

Happy Heart, Happy Home

Tips for Parenting your Rutgers College Student during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Empathy for the Student

Remember your college student is in a time of transition and the pandemic has stripped them of their routine, independence, and social interactions. Give them the space to be an adult and do things on their preferred schedule if possible. Your student may try to follow their college routine as much as they can, which may mean studying later in the evening and getting up later in the morning. They may spend some extra time on social media connecting with friends, which has important benefits for their emotional health and well-being.

Respect of Time

In this time of social distancing it may seem that students have plenty of time on their hands, but they do have work that has to be completed. This is a new situation and stressful time for everyone. Many students are overwhelmed with the transition to remote learning and may be struggling with time management. If you have younger children at home, you may be tempted to get your college student to help with their homeschooling. Or you may think nothing of popping into your student's room and asking them to take care of a household chore right at that moment. Your college student has to recalibrate their study habits and find comfortable spaces to do their work. This may seem like a simple task but their study habits have been disrupted and they are readjusting mentally. Ask to schedule time with your college student so they recognize that you value their time and space.

My House, My Rules

Though you pay the bills and desire a certain level of order/ respect in your home, students have been living on their own for months and have their own set of rules/ norms. Have conversations with your student as an adult not a child. Come to an agreement together about household expectations. Let them know your intent behind your conversation and be receptive to the impact that it has on your college student so you can have a healthy conversation.

Communicate Your Own Feelings

You likely have your fears and anxieties about these uncertain times. Sharing your feelings, either with your college student or separate support system, can model healthy coping. It can also help you to manage your feelings.

Respect Their Autonomy

Your college student may have a job or may have lost a job during this trying time. They may have to work to help out your family or pay for school expenses. If you are concerned about their health and safety when going out to work, have a conversation with them about what they are currently doing to stay safe and healthy.

Make them feel good about the correct steps they've already taken during a time when lots of jobs/internships are placed on hold. Then feel free to give more suggestions if needed. If you or your college student are looking for a job, visit: <https://jobs.covid19.nj.gov/>.

Connect Them to Resources

Remind your student to reach out for support by calling Counseling, Alcohol and Other Drug Assistance Program, & Psychiatric Services at 848-932-7884 and seeking other resources at health.rutgers.edu.