

## 2022 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

# Copiloting a smooth take-off & soft landing to college

#HECA2022CO

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For many students, the transition from high school to college can be a crash and burn instead of a soft landing. Our goal today is to offer insights into situations students may encounter when they arrive on campus, during their first weeks, and throughout their first year.

Presented by Chuck Erickson, *IEC & College Achievement Coach, College Connectors*;  
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and Carol Ben-Davies, M.Ed. *Student Success Coach and Strategist*  
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# Understanding the Social Construct of College

Beth arrived on campus eager to build friendships like the ones she had in high school, making connections came easy for her so she was confident she would make lifelong friends easily.

She decided to participate in sorority recruitment because everyone in her residence hall was talking about rushing. They giddily talk about the most popular sororities they hope to get into and how much fun it would be if they all got bids to the same one, the popular one.

At first, she's enjoying rush and meeting new people but it was becoming harder and harder as the friends she made were accepted to the same house, the popular one. She got a bid to the least popular sorority house and she feels rejected so she doesn't accept the bid. As she looks around her residence hall, everyone has found their clique and she feels sad and alone.

What are some ways you could help this student and their family?  
Give specific examples.

# Suggestions we've given students to help them acclimate.

- Connect with future classmates via social media
- Find events on campus to attend that are similar to your interests
- Research clubs and organizations to join before arriving on campus
- Encourage your student to attend the campus student organization fair
- Look up IM sports and performing arts opportunities
- Check out the volunteer center during Welcome Week
- Find affinity offices (Diversity, LGBT, Religious Life, etc.)
- College is different from what you see in the movies!

# Understanding partying and alcohol/drugs

Tony is a former client and his mom calls to express concern to you about Tony who is a freshman living seven hours away from home.

Tony's high school friend and roommate shared that Tony has been drinking heavily, he drinks to the point of being incoherent and forgetting the events of the night.

He was a good student in high school but came from a strict family home that stressed academics and you were concerned about how he would handle his newfound freedom away from home. Tony seems to be enjoying the social life of college too much. You know that Tony has an academic scholarship he can't afford to lose.

Have you had conversations with your clients regarding drug and alcohol use in college?

Each year, among college students ages 18 to 24:

- 3,360,000 drive under the influence of alcohol;
- 696,000 are assaulted by another student who has been drinking;
- 599,000 who are under the influence of alcohol are unintentionally injured;
- 22,219 are hospitalized for an alcohol overdose; and
- 1,519 die from alcohol-related unintentional injuries, including motor-vehicle crashes.

Source: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Facts on College Student Drinking, March 2021

# Here's what we would recommend.

- Be honest with students and families. There are drugs and alcohol on every campus, even “dry” ones.
- Encourage your parents to talk with their students about these issues before the student leaves for college.
- Help parents build trust with their students around topics of drugs and alcohol.
- Show families and students resources on campus, including social opportunities that do not involve drugs/alcohol.
- Every action has a consequence. Share the campus alcohol/drug policy with your student and their family.
- Unfortunately the reality is college students can face social pressure to drink, discuss alcohol education, consumption and prevention of the harms that can come from alcohol and substance abuse.

# Homesickness, long-distance relationships and exploring new values without the constructs of a home environment

Sidney has been looking forward to spending her free time on the beach and taking surfing lessons. The idea of going to college close to a beach after living in the Midwest is a dream come true for her.

Mid-semester, Sidney has an argument with her roommate and starts thinking that maybe being so far from home isn't as great as she thought it would be. She begins to realize that she hates the weather, she hates how everyone is so preoccupied with going to the beach and she kind of thinks she hates her roommate too. She calls her family and says she wants to transfer. She thinks maybe she's out of her element and she missed the familiarity of home.

Her family reaches out to you for your help with some transfer options, explaining that Sidney isn't happy at her college.

What kinds of conversations do you have with students who are planning to attend college farther than a day's drive away from home?

# Tips we've given to students regarding homesickness.

- Before you leave to college make an inventory of the things you find comforting at home and plan to take a few of those things with you.
- Talk to your family about your worries.
- Have a plan for when you feel homesick; communicate with the people that are part of that plan that when you reach out you need their reassurance.
- Talk to your roommate about it. They may feel the same way!
- Feeling homesick is real and can feel overwhelming. Nothing seems right. Its okay to feel this way, but don't keep the feelings in, talk them out.
- Make sure your student knows where the counseling office is located on campus.

# Recommended Books

How to College: What to Know Before You Go  
(and When You're There)

The Naked Roommate And 107 Other Issues  
You Might Run Into in College

Your Turn: How to Be an Adult

Choose Your Own Adulthood

The Ultimate College Student Health Handbook

Mindfulness: A Practical Guide

How to Raise an Adult

Letting Go: A Parent's Guide to Understanding  
the College Years

They're Ready. Are You? A Parent's Guide to  
Surviving the College Transition

College of the Overwhelmed

The Gift of Failure: How the Best Parents  
Learn to Let Go So Their Children Can  
Succeed

# Websites and Institutional Resources

[Grown and Flown](https://grownandflown.com)

grownandflown.com

[College Parent Central](https://collegeparentcentral.com)

collegeparentcentral.com

[My Student Body](https://mystudentbody.com/hbg/)

mystudentbody.com/hbg/

[College Info Geek](https://collegeinfo geek.com)

collegeinfo geek.com

[Healthyminds Innovations](https://hminnovations.org)

hminnovations.org

## **Institution Specific Resources:**

Family/Parent Guide or Parent, Family and Alumni Associations

Facebook groups for Parents and Family members

Verified Twitter, Instagram, Tiktok accounts (look for the blue check!)

# Apps and podcasts

[Shovel](#) app

[Noonlight](#) app

[FocusKeeper](#) app

[UCLA Mindful](#) app

Campus-specific apps

[The College Parent Podcast](#)

[College Parent Central Podcast](#)

[Mighty Parenting Podcast](#)

Podcasts on the college/university website

# College Transition Questions? Contact us.

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*We look forward to seeing you in DC!*