Ways to Help Your Freshman Adjust to College Life

- Trust in your student’s intellectual capacity to take on the challenge of college course work. This doesn’t mean there won’t be any academic difficulties; after all they are learning new information.

- Know that there are student support services on campus to address academic struggles (tutoring center, study groups, professor office hours).

- Take into consideration that this is a new adventure for your student and that they may be both excited and frightened.

- Understand that your student may already be feeling a lot of pressure to succeed in college. Too much pressure combined with unrealistic expectations can interfere with student success, as this may cause students to feel they can’t make mistakes. This can cause your student to feel overwhelmed.

- Expect changes. Your student will be growing, learning, and will make mistakes (this is normal & expected).

- Encourage your student to seek campus activities outside of studying. This will help them connect to the campus community. Studies show that students who connect to the university community increase their chances of graduating. When your student engages in college life, such as clubs, it gives them opportunities to develop crucial networking skills that will benefit them beyond college years.

- Ask what they are learning instead of just their grades.

- Understand that your student will have to invest time studying, researching and completing assignments outside of the classroom. As a result your student may have to decrease their responsibilities in the home and may need to cut back on work hours in order to achieve academic success. It can help to remember that this sacrifice is temporary and the rewards plentiful.

- If you notice major behavioral changes, such as isolating, depression and drug/alcohol use, talk to them and help them seek out professional counseling services.

- Ask your student what you can do to help their college transition.

- Recognize that this is also a time of adjustment for you. Find support for yourself. Talk to someone you trust. Take up a new hobby and take care of your health.

- Don’t forget to enjoy this journey, you and your student have worked hard to be here!