

# Navigating your Student's Transition to College



- **START** having conversations **EARLY!**
  - Proactive communication about important topics
  - Listen to each other's expectations for things like:
    - frequency of communication
    - academic performance
    - financial contribution
    - frequency of visits/coming home
    - rules/boundaries that still apply at home, but might look different at school
- **EXPECT & ACCEPT** change
  - Academic and professional interests may change over time
  - Students are further solidifying their sense of identity and values
  - Students are exploring new relationships and learning how to form meaningful social connections
  - *These are all normal and healthy stages of development for young adults, so being supportive to students as they do this is important*
- Use **ACTIVE LISTENING** when talking with your student
  - Use eye contact and other non-verbal cues to show you are fully present and hearing them
  - Reflect back to them what you heard them say before sharing your own response
- Be **SUPPORTIVE** and **EMPATHIC** if your student struggles to adjust
  - Avoid minimizing their struggles or saying things like "this should be the best four years of your life"
  - Ask ahead of time how they would like you to support them if they do struggle
  - Be aware of campus resources (e.g. career center, tutoring services, student clubs/organizations, counseling center) that could be helpful
- **LECTURE** vs. **EXPRESS CARE & CONCERN**
  - Be honest with your student about your concerns and fears and give guidance as appropriate, but seek to do it in a tone of genuine care and concern
- Have **YOUR OWN SUPPORT SYSTEM** in place
  - It can be challenging for families to "let go" and adjust to having their student away at college
  - Important to have your own spaces to feel supported and validated in the unique ways that this transition affects you, so that you are better able to support your student with what they need