

The Campus Link

A newsletter for parents & families

February 15, 2009

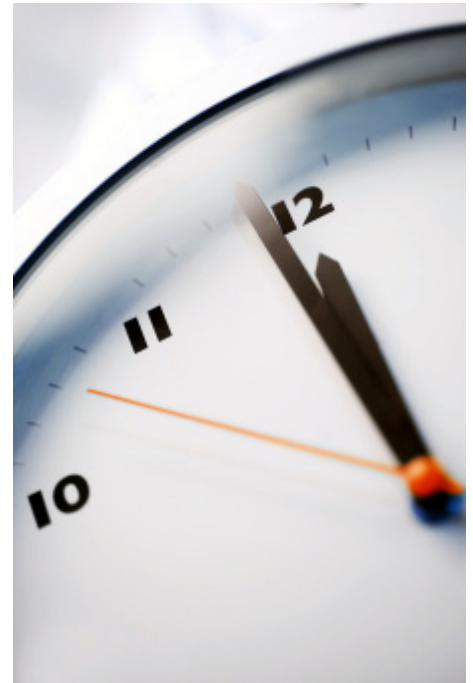


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Helping Students Improve Time Management Making Time

Time marches on — sometimes much too quickly. College students understand this. Unfortunately, what they don't always understand is how to manage the hours in their day. Many college students have a great deal more unstructured time than they did in high school. Therefore, they need to develop sound decision-making skills, decrease procrastination, and minimize distractions.



College offers your student more independence, but that requires more responsibility. Before college, parents and teachers often dictated students' schedules. Now, students must learn to make decisions about how to spend their time.

A rule of thumb is that for every hour of class time, students should reserve two hours for studying or class work. Often students see large chunks of unstructured time in their schedule and mistakenly think of them as "free time." Encourage your student to use the weekly planner that he/she received. Writing everything down — in one place — will be a big help. Weekly "time maps" can also organize when assignments are due, what studying or homework needs to be done each night, and how much time it may take to complete long-term assignments. Students should remember to include time for working, eating, working out, laundry, relaxing, even sleeping! Scheduling time and sticking to that schedule can help students avoid procrastination. Including some flex time will go a long way in handling the "unexpected" that is inevitable.

Encourage your student to plan ahead. A large research paper or a big project may take longer to complete than anticipated. If your student expects a project will take four weeks to complete, suggest he/she start at the due date and work backward to ensure there is adequate time for the project.

Students often have great intentions to study for hours. Research for a paper begins online, but then a friend instant messages them or they go on Facebook for a minute or quickly check their e-mail. Suddenly, hours pass with little research complete. Suggest that your student schedule an hour or so of uninterrupted time. When concentration becomes difficult and a break is needed, your student can "take 10" to log on to Facebook or chat with a friend. Remind him/her to set an alarm so that "10" does not become an hour.

The Office of Academic Support can assist your student with time management. The OAS is located on the first floor of Seton Hall and your student can call 716-286-8153 or stop in to make an appointment with one of the academic counselors.



Recognizing Eating Disorders

National Eating Disorders Week is Feb. 22-28

As college students contend with new anxieties, emotions and stressors, they may turn to eating disorders as a way of regaining control. Knowing the signs and symptoms of the most common eating disorders and how to talk about body image issues can help you proactively address any potential concerns you may notice. Additional help is available both on and off campus, too.

Anorexia Nervosa Signs & Symptoms

- Resistance to maintaining a body weight that is at or above normal for age and height.
- Intense fear of gaining weight and anxiety over being “fat,” even if underweight.
- Disturbance in how weight or body shape is experienced, overemphasis on weight or shape on self-evaluation, or denial of the seriousness of low body weight.
- Amenorrhea (loss of menstrual period).

Warning signs include: comments about being fat in spite of weight loss; refusal to eat certain foods or categories of food combined with food-related rituals; denial of hunger and excuse-making around situations involving food; and excessive and rigid exercise routines.

Bulimia Nervosa Signs & Symptoms

- Frequent intake of abnormally large quantities of food, coupled with a sense of loss of control over eating.
- “Purging” behaviors after binges, such as self-induced vomiting, laxative or diuretic abuse, fasting and/or compulsive exercise.
- Extreme concern with body weight and shape.

