

PLANNING FOR THE TRANSITION TO NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY: EMOTIONAL HEALTH

After you have bought the laptop, the bedspread, and the dustbuster for your freshman, consider mental health wellness as an important topic to talk to your student about and research *before* they arrive on campus:

- Lack of structure and irregular sleep schedules are preventable causes of poor academic performance for many students.
- Social supports “make or break” the freshman experience for many students. Plan time for extra-curriculars in order to meet people.
- Independence and academic deadlines are stressful. Exercise is a great “stress buster”. Alcohol is an unhealthy stress buster.
- CAPS offers workshops on stress management, perfectionism. “from shy to more social”... Encourage your student to go online and look up workshop offerings at www.northwestern.edu/counseling/services/workshops.html
- Become aware of campus services before a crisis arises. Look online to learn about the Office for Students with Disabilities, the International Office, tutoring, Multicultural Student affairs, various campus religious organizations, etc.
- Make sure your student will have insurance with mental health coverage “just in case”. Consider buying NU insurance if your student is not well covered by the family’s plan while in Evanston.

10 Ways to Smooth the Transition If Your Student Received Treatment in High School

- CAPS staff (Counseling and Psychological Services) has worked with thousands of students, and can provide consultation on what kind of treatment college students need, and how to access community resources. CAPS provides short term treatment to NU student when *short term treatment is indicated and resources allow*. If your student needs long term follow-up, CAPS will provide free consultation about how to make those arrangements (847-491-2151). *Consultations are confidential by law.*
- Students who use NU insurance for outpatient psychological treatment need to contact CAPS (call 847-491-2151) *before* they make an appointment with an AETNA preferred provider. Start this process early to ensure continuity of care!
- If your student needs AA, ACOA, an eating disorder treatment group, a DBT group, or other kind of adjunctive care, find out about local resources *before* your student arrives on campus.
- Academic accommodations (increased time on tests, for example), can only be arranged *after* a student provides documentation to SSD (Services for Students with Disabilities 847-467-5530 or visit their website at www.northwestern.edu/disability).
- There is still time to research insurance coverage! Compare mental health coverage of NU's AETNA (visit their website at www.nuhs.northwestern.edu/evanston/insurance.aspx) to your family's current insurance. Look up preferred provider lists online. Checkout co-pays and deductibles. NU insurance has no deductible for mental health coverage.
- Some students with therapists or doctors "at home" wait too long to ask for help when they run into difficulty. There is still time to get a therapist or psychiatrist near NU.
- Research pharmacies where prescriptions can be filled. Does your student have an insurance card to take to the pharmacy? Do they know how to order their medication from your mail order pharmacy? If they take a prescription medication that is a controlled substance, do they have a lock box in which to store it?
- Has your student talked to their doctor about exactly how many servings of alcohol or other substances are allowed per week with their medication?
- Young adults need privacy. Sit down with your student and their therapist and discuss a "limited release", whereby parents can be told only if there are safety concerns, if the student drops out of treatment, or a summary of treatment recommendations. This allows for privacy around many other issues discussed in therapy.
- Become acquainted with the many services offered at Northwestern. Consult the Parent Handbook (mailed in July) or go online at www.northwestern.edu/orientation. Encourage your son/daughter to use these services. For general information or advice on where to go for what, call the Dean of Students at 847-491-8430.