

Counselling Services'
**Tips for Parents of New Students with
Mental Health Concerns**

10. **Keep in mind that you will also be going through a transition** and begin adjusting your ways of parenting accordingly.
 - Remember, you have helped them through educational transitions at least twice before, when they started Kindergarten and high school. You can do this.
 - You are still your child's "best bet". Do everything you can to keep the lines of communication open. Be genuinely interested in their hopes and fears about what comes after high school.
 - Avoid offering unsolicited advice; listen, and let them come to you for input when they're open to it. Be aware of the powerful effects of counterwill in adolescents!
 - Show genuine interest in what they are learning. One great dinner-table question is "Did you hear anything surprising in classes today?"
9. Explicitly **clarify your expectations** of each other regarding their studies.
 - Who will pay for what?
 - What will the minimum expectations be regarding their academic success and progress?
8. **Be realistic in your expectations** of them regarding their goals.
 - Most students either don't have a clear goal during their first year, or have one but change it. Almost all degree programs have enough flexibility to accommodate the "sampling" that happens during first year.
 - Reduce the pressure you may unintentionally be putting on them in this area.
 - Let them know that career counselling is available at almost every post-secondary institution.
 - If all else fails, have honest discussions about whether going straight to post-secondary studies is the right choice for them. Here's one student's advice to parents: "No matter what you do as a parent, your kid won't succeed if they don't want to be in school right now".
7. **Remember that all post-secondary institutions will view them and treat them as adults**, even though that may only be partly true.
 - Unless they agree and put it in writing, you won't have any access to their grades, counselling records or correspondence. However, the institution, and support services in particular, can sometimes provide you with general information that is not specific to your child.
 - Having said this, significant safety concerns override confidentiality regulations. Ask your child whose name they have listed as their emergency contact.

For more information on Counselling Services and tips on student success, go to:

kwantlen.ca/counselling

6. **Discuss how the work load at post-secondary is different from high school.**
 - New students are often shocked to find out how much work university really is. Research and practice tells us that, in order to be successful, students need to study two hours per week (including readings, homework and assignments) for every credit (not course) they are taking. This is the **2-to-1** guideline.
5. **Create a great study area at home**, even though they may not use it much at first.
 - It should have a door that closes, a desk, a comfortable chair, a good reading light and a bookcase. If possible, put the computer in another room.
 - Encourage them to study on campus before, after and between classes.
 - Phones, Facebook, MSN, etc. interfere with the ability to focus while studying. Adults know this; young adults may not accept it. Do what you can.
4. **Encourage them to stick with academic English and math courses in high school** that will better prepare them for post-secondary studies.
 - If that doesn't happen, encourage them to upgrade their English and math skills, which they can do at many post-secondary institutions in BC.
 - Almost all colleges and universities will offer academic coaching in some form.
3. **Discuss minimum academic standards** and the permanence of their transcript.
 - *Minimal* success is generally 60% (C), not 50%, as in high school.
 - If they don't achieve a minimum Grade Point Average after a certain number of semesters or credits, they will be required to take a break from their studies at that institution. The details vary, but the basic policy is very similar across schools. They will receive warnings in writing before this happens, but they may ignore them or not tell you about them.
2. **Help them to start making connections at the school** prior to beginning their studies.
 - Course planning events help them to select their courses and register.
 - Orientation events help them to meet other students, learn about services and get familiar with the campus.
 - It's crucial for them to connect with disability services before their first semester if they are seeking accommodations related to a mental health or other disability.
1. **Help them to stay connected with current supports and services and to seek out new ones at their college or university.**
 - Research has found that, for *all* students, those who utilize more services get better grades. Asking for help is a sign of being a strong student, not a weak one.
 - Let them know that, although they are now "adults", there are many services available to them – probably more than at their high school. For students with mental health concerns, counselling services and disability services are good places to start.
 - Let them know that you're still available to help them access those services. Be prepared to accept their choices if they are not willing to do so.

For more information on Counselling Services and tips on student success, go to:

kwantlen.ca/counselling