

Month to Month Adjustments

Certain times in the academic year tend to be universally challenging to students. Parents who understand the ups and downs of the first college year are better able to help their students negotiate the challenges of transition to college. Below are some typical adjustment issues faced throughout the year.

September/October

- Excitement
- Testing new-found freedom
- Frequent calls and visits home
- Campus familiarization
- Homesickness and loneliness
- Anxiety about roommates, professors, classes
- Students question "Do I fit in here?"
- First assignment/test grades returned
- First midterm exams
- Love relationships from home remain strong
- Consequences of decision-making experienced
- Roommate problems may begin to arise

November

- Midterm grades returned
- Excitement and/or anxiety about going home for Thanksgiving
- First series of campus-wide illness (cold, flu, etc.)
- Time management conflicts between social and school obligations

December

- Anxiety over preparations for finals
- Excitement and/or anxiety about going home for holiday
- Sadness about leaving new friendships and/or love relationships for the holidays

- Financial strain from lack of budget experience/holiday expenses

January

- "Fresh Start" mentality sets in with new quarter
- Satisfaction and/or disappointment with fall quarter grades
- Homesickness after break
- Loneliness for love relationships back home
- Relief being away from home and back at school

February

- Feelings of cabin fever and depression with winter
- Potential increase in alcohol or other substance abuse
- Challenges with love relationship back home
- Valentine's Day brings out loneliness, isolation
- Midterms

March

- Spring fever
- Excitement and/or disappointment regarding Spring Break plans
- Concern over winter weight gain
- Final exams

April

- Burned out feeling with start of spring quarter
- Anxiety regarding roommate(s) for next year
- Excitement with arrival of spring
- Concern over declaring major

May/June

- Final exam anxiety
- Stress over moving

- Apprehension about returning home for summer
- Sadness over leaving new friendships and/or love relationships at school
- Realization of how college influences life decisions

In addition to these more predictable stressors, students may experience the following concerns throughout the academic year:

- Missing family birthday and holiday celebrations
- Missing participation in family traditions
- Wanting involvement with family maintained, but expecting their desire for complete freedom to be respected