Warning signs include: swelling of the cheeks or jaw, stained teeth, and/or calluses on hands or knuckles from vomiting; evidence of binges such as the rapid disappearance of large amounts of food or many empty food packages; evidence of purging such as trips to the bathroom after meals, signs and/or smells of vomiting, empty laxative or diuretics packages; a rigid exercise routine even if sick or injured; complex schedules or rituals to make time for binge-and-purge sessions; and withdrawing from friends and activities.

Binge Eating Disorder (or Compulsive Overeating)

- Recurrent binge eating similar to bulimia without the compensatory measures to rid oneself of the food.
- Extreme discomfort from consuming large quantities of food.
- Avoidance of social activities that draw attention to one’s body or involve food, or eating only small amounts around others.
- History of cyclical dieting, depression and weight gain.

How to Help

Many individuals go through periods of disordered eating in response to transition or stress; this doesn’t necessarily indicate that an eating disorder exists. When eating or restricting patterns become a

compulsive urge and interfere with health, social interactions and academic progress, it’s likely an eating disorder has developed. At the heart of any eating disorder is a lack of emotional coping skills for dealing with stress, anxiety or trauma. The person’s relationship with food becomes his or her mechanism for coping and a way to manage or alter mood states.

If you suspect that your student has an eating disorder:

- Learn as much as you can about eating disorders.
- Develop a support network in which you can talk openly about your feelings and frustrations — and where you can develop a plan of action to help your student.
- Directly express concern; tell your student that you care and offer to help. Share details about behaviors you have noticed that concern you the most.
- Try to be objective and calm in discussing the behaviors that concern you. Avoid offering simple solutions — if it were that easy, there would not be a problem.
- Suggest that you and your student seek professional help from a physician and/or therapist.
- Avoid making comments about appearance. Concern about weight loss may be interpreted as a compliment; comments about weight gain may be felt as criticism.
- Don’t become involved in a power struggle. You can’t force the person to eat. Offer continued support and refrain from judgment.
- Try to maintain as normal and healthy a lifestyle as possible.
- Do not blame yourself.
- Visit www.niagara.edu/counseling/ for additional resources.

February is Relationship Wellness Month Exploring Healthy Relationships with Your Student

Talk with your student this month about what a healthy relationship looks like. It doesn't really matter if you're talking about the love of your student's life or a good friend. The basic tenets of healthy relationships are the same, regardless! Consider using the following acronym to get the conversation started.

Signs that a Relationship is Healthy

Vitality! In a healthy relationship, both individuals have the opportunity to grow, explore areas of interest to them and live life to the fullest.

Acceptance. It's nearly impossible to change another person. In a healthy relationship, both partners accept the good, the bad (and the sometimes ugly) parts of one another.

Love. This goes without saying! But, it's important to note that love is intimacy, friendship and respect — not possessiveness, obsession and manipulation.

Emotion. Relationships are emotional roller coasters, there's no doubt about it. If you didn't truly care about the person, the relationship wouldn't be hard work. Sometimes you'll face uphill battles and sometimes you'll feel like you're coasting downhill. This is all-important in building a strong, solid relationship.

Natural. In a healthy relationship, partners aren't pressured to do things they don't want to do. If something doesn't feel right, it's quite likely that it isn't. You should never feel intimidated or put down by the person who loves you.

Trust. It's much easier to be vulnerable when you trust someone wholeheartedly. And this vulnerability is so important in achieving an authentic relationship built on honesty and openness.

Interdependence. In a healthy relationship, partners live and work together. Neither is dependent or independent from the other and both have their own positive identity.

Nourishing. A relationship should make deposits in your emotional bank account, not withdrawals. Healthy relationships are those that make you feel good about yourself.

Effervescence. If you're not feeling excited about your relationship, something is wrong. Although relationships are hard work and take a great deal of compromise, if you've tried this and you're still not feeling excited, it might be time to evaluate why you're feeling the way you are. This is okay! Sometimes you just need to take stock to realize all that you have. But sometimes, it may be time to part ways. If this is the case, stay true to yourself and be as honest as you can.

Now is the time to get the conversation started. Show your student that you care about his/her emotional well-being by encouraging him/her to take a close look at the relationships he/she has to determine how healthy they are.



Important Dates

There are some key dates in your student's and your family's life that are important to know in order to plan effectively:

Holidays

- Winter recess begins after last class on Saturday, Feb. 28, and ends Sunday, March 8. Classes resume March 9.
- Easter recess begins after last class on Wednesday, April 8, and ends Monday, April 13. Classes resume Tuesday, March 14.

