

a note to parents:

Whether your graduate is about to attend college, start a job, or just moving out of the house, the process can be overwhelming! Although the to-do list keeps growing, it's critically important to go over [BV Well's Mental Health and Wellness Checklist](#) with your student. The time you and your child spend going over these topics together now will have tremendous payoffs later.



MENTAL HEALTH & WELLNESS CHECKLIST for graduates & their families

- 1. MENTAL HEALTH:** Research where the mental health/counseling center is on campus, what services are available, and how they can access the services. Often students can receive a number of counseling sessions at little to no charge every month, then can be referred to local therapists if they are still in need of support. Remind them to prioritize their mental health. Validate that this is a new experience and it's normal for that to evoke many emotions. Review their sources of strength and encourage them to build a support network they can tap into when things get tough. Keep the conversation going and be ready to intervene if necessary.
- 2. PHYSICAL HEALTH and WELLNESS:** Review overall healthcare. See their dentist for a cleaning and their doctor for a well check before they go and make sure they have needed vaccinations. Have them take a photo of their health and dental insurance cards and immunization record including date of last Tetanus booster. Assemble a first aid kit and teach them how to use it.
Review the basic building blocks of wellness: sleep, hydration, nutrition, movement/exercise, stress reduction, getting out in nature and connecting with others in community all have a huge impact on how they feel in body and mind.
- 3. LOCAL FACILITIES:** Know where to find physical and mental health help. Locate where the health clinic is on campus, the weekday/weekend hours, and how they can make an appointment. Also, research what facilities are in the surrounding community (ERs/urgent cares/mental health treatment facilities) and determine which ones accept your health insurance.
- 4. PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS:** Make a plan for prescriptions. Do you want them to transfer prescriptions to a local pharmacy? Will they manage their meds or will you? If they are on psychiatric meds, do you feel comfortable with them having a 3-month supply at hand? You might consult with their provider. Also, encourage them to stay aware of medication amounts so they get refills before they run out.



MENTAL HEALTH & WELLNESS CHECKLIST for graduates & their families (continued)

- 5. RISKS: Address sexual health including contraception.** Don't skip this talk even if your child isn't currently sexually active. **Discuss the negative impacts of drinking, vaping and drugs** (including Fentanyl- remind that one pill can kill.) Don't skip this talk even if your child abstains from substances.
- 6. MEDICAL RECORDS: Obtain and sign necessary documents.** Once your child turns 18, you no longer have open access to their medical records, even in an emergency. Go over HIPAA and any other forms needed and ask them to list parent names so you can access information about their medical and mental health care. *See helpful links for more info.
- 7. SUPPORT SERVICES: Determine what student support resources exist** for tutoring, academic and peer advising, student activities, and career services. These resources can all help support a student's emotional well-being. Encourage them to join a community of some sort- study group, club, or church group. Expanding their support network will be a huge benefit!
- 8. EMERGENCIES: Prepare for emergencies.** Make sure they have the contact info of several trusted adults in their phone in case you cannot be reached. Tell them to share their emergency numbers with their roommate also. **Put 988 and all of the hotline numbers in their phone contacts!** 988 is the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, 741-741 is the National Crisis Text Line, 1-800-662-4357 is the National Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration. Their campus may also have a mental health hotline for students.
- 9. FAMILY CONNECTION: To maintain family connection,** set up a time and agreed upon frequency for regular check-in calls with your graduate once they leave. Ask for ideas from them on planning special meals and events for when they come home for a weekend or break. These family connections continue to be important- to you and to them!
- 10. PARENT CARE: Add in some self-care for yourselves, parents!** This is a very emotional time that often begins during all of the "lasts" of senior year. As you prepare for this transition, you may find yourself with mixed feelings- joy of celebrations, happiness for your student's next steps, yet also feeling relieved that it's over, (then feeling guilty about feeling relieved!) You might feel pride about their accomplishments, and at the same time anxiety about the financial burdens. This is also a major change in family dynamics and can induce intense grief. Allow yourself to grieve! Acknowledge and address your own emotions and pay attention to those of your other children in the home, as well. Be vulnerable and reach out to other parents who can encourage you. Most universities have online parent groups for questions and support. You are not alone!



MENTAL HEALTH & WELLNESS CHECKLIST for graduates & their families (continued)

IN CLOSING: Please don't skip these conversations with your college-bound kid! Even though some of these topics will be uncomfortable, they are so important. You don't want your child to have to figure these important things out alone during a health/mental health crisis. Also, you don't want to end up in the stressful situation of trying to find help for your child in crisis from another city or state. Plan ahead. Go over these things now so you will both be prepared.

Congratulations to your graduate! May their future be bright and healthy! Be well. ♥

HELPFUL LINKS:

For additional insight, read the articles below that expand on this to-do list.

- Before Heading to College, Make a Mental Health Checklist | The New York Times <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/08/well/mind/mental-health-college-students.html>
- Mental Health Matters: Why Your College Student Should Get to Know the Campus Counselor | Better Magazine <https://better.net/life/mental-health-matters-why-your-college-student-should-get-to-know-the-campus-counselor/>
- Sources of Strength www.sourcesofstrength.org
- 15 Items to take care of before your student leaves for college: <https://collegecountdown.scholarshare529.com/parenting/15-items-to-take-care-of-before-your-student-leaves-for-college/>
- Printable Off-to-College Checklist: <https://grownandflown.com/wp-content/uploads/ebooks/Off-to-College-Checklist-Grown-and-Flown.pdf>
- Risks of Fentanyl: <https://www.dea.gov/onepill/parents-and-caregivers>
- ***PAPERWORK AFTER AGE 18:** <https://www.commercebank.com/personal/ideas-and-tips/2022/important-documents-parents-and-college-students-should-sign>
Printable HIPAA form: <https://eforms.com/release/medical-hipaa/>