

## **The Life and Times at U of M: Helping Your Student Flourish**

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You may be the parents of first year students or of seniors. Whatever class standing your daughter or son may have at the university, they will be experiencing a variety of stressors that impact their lives and possibly yours.

As a parent of a first year, first semester student, your daughter or son has left home for the first time and is now a college student. You most likely prepared yourself as best you could for this major transition, but now much of your intellectual and emotional preparation will be put to the test over the next few months. The reality is that your relationship with your student will change the moment they set foot on campus. It will be important for you as their parent to be flexible enough to move with those changes and understand that it is a common developmental stage. Expect to be pushed away as too controlling one day and asked to come to the rescue the next. Ultimately, your roles as a protector and director will evolve into being a loving consultant and advisor. The path may not always be smooth, but the process of your daughter or son becoming the independent, responsible person you have worked all your adult life for them to become, has begun. Your support, listening ear, encouragement and trust in their process will help them immensely to develop these skills.

As a parent of other returning students, you have probably established a comfortable pace between your daughter or son by now. However, they are still going to face stressful times in their academic year as they go through midterms, relationship conflicts, internship or job interviews, maybe graduation in December, possible changes in your family unit configuration, financial stresses, and other concerns. Your ongoing support and being a sounding board for them during these stressful times will be of real help. Refraining from telling them how they might "fix" whatever is happening with them might be difficult at times, but will encourage their continued growth into adulthood, and strengthen your relationship with them.

Remember if your son or daughter is having a significantly difficult time and all their best efforts, and yours, don't seem to be working, counseling support is available for them at Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS). Our knowledgeable and committed staff is ready to provide professional assistance to help them with their concerns in a confidential and safe setting.