There’s a seasonal ebb and flow when it comes to student issues. Here are a few things your student may be experiencing this month:

- Exploration and acknowledgement of personal values
- Long distance relationship strain
- Feelings of loneliness and homesickness may increase
- A desire to feel connected to campus
- Roommate adjustments
- Experimentation with alcohol and other drugs
- Getting acclimated to a new type of academics
- Figuring out how to get organized and manage time
- Searching for a sense of belonging

Time Management Strategies
Learning to work smartly and efficiently

Smart time management is a key path to success this academic year. You can help your student by discussing time management strategies with her, such as…

**Using In-between Times.** That 45-minute chunk of time between a class and a meeting can be used wisely instead of wasted. That’s several pages of reading for a class, studying for a quiz or buying a birthday card at the bookstore. Those in-between times add up quickly!

**Not Over-Scheduling.** There comes a time in some students’ schedules where they just can’t fit anything else in. So, learning to say “no” is important. It’s much better to be realistic than trying to do all things to all people. The latter is bound to disappoint someone and to overwhelm your student.

**Recognizing That Stuff Steals Time.** When you have too much stuff in your living space, you spend more time looking for things. By doing a “stuff purge,” your student will be better able to get to things quickly while staying more organized.

**Decompressing Your Mind.** A stressed, overactive mind is not as time efficient as a calm, collected one is. So, whether your student uses breathing techniques, exercise or other stress management tools, it’s important to make them a natural part of her everyday life.

**Avoiding Weekend Reliance.** During the busy weekdays it’s easy to say, “I’ll get to that over the weekend.” However, weekends often get full, plus it’s important for students to give themselves some down time, too. So, encourage your student not to rely on weekends as his time to get most things done. Instead, he can dose it out over the weekdays, for maximum efficiency.

**Time Stealers**
Random texting, chatting endlessly on the phone, spending hours on video games or Facebook… all are Time Stealers. Gently ask your student if this is how he wants to be spending his precious free time.
Fostering Self-Responsibility in Your Student

Going away to college can be a big transition for some students. Here are seven ways you can foster self-responsibility in your student:

1. **Help Your Student Make His Own Decisions.** When you say, “Well, what do you think you should do?” during a phone conversation, you’re offering your support but, instead of jumping in with advice, you’re helping your student figure out his own answer.

2. **Trust Your Student.** And let her know that you do. She’ll likely feel more confident, supported and able to stand up for what she believes as a result.

3. **Communicate without Overcommunicating.** Check in with each other a few times each week via email, text or phone. However, don’t feel like you need to touch base every day – there needs to be some space so your student can gain a sense of independence.

4. **Don’t Solve Everything for Him.** The tendency to want to jump in and “take care of things” is natural. Yet, students need to start learning to do these things for themselves. So, try not to fix things – instead, ask questions like “What steps have you taken so far?” to help your student take the lead and take self-responsibility.

5. **Stay Involved.** Just because your student goes off to college doesn’t mean she stops needing your input. Your involvement is essential to her success. Be interested, ask questions without prying too much and listen to what she has to say.

6. **Let Go a Bit.** You can’t know where your student is every hour of the day – nor should you have to keep track of that. Instead of quiz-zing him about where he’s been, ask more general questions like “Have you gone anywhere interesting lately?” or “How have you been spending your free time?” so he can share without feeling put on the spot.

7. **Keep Her in the Loop.** Even though your student is building a new life at college, it doesn’t mean she should be cut off from what’s happening back home. Share a balance of news to keep the connection strong – and to make sure your student focuses on people beside herself, too!

   In this time of transition, keep the lines of communication open, let mistakes be made and encourage your student to make decisions for himself. It’s all part of the process, especially in this important first month!

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Gaining Independence

Students need to express their autonomy and spread their wings when they get to school. This doesn’t mean that they’ve stopped needing you – of course not! What it may mean, though, is that your student needs a chance to:

- Make his own mistakes
- Decide how to confront challenges
- Communicate with others when there’s a problem
- Choose how to spend her time
- Take responsibility for his actions
- Struggle a bit
- Learn from experience

Be there to talk things through when your student needs that and to offer support. The actual “doing,” though, is primarily up to her. This independence is one of the main ways that she will learn, grow and develop into a strong adult.

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Safety Tips You Can Share

In addition to the important safety tips your student will hear on campus, here are some others she should keep in mind…

**Give Incident Descriptions.** When describing an incident, stay objective, keep things in time order and share where you were located when it occurred.

**Travel in Groups.** If you go somewhere with friends, make sure that everyone is accounted for before leaving.

**Know Resources.** Memorize the phone number for campus public safety so you can call at a moment’s notice.

**Protect Textbooks.** Write your name on the same page in each textbook, near the spine, so you can more easily identify them if they are stolen.

