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:

- Roommate problems and floor tension
- Academic pressures due to procrastination, workload
- Burnout
- Not feeling like they have the stamina to keep up the pace through finals
- Job search stress for holiday break
- Lack of initiative to find new friends or activities because it seems social groups are already set up
- Concerns about going home at Thanksgiving time—seeing changes among old friends, how things will be with family members or dealing with a romantic relationship.

The Thanksgiving Transition

When your student comes home during the Thanksgiving break, it will be a time of transition. You may have lived separately, while your student enjoyed some newfound independence. This can be challenging to reconcile when you’re living under the same roof. So, here are some things to keep in mind as you all lovingly make this transition work:

Discuss, Don’t Order. A student who has been living independently for the past few months will naturally balk if ordered to do something. Have discussions instead, where there is give and take and you both listen to one another.

Consider Compromise. Where can you compromise so that you and your student can meet in the middle?

Prepare for Difference. As your student learns new things and experiences new people, chances are that some views will change. Be prepared for her/him to express different opinions and to discuss varied topics—it’s all part of the learning curve.

Agree to Disagree. As you discuss new topics, you and your student may not always see eye to eye. This doesn’t mean anything about whether he/she respects you or not. It’s more about testing newfound knowledge and interests. So, agree to disagree on certain topics and to listen to one another’s different perspectives. You’ll learn a good deal from one another! (Continued on page 5)
10 Things Parents Should Know About H1N1

Written by: Lori A. Soos RN, BSN, Director of Health Services

1. **College students are at high risk**: Students between the ages of 18-24 have been identified by the Centers of Disease and Control in the first priority group to receive the H1N1 vaccination.

2. **It is important that your student practices good respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene**: This is important in preventing the spread of illness. The main way H1N1 spreads is through person-to-person contact, usually by being near someone who is sick and is coughing, sneezing or talking. Encourage them to practice the following: Avoid touching their eyes, nose or mouth with their hands; germs are spread this way. Cover their nose and mouth with a tissue or sneeze into their sleeve. Throw the tissue in the trash after use, washing their hands thoroughly afterward. Wash their hands often with soap and water, especially after they cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based cleaners are also effective.

3. **Germs spread up to six feet away**: Advise your student to keep his/her distance from anyone who is coughing, sneezing or sniffling, no matter how rude it may seem. Students are encouraged to stay away from social events where there will be large groups of students sharing the same drinks or activities.

4. **Students should wipe down surfaces regularly**: Students should be encouraged to wipe down high-touch surfaces frequently with Lysol or Clorox wipes. These areas include their refrigerator handles, door-knobs, dorm and personal phones, computer keyboards, desktops and bathrooms areas.

5. **Early identification decreases transmission**: Students may pass the illness to others in the 24-48 hours before they become ill. The CDC says that students can be contagious for as long as 10 days, but typically are most contagious from the day before they get sick to 5-7 days afterward. That is why early identification, treatment and self-isolation is so important. Students who develop flu-like illness are required to self-isolate until they are fever free without the use of fever-reducing medications for 24 hours. At that time they may return to class.

6. **Students must self-report flu-like illness**: Students must report their flu-like illness by utilizing the Absent4Flu link, via their myNU account. This automatically notifies the health center as well as their professors of their illness. Students are required to contact their professors directly to discuss their plan to make up their work. Students out of school for more than five conservative days must provide professors with a note from their primary care provider to return to class. (continued on next page)
7. **Self-isolation is necessary:** H1N1 is highly contagious. In order to ensure the health and welfare of our campus community, all students identified with flu-like illness will be required to self-isolate. Students living in the local community will be required to do so at home. Students unable to return home will be self-isolated within the dorms at the discretion of the health center medical staff. Students self-isolating within a campus residence will be required to adhere to the guidelines provided to them by the health center.

8. **A flu kit will help to prepare your student:** Students are encouraged to have the necessary supplies should they become ill and need to self-isolate. Suggested supplies include: digital thermometer, cool air humidifier, tissues, hand sanitizer, cough drops, Lysol disinfectant spray, Lysol wipes, and packets of chicken noodle soup, crackers, Gatorade packets, and extra water. Medications should include: fever-reducing medication (Motrin or Tylenol), an antihistamine/decongestant liquid or tablets, and normal saline nasal spray.

9. **You should be prepared to pick up your ill student should he/she be required to return home due to illness.** The World Health Organization estimates that 60 percent of the U.S. population and 1/3 of the world population will be infected with some degree of illness. That means that it’s highly likely that you or someone you know will get sick. Before the flu strikes your family, have a plan as to who will look after a sick child.

