

TO: Parent/Caregiver of Aquinas First Year Student

FROM: The Counselors at Aquinas College Counseling, Health & Wellness Services

Congratulations, your child is a college student! All the love, time, work, and sacrifice that you have invested in your child has enabled them to pursue higher education. Though your child is entering college, your help and support is still needed through this transitional period.

Your student's first year is considerably the most stressful. Everything is new and unfamiliar. More is demanded of students in college than in high school. The concepts that are introduced are more complex, there is more reading and homework, and a higher quality of work is required. Students are expected to balance academic demands with social and recreational activities. Many students have left their support networks, their family and friends, and are challenged to make new ones. First year students start to develop a sense of competence, emotional management, autonomy, and interpersonal relations. They struggle with the duality of multiple perspectives. It is not unusual for new students to experience stress, anxiety, and/or depression. Other difficulties that students may face are relationship issues, alcohol/substance abuse, burnout, and eating disorders.

As a parent of a new student, you can help your child by maintaining communication and support. Simply listening to their struggles and offering advice when asked will validate your child's thoughts, feelings, and experiences. This lets your child know that what they are feeling and thinking is normal, thus, reducing some of the stress and anxiety they experience.

To learn more about common mental health issues for college students, visit the *Mental Health Resources* page on the Counseling, Health & Wellness Services' website.

For more information about helping your child during their college career, visit the *Info For Parents* page of our website.

Counseling Services at Aquinas College are available to help your child with concerns they may encounter while at college. Counseling provides a safe environment where students can openly express their thoughts and feelings with a trained professional counselor who serves as an objective listener. Counseling staff are available for scheduled individual appointments.

Aquinas College Counseling, Health & Wellness Services

Hours: Monday – Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Walk-in Hours: Monday – Friday, 2 p.m. to 3 p.m.

Location: Donnelly Center, Lower Level

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