Records Office

- Midterm ends Friday, March 13.
- Last day for course withdrawal without permission is Friday, March 27.
- Last day to request a tutor is Friday, March 27.
- Exam week begins Tuesday, May 5, and ends Saturday, May 9.
- Semester ends Saturday, May 9.
- Undergraduate commencement is Sunday, May 17.

Registration Dates for Fall 2009

Seniors — April 14 and 15

Juniors — April 16 and 17

Sophomores — April 20 and 21

Freshmen — April 22 and 23

Financial Aid

- Submit FAFSA for renewal of financial aid by March 17.
- Submit NU Financial Aid Application by April 15.
- Submit signed copies of parents' and student's 2008 federal and NY state tax returns by April 15.

Visit www.niagara.edu/financialaid for links and information.

Study Abroad Application Deadlines:

Summer programs — Feb. 1

Fall programs — March 15

Spring programs — Oct. 1



February is Library Lovers Month

Use this month-long theme as an excuse to gobble up some good reads for pleasure. That's right, put aside those work-related publications and encourage your student to set aside textbooks (for just a little while) too. Here are several bestsellers that you can pick from to read together — and discuss — this month:

“The Twilight Saga” by Stephanie Meyer — This series received considerable attention in late 2008 when the first book became a major motion picture, but it was around long before then! Deeply romantic and extraordinarily suspenseful, “Twilight,” “New Moon,” “Eclipse” and “Breaking Dawn” are powerful reads for people of all ages. Check out what all the buzz is about!

“Three Cups of Tea” by Greg Mortenson — This is the story of a real-life Indiana Jones and his humanitarian campaign to bring education and justice to the Taliban's backyard. It's the tale of Greg Mortenson, a homeless mountaineer who was inspired to build a group of impoverished mountain villagers a school. He didn't stop there! He has since built 55 schools, especially for girls, in one of the most isolated and dangerous regions on earth.

“Dreams from my Father” by Barack Obama — Published years before he became the 44th president of the United States, Barack Obama shared this memoir, which became a bestseller when it was reissued in 2004. The book tells the story of Obama's struggle to understand the forces that shaped him as an individual and his father's legacy. The book has been described as a “searching meditation on the meaning of identity in America.”

The library at Niagara University has the books described above and provides access to other titles that are enjoyable to read, including bestsellers and graphic novels.

Having Fun with the Academy Awards

The Oscars will be awarded live this Feb. 22 on ABC-TV. A variety of high-quality movies have been nominated, providing yet another topic of conversation to share with your student.

Tune into the Academy Awards Web site at www.oscar.com for more information. Plus, check out the movie descriptions, actor/actress bios and previews available through the Internet Movie Database (www.imdb.com). You'll have all sorts of information at your fingertips to “talk movies” with your student.

Plus, just for fun, have family and friends guess who the winners will be in some of the major categories. Have a cheesy prize or crown that can be passed on to the winner once the show airs. You may just have an annual tradition on your hands!

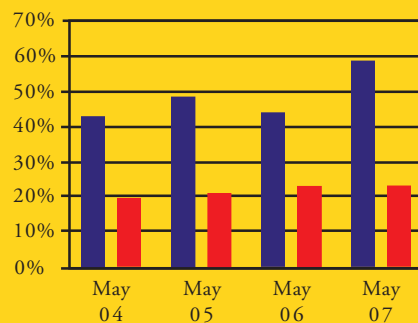
Seasonal Student Issues

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:

- Difficulty getting into study mode.
- Things become routine/school finally becomes home.
- Missing family and friends at home, and friends who did not return to school.
- Cliques become stronger within residence hall communities, student organizations and in classes.
- Cabin fever and burnout.
- Pressures to figure out living plans for next year as the room assignment process draws near.
- Anxiety over vocational choice/internship search.
- Planning for spring break.

Niagara Students Attending Graduate or Professional Schools

The National Association of Colleges and Employers compiles data annually on the number of college graduates who attend graduate or professional schools. Niagara's students attend postgraduate study at a rate that is more than double the national benchmark.



■ Niagara	43%	48%	43.6%	58.7%
■ National Data	19.8%	20.4%	22.8%	22.8%