**Stop Cyberbullying.** Report any obscene emails, texts, social media or phone messages. Some students are

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Working Toward Academic Success

Academics are the number one priority here at school. So, in order to help your student work toward academic success, here are some tips to share…

**Create a Space.** Having an academic space to work in can help your student create the right mindset, while having the tools he needs close at hand. Brainstorm ways to set up his desk space or to find other spots on campus where he can get the academic peace, quiet and inspiration he needs.

**Words of Wisdom**

- It’s a sign of strength for a student to seek help when she’s struggling.
- Professors *want* students to interact with them.
- There’s no skating by in college – students need to put in the work to see positive results.
- Getting involved in co-curricular activities typically helps students stay on track with their academics, too.

**Get Help – Sooner Rather than Later.** Everyone struggles with some subject. There are plentiful resources on campus to help students in academic need, whether it’s getting tested for a learning disability, using the campus learning center and tutors, or talking with a counselor about test anxiety. Encourage your student to seek help now by initially talking with her advisor or another trusted professional, before things get out of hand.

**Talk with Professors.** Students who strike up a relationship with their professors are often better students because they ask for clarification when they’re unsure about a topic and show they’re interested in being the best learners they can be. So, let your student know that attending a professor’s office hours is a smart move!

**Put in the Work.** Above all, students need to take responsibility for their learning by putting in the academic work required. That means doing the readings, studying for exams, participating in group work and keeping up with classes.

Following these suggestions will help students work smart and come out with favorable results. Here’s to your student’s academic success story this fall!

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bullying and stalking others via cyberspace, and campus officials need to know so they can step in.

**Share Community Concerns.** Let residence hall staff know about building concerns like slippery floors, broken glass, missing window screens, burned out lights and more that can compromise community safety.

**Describe People Accurately.** When noting a person so you can describe him later, recall permanent features like hair color, height, facial structure, tattoos and birthmarks, rather than just focusing on changeable features like clothing.

**Don’t Give Away Your Location.** Don’t post away messages on Facebook, IM or on your door memo board that tell exactly where you are and for how long. That can be an invitation for robbery or other harm.

**Lock the Doors.** If you’re sitting in your car in a parking lot making a phone call, lock the door so no one can take you by surprise.

**Leave It to Medical Personnel.** Don’t transport anyone to the hospital! Most of us aren’t medically trained and could do more harm than good by moving an injured person. Ambulance personnel can work on your friend en route – they know what they’re doing.

These safety tips and others can help your student and his friends have a safe, responsible year ahead.

*Sources:* www.securityoncampus.org; www.campussafetymonth.org/home

**Helping Friends**

Remind your student that, if friends seem ill, intoxicated or drugged, to get help immediately. Don’t worry about “getting them in trouble.” Their health and safety need to be the #1 concern.
Helping Students Deal with Homesickness

When the initial excitement and newness of the new year wears off, it’s common for a student to long for home and the familiarity of her old routine. You can help your student cope with these feelings by offering the following suggestions:

- **Acknowledge your feelings and worries.** Once you’ve identified the feelings, it can be easier to address them.

- **Take advantage of the resources available on campus.** There are so many people available to help! Housing staff, counselors and others are prepared to help students who are homesick or lonely. Don’t be afraid to tap into them…you won’t be the first.

- **Get involved.** If you sit and think about what you are missing at home, you are also missing what you could be doing on campus. This is a lose-lose! Trying new things and meeting new people is one of the best ways to combat loneliness.

### When Your Student Needs Something More

How do you know if your student is experiencing a normal bout of homesickness or if he is really struggling in a way that might require some additional support? Here are some signs that might signal that your student is severely homesick:

- **He finds reasons to call.** If your student starts contacting you much more often than normal, it could mean that he is looking for reasons to talk to you.

- **She’s not getting involved.** If you aren’t hearing your student talk about co-curricular activities or she keeps giving excuses as to why she isn’t getting involved, she could be holing up in her room and not connecting with her peers.

- **He’s becoming more and more dependent.** If your student asking you to take care of simple tasks that he normally handles on his own or should be handling on his own now that he is in college? It’s one thing for a student to call for some advice or to talk through some possibilities, but it’s another for a student to call home to ask someone to handle something he should be.

- **He keeps getting sick.** Sometimes, homesickness can manifest itself in physical symptoms such as headaches, insomnia, nausea or fatigue. If your student is experiencing these symptoms with regularity, it could mean more than simple illness.

- **Poor grades.** Severe homesickness can make it really difficult for a student to concentrate on her schoolwork. Talk with your student about her grades, what she is learning in her classes and what she is enjoying about her academic pursuits.

If you believe your student is severely homesick, encourage him to visit the campus counseling center. A professional can help him work through his feelings and get him on the right track.

Most of all, you can help your student by reassuring him that, by accepting his life in college, he’s not giving up his life at home. Some information adapted from Helium.com.