

# HAMPDEN-SYDNEY COLLEGE

FORMING GOOD MEN AND GOOD CITIZENS SINCE 1776



## HOW TO: HELP A STUDENT STRUGGLING TO ADJUST TO COLLEGE

There are many different reasons first year students have trouble transitioning to college life. This is one of the first major life transitions for many young adults. Some students are excited to take on the new experience, while others feel apprehensive about making this change. Regardless of their outlook, it is helpful for them to talk to others who have already made that transition, like RA's.

Talking to these students about common changes and common stressors they can expect can be very beneficial, plus this gives them a resource of someone to talk to. Below are brief lists of each and advice to give students.

### COMMON CHANGES

- **New Environment and relationship**
  - > Living with roommates can be a challenge and adjustment
  - > Learning how to communicate and compromise with roommate
  - > Introduced to new cultures and backgrounds they may not have been exposed to before
- **Greater Personal Freedom**
  - > Gaining independence and having to make choices and decisions on their own
  - > New freedom can be exciting, overwhelming, and difficult
  - > This is a learning process and it takes time to adjust
- **Added Responsibility**
  - > Manage basic tasks (eating, sleeping, exercising, going to class)
  - > Address more complex responsibilities (balancing studying/work and social life, participating in clubs/activities, handling finances)
- **Changing Relationships**
  - > Being away from friends from high school
  - > Ending romantic relationships and beginning new ones or starting long distance relationships
  - > Figuring ways to balance staying connected with old friends

## COMMON STRESSOR

- **Time Management**

- > Balancing time and staying organized can be hard for some students.
- > Advice: Using a schedule and some organization skills will help the student effectively manage time. Get a planner or calendar!

- **Roomate Conflict**

- > Different living habits and failure to communicate with each other can create tension.
- > Advice: Communicate needs and expectations with roommate respectfully, while student should recognize his own habits may need to change as well.

- **Long Distance Relationship**

- > It is common for first year students to begin college and attempt a long distance relationship, this is hard on relationships, many times there are worries about what the future will hold.
- > Advice: Encourage student to be open and communicate with significant other about worries.

- **Alcohol/Other Drugs**

- > Many first year students experiment when they get to college, because of the new personal freedom.
- > Advice: Remind student that although the social experience is important, successful academics keeps him here. Encourage safe drinking habits and make sure student is aware of drug use consequences.

- **Homesickness**

- > Some students struggle with being away from home.
- > Advice: This is normal and will most likely pass with time. Talk to parents over the phone, but become connected with others on campus and stay busy.

- **Other Advises**

- > Be patient – While campus may seem new and overwhelming, it becomes more familiar with time.
- > Connect with others – If you talk to other students, you are likely to discover that they share similar questions and concerns. Get involved – Student organizations are a fun way to interact with other students. Utilize resources – There are numerous resources on campus designed to create a rewarding college experience.
- > Care for yourself – The foundation for a productive college career is a healthy lifestyle. Take the necessary steps for nurturance, getting adequate rest, socializing, and physical activity.