

ASK THE EXPERT



Transitioning to Adulthood with ADHD

Helping Your Young Adult Become Independent

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Moving Towards Independence

- Moving towards independent living is a time of both excitement and trepidation
 - It is normal for students to be excited and anxious at the same time
 - It is also normal for parents to feel terrified
- Remember, everything will be okay!



Transitioning Into Independent Living

- Consider having student attend local college for first two years
 - Living at home may help transition
 - After two years will have AA or AS degree
 - Smaller class size
 - Easier to transfer to larger school after two years than get accepted as a freshman

Practicing Good Self-Care

- Order of Priorities for Students
 - Health
 - Family
 - Friendships and Relationship
 - Academics
- Self-Care is Essential
 - Sleep
 - Limited substance use
 - Safe sex



Practicing Good Self-Care

- Students with ADHD may have difficulty “checking in” with themselves to see if they are
 - Hungry
 - Thirsty
 - Tired
 - Needing exercise
- Mindfulness meditation and having scheduled “check in” times has been found to improve self-awareness



Substance Use in College

- Six times higher rate of substance abuse when a person has ADHD
 - Stimulant medication drops substance abuse risk rate down to that of a control group
- People with ADHD are more likely to succumb to peer pressure



Signs of Problematic Substance Use

- Changes in sleep patterns
- Changes in appearance
- Grades dropping
- Getting into legal trouble
- Missing classes
- Family history of substance abuse
- Missing medication
- Asking for money more than usual

90% of Success in Life Comes from Just Showing Up

- Key ingredients to success in college:
 - Show up to get enough sleep
 - Show up for every class
 - Show up to study (preferably at scheduled times)
- Working on these will be an ongoing process
 - But every good day is a step in the right direction
 - Goal is to have more good days and fewer bad

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Get to Know the University's OSDS

- Office for Student Disabilities Services
 - They are in charge of accommodations
 - Apply for accommodations online as soon as student is accepted to the college
 - Student needs to provide letter from clinician stating diagnosis
 - Full testing no longer a requirement
- Student will need to sign a release to give parents ability to talk to OSDS

Accommodation Tips

- You have the right to appeal
- Get an accommodation approved even if you think you might not use it every time
 - Student may feel they don't need extended time at the beginning of the semester, but may need it as semester progresses and tests scores aren't up to student's ability

Set Up a Structured Schedule

- Use iCalendar or Gmail Calendar sharing feature
 - You and your child can update the calendar
- Color-code events
 - Class
 - Study times
 - Household chores (laundry)
 - Social events
 - Free time



Money Management

- Link Bank Accounts
 - Parent can transfer money into student's account, but student can't transfer money out of parent's account
- Use Pre-Paid Credit Card
 - Parent can load a set amount of money
- Consider holding off on a job the first year of college
 - Get adjusted to college first



Money Management

- Set up a basic budget
- Beware of students using university meal plans to treat friends to dinner
- Avoid “real” credit card use
 - Have a very low spending limit
- Search for scholarships
- Beware of high interest rates on student loans

Living With a Roommate

- Chronic disorganization can cause conflict with roommates
- No need to disclose ADHD diagnosis to roommates
- Roommate matching isn't always the solution



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Study Skills and Tips

- Study for 30 minutes and take 15 minute breaks
 - Go outside for a walk during breaks
- Turn off notifications on phone and laptop
- Clear off desk except for study materials
- Put “do not disturb” sign on door
- Have some background sound
 - Music, ceiling fan, white noise app or machine

Summary

- Accommodations help “level the playing field” for college students with ADHD
- Emphasize the importance of self-care to your student
- A structured schedule helps students stay on track
- Keep close reins on money usage
- Parents may need to be more involved

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Talk with an ADHD Information Specialist
1-866-200-8098, Monday-Friday, 1-5 pm ET