Easing the Transition to College

Wisconsin Child Psychiatry Consultation Program (WICPCP.org)

Build Self-Compassion:

- College students who practice self-compassion report improved mental health, coping, and social interactions
- Self-compassion includes:
  - Gentle, "friend-like" self-talk in response to struggles or worries
  - Reflection on how one is not alone, other students are experiencing similar challenges
  - Mindfulness to identify and work through emotions rather than be controlled by them
- **Resources:** self compassion

Identify Positive Social Connections on Campus:

- Students who experience positive identity and social connections report more positive transitions to college.
- As part of the college search/preparation, ask about/connect with meaningful campus clubs/organizations.
- Talk regularly with the Residence Advisor about student life and social connections.
- **Resource:** 5 steps for making friends in college

Address Homesickness:

- Acknowledge that many students will experience difficulty living away from home.
- Students and families have different approaches that feel most helpful.
- Research suggests that students do best when finding ways to feel connected without frequent visits home.
- **Resource:** how to deal with homesickness in college

Campus Support Services:

- Often, mental health services are offered at college health clinics. Learn more during tours and orientation.
- If not, determine if any local mental health providers are covered by parental insurance.
- A school social worker can help find free or low-cost clinics in the college community.
- **Resource:** college guide

Specific Web Resources for Parents/Caregivers:

- **University of Kentucky:** **how to navigate mental health conversations**
- **Mass General:** parents' guide college to student mental health
- **NAMI:** college guide

Resources for Students from Underrepresented Communities

- **Gustavus Adolphus College:** **identity counseling center**
- **Western Michigan University:** bipoc resources

Specialized Support Resources:

- **Students with autistic spectrum disorders:** college and autism