



THE UNIVERSITY OF
NEW MEXICO

Counseling Services

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Tips for Parents*

What can you do to help your college student from a distance? You are still a parent to your college student, and he or she still needs your support and guidance during these years. Here are some ways you can express your caring and help improve your child's experience at UNM.

Stay in touch! Even though your college student is experimenting with independent choices, he/she needs to know you're still there, to discuss both normal and difficult issues. But remember to respect their erratic schedules and increased demands and watch your expectations that they'll be available whenever you call. Negotiate some agreed-upon times to email, text, or call, and use the method you child is most likely to answer. Frankly, we've found voicemail to be obsolete.

Recognize some new boundaries and limits. This is your child's transition to full autonomy and adulthood. It can be normal and developmentally appropriate for some college students to want less contact with their parents for a time, preferring relationships with peers and important faculty. This is an important step towards personal identity and autonomy, and may help the student relate to you, ultimately, on an adult/adult level.

Be realistic with your college student about financial matters. It helps parents and the college student to create a detailed plan covering how tuition, fees, books, and room and board will be paid for, and the family's expectations about other spending.

Be realistic with your college student regarding academic achievement and grades.

UNM attracts bright students from all over the world. Given the competition, not every first-year student who excelled in high school will be a straight-A student in college. While meeting the basic academic requirements of the University is critical, it can be just as important for the student to develop and refine the capacity to work independently and consistently, experiencing growing mastery.

* Adapted with permission from Susan Landis Beck, Counseling Center, Goshen College, and Mental Health Services of Central Michigan University.