

Parent Talk

AUGUST 2024

Managing Mental Health in College

When we think of back-to-school season, our first instinct is usually to consider younger kids returning to their elementary schools. However, transitioning to college as a young adult with a mental health condition can be an incredibly challenging experience too, particularly for those with ADHD, Autism Spectrum Disorders, or anxiety. Below, we list some tips for young adults with these conditions and more to help them succeed in a college environment.

Commit to a Routine

Getting into a regular routine during a new semester at college is critical for success. Many students might feel like they're thrown into a chaotic situation filled with different times, classes, and expectations. Getting everything together in a physical planner can be a huge help. It's also important to make sure you're waking up and going to bed at the same time to prevent any deviations from your schedule. Building structure has been proven to help when mental health symptoms begin to get out of control.



Form a Social Circle

Being in college can feel isolating during your first year. Many young adults are leaving their high school friends behind for the first time. It can be a huge help to seek out opportunities to make new friends or be a part of groups. Make sure to attend any meetings or events in your dorm as a chance to meet new people and investigate any on campus clubs that spark your interest. Not only will this help you feel less alone, but having a set social circle can help you stay on task with your schoolwork. Look into finding a study buddy or tutor!

Know What Resources Are Available

Make sure you do some research to find what on campus resources are available should you find yourself in crisis. Look into the office locations of campus counselors and therapists, as well as any local mental health clinics or offices. It's always helpful to come prepared with a plan, even if you don't end up needing it. It's also important to stay connected with your off-campus resources such as your regular therapist who may be able to offer you therapy online or by phone. If you take medication, make sure you have a reliable way of getting your prescription filled as well as an easily accessible location to pick it up.



Minimize Distractions

One of the leading causes of anxiety and stress in college is keeping up with your schoolwork. For people with a mental health condition, symptoms can make it much easier to fall victim to common college distractions like parties. While these social gatherings are great for making friends, there's a time and a place for them. If you're finding it difficult to concentrate when it's time to get work done, minimize distractions by doing your homework in a designated quiet area like a library or group study session. Commit to doing your work at a regular time and place to ensure you can always complete it on time.


Need more help?

Resources at The Baker Center are just a click away



Therapy & Treatment Services

CENTER FOR EFFECTIVE THERAPY →




Special Education

MANVILLE SCHOOL →



Therapeutic Summer Camp

CAMP BAKER →



College Preparation

NEXT STEP →

Featured Resources



Next Step: College Success & Independent Living

Next Step is designed to help students with social language and anxiety challenges prepare for college. The program serves as a simulation for independent living.

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Preparing for a Successful Return to School

Join us on Thursday, August 29th at 11AM for Preparing for a Successful Return to School, featuring Mary Woodland, LICSW, Assistant Director, Center for Effective Therapy. This seminar will address the different challenges that returning to school can bring up for kids and families, and how to prepare for success in advance.

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Parent Talk: Autism Acceptance

Many teens with autism struggle with attending college, so we've outlined a list of helpful tips to get you started on promoting autism acceptance at home, school, and in your community.

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