting to and dealing with the challenges and rewards of college life.

WHAT CAN I EXPECT AS A PARENT? Like your child, you can expect to experience a wide range of emotions when your child leaves for college. You may experience the joy of new freedom as your child leaves home, as well as sadness at his or her departure. You may experience a great deal of pride and joy about your child's achievements. You also may worry about whether he or she will be able to adjust well to a new life, and you may worry about "losing" your child as he or she experiments with new ideas, behaviors, and relationships. These are normal feelings and ones that are often good to share with other family members and friends.

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS

As the parent of an Emory student you can talk to a counselor at the Counseling Center during office hours, Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. eastern time. Counselors will be able to help you with many questions and concerns you may have about your child's well-being. They also can help you decide if your child needs assistance and where he or she can get it. The number to call is 404.727.7450.

Confidentiality is an essential part of any counseling relationship and is legally protected in Georgia. Consequently, the Counseling Center cannot discuss your child's counseling in any way without written permission from your child, except in rare instances when disclosures are legally required, including but not limited to, situations when child abuse is suspected, when the therapist has reasonable cause to believe that a client presents a danger to himself or herself or others, or in response to a valid court order. You should not expect anyone from the Counseling Center to confirm in any way whether your child has been seen at the Counseling Center. However, you should always feel free to contact the Counseling Center if you have any concerns about your child, want the Counseling Center to be aware of something concerning your child, or have questions about how the Counseling Center works.

HOW CAN I HELP?

1. LISTEN. One of the most important roles of a parent is that of listener and supporter. You cannot overestimate how important this role is. Be an active listener. Work hard at understanding what your child tells you about his or her feelings or experiences. Be sure to listen before making suggestions or giving advice. Listening is always necessary and often sufficient.

2. SUPPORT INDEPENDENCE. Offer suggestions when appropriate but also allow your adult child to make up his or her own mind. Resist rescuing your child from a problem but rather let your child know how confident you are in his or her ability to resolve things independently. Help your child find the appropriate resources on campus.

3. COMMUNICATE. Stay in touch with your child. Let him or her know what is going on at home, when appropriate. Remind your child that he or she is still part of the family. Seek your child's input on how to use his or her old bedroom!

4. DEAL WITH PROBLEMS EFFECTIVELY. If there are problems at home, a divorce or illness, for example, work hard to resolve them effectively. Just as you want to know that your child will be able to take care of himself or herself, your child needs to know that you can deal with these situations effectively on your own. In the case of a divorce, work especially hard to keep your child out of the marital argument.

5. KNOW WARNING SIGNS. Children are not always direct about letting parents know when they are experiencing even serious problems. Some warning signs are: a drop in academic performance, an increase in sadness or anxiety, calling home more or less frequently than usual, physical complaints, depression, eating problems, alcohol- or drug-related problems, a lack of social supports. If you see these signals do not hesitate to ask your child how he or she is doing, or call the Counseling Center to find out how you might get your child needed help.

6. IDENTIFY RESOURCES. This is particularly important if your child has a previously identified physical- or mental health-related condition or requires ongoing treatment or medication. Find out where important resources are for your child. Do not be shy about calling these resources if you or your child needs help.