10. **Your student should consider getting the seasonal flu and H1N1 vaccine:** Discuss with your child whether he/she will be getting the seasonal flu and H1N1 vaccination when it is available in our area. If you have questions or concerns regarding the vaccinations, research them now. You may also want to discuss your student’s options with his/her primary care provider. Vaccinations will be available on a first-come, first-served basis. For more information regarding the availability of both vaccinations, please refer to [www.niagara.edu](http://www.niagara.edu) H1N1 Preparations.

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**Advance Registration Set for November**

Registration for spring 2010 will begin mid November. Spring registration for seniors opens on November 9th and 10th; juniors on the 11th and 12th; sophomores on the 16th and 17th; and the freshmen on the 18th and 19th.

Each class is broken down by the number of credit hours that have been completed at the end of the spring 2009 semester. Also included in this total of completed hours is credit given for AP, CLEP, IB, and, previous college coursework that has been transferred to NU. The registration breakdown is posted at: [http://www.niagara.edu/registration-schedule](http://www.niagara.edu/registration-schedule)
Smoking is bad for you. We all know this. But does your student know the real truth about smoking? According to the American Cancer Society, approximately 443,600 people die each year in the U.S. from illnesses related to cigarette smoking. In fact, more Americans die from cigarettes than alcohol, car accidents, suicide, AIDS, homicide and illegal drugs combined! Here are some other statistics to share:

♦ Almost 90% of adult smokers first smoked at or before age 19.
♦ Research finds that smoking even as few as one to four cigarettes a day can lead to serious health outcomes like increased risk of heart disease and a greater chance of dying at a younger age.
♦ It’s estimated that more than 43 million U.S. adults currently smoke cigarettes—22% of men and 17% of women.
♦ Close to 50,000 non-smoking people die each year in the U.S. from secondhand smoke.
♦ Tobacco use accounts for at least 30% of all cancer deaths in the U.S., including 87% of lung cancer deaths.
♦ Flavored tobacco has become popular lately, in the form of clove cigarettes (kreteks), bidis and hookahs, yet these substances hold many of the same risks as cigarettes and other tobacco products.
♦ Hand-rolled cigarettes are not safer than those sold in stores – they actually have been found to increase the risk of cancers of the voice box, esophagus, mouth and throat.
♦ Nicotine is an addictive drug, just like cocaine or heroin.
♦ Smoking is a major cause of heart disease, aneurysms, bronchitis, emphysema and stroke.
♦ Smoking contributes to the severity of pneumonia and asthma symptoms.
♦ Tobacco is associated with reduced fertility and a higher risk of miscarriage among women, as well as premature births, stillbirths, infant death and low birth weight in infants.
♦ Smoking has been linked to a variety of other health problems including gum disease, bone fractures, ulcers and cataracts.
♦ The Centers for Disease Control estimate that adult male smokers lose an average of 13.2 years of life.
♦ Smoking harms nearly every organ of the body.
♦ Smoking low-tar cigarettes is not any better for you than smoking regular cigarettes.

Smoking early in life will affect you later in life. It’s time for students to start taking care of themselves! If you have a student who smokes or who wants to help a friend, encourage them to participate in the Great American Smokeout happening this month. If they don’t want to quit the habit, talk with them about putting preventive health care practices in place, including regular screenings and measures such as oral exams and paying attention to repeated respiratory conditions.

The good news is that people who stop smoking at younger ages experience the greatest health benefits from quitting. They can reduce the risk of getting lung cancer and other smoking-related illnesses.

Source: www.cancer.org
November is Vegan Month

Vegans go one step beyond what vegetarians choose by not eating animals; they steer clear of all animal products.

What Does It Mean? Vegans avoid using or consuming animal products. This includes milk, cheese, eggs, leather, fur, wool, silk, down and products tested on animals (such as chemicals or cosmetics).

Students often choose to make a commitment to a vegetarian or vegan lifestyle during their college years. The reasons for this vary: their awareness is raised, they are able to talk with more people making similar choices, they are stirred to get active and this lifestyle choice is one part of it.

Your student can also talk with folks in Niagara’s dining services about this lifestyle choice for assistance in planning nutritionally sound meals. Niagara currently offers a Vegetarian/Vegan station at every meal. If your student has a favorite dish, they can bring their recipe and it will put on the menu. Your student will be notified of the day and meal that their favorite recipe will be offered.

