

KEY LIFE SKILLS

Partner with your teen to develop the skills that will serve them well on the college terrain and in life

Assertiveness/Self-advocacy

Familial

Social

Academic

Expressing needs, concerns in an effective, direct way using “I”

Being persistent when necessary

Develop by:

Being a role model

Encourage behavior with you, teachers, friends, coaches, school administration

Ability to make healthy choices/decisions

Weighing the pros and cons and fully understanding the consequences

Develop by:

Whenever possible don't protect them from experiencing consequences

Encourage teens to think about the issues, generate their own pros and cons and “process” with them later (Utilize the cell phone in this vein)

Coping with Stress/Anxiety/Depression

Develop by:

Encouraging teens to do the following:

Explore healthy outlets for stress management: exercise, yoga, relaxation

Understand what triggers their anxiety and/or depression

Understand the impact of sleep and food choices

Encourage the development of helpful strategies to deal with their feelings

Understand when and how to pursue professional help

Self-awareness/being realistic about who you are

Develop by:

Letting them make mistakes

Having open, non-judgmental discussions

Encourage journaling

Encouraging teens to reach out for help in any area when needed

Anticipate:

What supports they will need at college based on what supports they have now (e.g.: psychotherapy, academic tutors, medication monitoring)

Time management

Develop by:

Encourage teens to find an effective system utilizing planners, lists, alarm clocks, etc. Whenever possible don't "pick up the pieces" at home - Let teens really experience the consequences of their decisions with time management

Anticipate:

Parent will no longer be monitoring this

Financial literacy

Develop by:

Teach about the use (and potential abuse) of ATM, credit cards

Teach about budgeting

Strongly encourage work experience

Discuss what parents' financial contributions will be to college and what is expected from the teens

Healthy relationship with alcohol, drugs, food, gambling

Develop by:

Role modeling, observing current behavior, open discussions of their issues (especially related to peer pressure), discussions of healthy alternatives, sharing statistics

Anticipate:

Parent will no longer be monitoring this

If there are any concerns, consult with a professional

Teens who have confidence, passions, goals and their "own" drive are empowered to take care of themselves, which is reflected in the decisions they make. They do not feel they need to submit to peer pressure, and want to stay healthy and productive to accomplish what they care about.

**by Maureen P. Tillman, L.C.S.W.
Mtilmanlcsw@gmail.com
(973) 267-5586**

