

Tips for Parents on College Student Mental Health

Whether you're helping your first-year student set up a dorm room or you're texting your senior goodbye, the start of the school year brings varying levels of worry to college student parents. High on the list is the mental health and wellbeing of the students they are sending off, particularly after the disruption and isolation of COVID-19. This brief guide to supporting your students' mental health while he, she or they are at school, was compiled from expert sources, including [Dr. Marcia Morris](#), a professor and psychiatrist at the University of Florida and the author of "[The Campus Cure: A Parent's Guide to Mental Health and Wellness for College Students](#)."

Dr. Morris's 4 T's for Parents



Tell your students you love them and they can come to you at any time to discuss how they are feeling. They should not be afraid or ashamed to seek help if they need it.



Teach your students about mental health. What is anxiety? What is depression? If they are experiencing symptoms, they should go to their counseling centers right away.



Talk with them on a regular basis. From homesickness to relationship problems, students may look for or need more support from their parents while studying away at college. Parents can support their college students by regularly checking in and providing emotional support. Parents can also ask questions on how the student is feeling and learn to create space with nonjudgment and empathy.



Take action. If you are really concerned about your student, connect with their RA or their roommate. Visit if you can. Encourage your students to provide consent (HIPAA waiver) that allows you to interact with treatment providers on campus. Parents can provide valuable information on family and developmental history to providers, which can be beneficial for the student.



Know the Mental Health Services on Campus and in the Community



Before your children transition to the dorms, you should familiarize yourself with the mental health services that their school offers. Making an appointment or connection with a counselor, dean, or other adult figure on campus can help ensure that someone is looking out for your child's wellbeing, especially for students who are already dealing with mental illness. When on-campus mental health resources are no longer adequate to support your child, you will want to have a plan for contracting outside assistance. You and your child should be familiar with the local hospitals and appropriate crisis numbers and seek medical referrals from the school's mental health services if necessary

Additional Parent Resources

- [Active Minds](#)
- [Mental Health America](#)
- [The Steve Fund](#)
- [Jed Foundation](#)
- [NAMI](#)

Dr. Morris's Links

- [A Model of Care for College Students](#)
- [Strategies to Improve Access to Mental Health](#)
- [Collaborating with Parents to Promote Mental Health](#)