Sources: www.eatright.org; www.vegan.org; www.vrg.org

Dealing with Difficult People

Dealing with difficult people is something your student has faced and will likely face again. Here are some tips to share to keep this issue in perspective:

♦ Most people just want to be listened to. Are you practicing reflective listening when talking with individuals so that they know you are hearing and absorbing what they have to say?

♦ People are socialized in different ways. When someone does something that you consider rude, consider the fact that he/she may not have been socialized in the same way that you were. Your points of reference are likely different as a result of different upbringings.

♦ We all need attention. And some people may go about garnering that attention by being difficult. Perhaps you can turn the tides by recognizing them for positive attributes so they may not feel the need to solicit negative attention.

♦ Too much attention can backfire. When difficult people see that they’re getting a rise out of you, this can reinforce their negative behaviors. Keep your reactions in check.

The Thanksgiving Transition (continued from page 1)

Reintegrate Into Family Life. The student who has been away for a while may need time to reintegrate back into family life. Sleep patterns may not jive with everyone else’s. It may take some nudging to participate in household chores. And siblings will need to get used to one another again. Just be prepared that this reintegration won’t happen automatically.

The Thanksgiving transition will be okay, as long as you prepare for changes and remain open to your student. Talk about things, make him/her feel welcomed and realize that this Thanksgiving test run will make the winter break even better!
The American Cancer Society’s **Great American Smokeout** occurs on Nov. 19, encouraging smokers to quit and supporting them in their efforts. Kicking the habit results in benefits beyond improved health, such as:
- Food will taste better.
- Your sense of smell returns to normal.
- Your breath, hair and clothes smell better.
- Your teeth and fingernails stop yellowing.
- Ordinary activities leave you less out of breath (climbing stairs).

Source: www.cancer.org

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**Carbon Monoxide Poisoning**

As the weather gets colder, carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning typically has more opportunities to occur. Share this fact checker with your student so he can easily recognize the symptoms of CO poisoning, should it occur. Carbon monoxide is an odorless, colorless gas that can cause sudden illness and death.

**Where is CO found?**
CO is found in combustion fumes, such as those produced by cars and trucks, small gasoline engines, stoves, lanterns, burning charcoal and wood, and gas ranges and heating systems. CO from these sources can build up in enclosed or semi-enclosed spaces. Breathing it can poison people and animals in these spaces.

**What are the symptoms of CO poisoning?**
The most common symptoms of CO poisoning are: headache, dizziness, weakness, nausea, vomiting, chest pain, and confusion. High levels of CO inhalation can cause loss of consciousness and death. Unless suspected, CO poisoning can be difficult to diagnose because the symptoms mimic other illnesses. People who are sleeping or intoxicated can die from CO poisoning before ever experiencing symptoms.

**How does CO poisoning work?**
Red blood cells pick up CO quicker than they pick up oxygen. If there is a lot of CO in the air, the body may replace oxygen in blood with CO. This blocks oxygen from getting into the body, which can damage tissues and result in death.

**How can I avoid CO poisoning from my vehicle?**
- Have a mechanic check the exhaust system of your car every year. A small leak in your car's exhaust system can lead to a build up of CO inside the car.
- Never run a car or truck in the garage with the garage door shut. CO can build up quickly while your car or truck is running in a closed garage. Never run your car or truck inside a garage that is attached to a house and always open the door to any garage to let in fresh air when running a car or truck inside the garage.
- If you drive a vehicle with a tailgate, when you open the tailgate, you also need to open vents or windows to make sure air is moving through your car. If only the tailgate is open CO from the exhaust will be pulled into the car.

Source: www.cdc.gov
Getting to Know Faculty & Staff

Simple tips for students
Sometimes students are so focused on the intent of their conversation with a faculty or staff member that they forget to take a few minutes to get to know more about that person.
To learn more about the faculty and staff in their lives, your student can do things like:

♦ Ask about something that’s hanging on their office wall (“That mask is really interesting—where did you get it?”)
♦ Notice their diploma and ask what they liked about attending XYZ University
♦ Ask how long they’ve been at the institution and where they’re originally from
♦ Comment on something mentioned in class (“In class last week you mentioned your dog—what kind do you have?” or “The story you told last week about veterans often having trouble with driving once they return from war intrigued me and I looked up more about it.”)
♦ Notice a book on their bookshelf
♦ Ask if they have a favorite kind of music or if they’ve seen any good movies lately

Sometimes a few minutes of “get-to-know-you” talk can go a long way in helping your student develop a relationship with a professor or staff member