10 Tips for Parents with College Students at Home

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https://medical.mit.edu/mit-health-plans/student-health-plans
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1. Be a coach
   - Don’t solve problems
   - Support age-appropriate autonomy
   - Refer out
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2. Students have all the same campus resources
   • Student Support Services
   • Tutoring
   • Mental Health and Counseling
   • Fitness and wellness
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3. Support attachment to campus
   • New communities are available
   • Meetings and gatherings are later than high school
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4. Focus on values, not goals
   • Remind students that the pandemic is everywhere
   • Many are frustrated with lack of progress on goals
   • Dig deeper to find core values
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5. Find ways to maintain motivation
Mihalyi Csikszentimihalyi, *Finding Flow*
When Motivation is Low for Students

• **Go beyond grades as motivators.** Dig deeper into core values and future goals.

• **Create more structure and boundaries than usual.** Set small, manageable goals. Remember, right now is generally not a time of peak goal attainment. Set boundaries around news and worry.

• **Create deliberate connection.**

• **Put rewards at the end of work, not before.**
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6. Don’t fall into the “I’ll just...” trap
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7. Discuss and negotiate needs ahead of time as much as possible
   • Space
   • Technology
   • Do not disturb
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8. Support good quality sleep
   • While you still can...
Sleep deficit

Short sleep duration (<7 hours per night) is associated with greater likelihoods of obesity, high blood pressure, diabetes, coronary heart disease, stroke, frequent mental distress, and death.

CDC (2016)
Reality check

- Less than 5% of the population has a genetic mutation allowing them to function normally on 6 hours of sleep per night.

He, Y. et al. (2009), *Science* 325(5942)

Optimal quality sleep

• Sunlight before noon
• Relaxation technique
• 150 minutes of exercise per week
• Cool, dark, and quiet
• Wake up at around the same time each day
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9. Acknowledge the losses
   • College classes
   • Dorm life
   • Lab opportunities
   • Athletics
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10. Create a family ritual or routine
   • Weekly activity (exercise, movies, games, cooking)
   • Gratitude question: rose, bud, thorn; arrows in, arrows out
bit.ly/mitwellness

• Video/podcast recordings and recommended apps
• The MIT Sleep/Relax Line: 617/253-CALM (2256)
• Live virtual classes in mindfulness meditation, yoga, health coaching, and more.
Thank you!

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