

Dec. 1, 2022

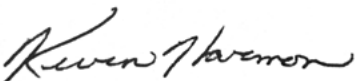
Dear parents and families,

December is upon us and that means end-of-semester activities. As your student readies themselves for final projects and tests, this is a great time for some extra boosts from home: supportive phone calls and texts, maybe a special delivery food item, really any little show of support.

It's been a great semester filled with many activities for our students. I hope you are finding this newsletter as a positive way to stay engaged with Minot State University. I always appreciate any feedback about newsletter content, as well as any suggested topics or potential engagement activities for families. I would love to hear your ideas on improving the family experience at Minot State.

The University has a wealth of information available at MinotStateU.edu. This month, I encourage you to take a few moments and familiarize yourself with the Report a Concern webpage, available [HERE](#).

Respectfully,



Kevin Harmon,
Vice President for Student Affairs

Be seen. Be heard. Be empowered.

Some recent campus events:



The Business Information Technology Department and the SWIFT Club hosted [NoDAKoN](#), MSU's premier cybersecurity community event.



Students had the opportunity to practice proper dining etiquette while networking with area business leaders during our Etiquette Luncheon.



During our annual International Cultural Celebration, students shared their home countries through colorful displays, music, and food. More than 160 international students from 55 countries attend MSU!

Emotional well-being at Minot State

Nancy Mickelson, mental health counselor

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The struggles of being a college student can be overwhelming and stressful at times, and your student may need help learning to cope with this transition. At Minot State University, we have two licensed mental health counselors that provide free and confidential counseling services to MSU students.

Minot State University's clinical mental health counselors are advocates for the student body, providing a wide range of counseling services including individual and group sessions, outreach and psychoeducational presentations, educational lectures, after-hours appointments, on-campus wellness checks, virtual appointments, drop-in services, care coordination, and referral services. We are part of the Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT) on campus.

What should my student do if they are struggling in school?

Reach out for help! Remind your student that counseling services are available free of charge and are confidential. Our team is ready to partner with any student who is struggling at Minot State University. Our role is to empower and advocate for each student's personal and educational development through counseling and educational outreach. We want your student's experience at MSU to be positive and growth promoting.

When utilizing the University's counseling services, a student's identity interacts with their clinician in important ways. This interaction helps shape the therapeutic relationship, the student's sense of belonging, and their ability to be vulnerable in reaching their goals.

We are committed to the success of your student. Our priority is not only the mental health and well-being of our students, but also their academic success and personal growth.

Please understand that due to confidentiality laws, we cannot share information without your student's written permission. We can, however, listen to any concerns you may have about your student. If you have any questions or concerns for any of our staff, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Available services and programming:

- Crisis response and wellness checks
- Online self-help and screening tools
- "Let's Talk" drop-in services
- Group counseling
- Individual counseling
- Care coordination and referral services
- Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT)
- Outreach and psychoeducation

Counseling Services is located in the Student Health Clinic in Lura Manor.

Ph. 701-858-3371

[MinotStateU.edu/counseling](https://www.minotstateu.edu/counseling)



Four steps to better conversations with your student

Jennifer Sullivan, CollegiateParent.com

Entering a teenager's room can feel like walking into a lion's cage. Your teen suspects you're there to get something, usually an answer to an important question, and they immediately put up their guard.

When I coach college parents, I frequently offer advice about how they can engage their teenagers in conversation and, more importantly, how to create meaningful conversations that last longer than the usual two-word response, "I'm fine."

In any conversation with your student, I agree with Aaron Burr's character in the Broadway play "Hamilton" who advises Alexander to "talk less, smile more." Below I outline four steps to having open and meaningful conversations with young adults: setting the stage, breaking the ice through relationship-building questions, being aware of your body language, and resisting the urge to solve your teen's problems.

1. Set the stage

Parents, think for a moment about how you would answer if someone asked you to share your proudest moment from the past few weeks. You'd need a few minutes to reflect, filter through all of your recent activities, and then identify an experience you felt comfortable sharing.

Now imagine you were asked to do this while standing in line at the grocery store. Would you feel open and comfortable? Probably not. But you might feel differently if you were asked the same question while sitting on your couch at home under a cozy blanket.

This principle applies to conversations with your teens as well. Environment and timing can be just as important as the words we use.

To increase the likelihood of your teen engaging in a conversation, consider the environments where they're most comfortable. Where do they feel relaxed? Where do they feel valued? Do they enjoy going on walks with the family pet? Do they love car rides with their favorite music playing? Do they feel at ease on the basketball court, hiking, or on the beach?

Each person's comfort zone is unique to them. Each sibling's comfort zone is different, too, and the location

where you and your student are most likely to connect and chat could be completely different from where their brother or sister feels comfortable opening up.



2. Ask a relationship-building question first

Before jumping into the real question that you want to ask, I suggest asking a relationship-building question. To understand why this approach works, let's apply the principle to a different situation (and one of my favorite topics) — food.

Do you know why grocery stores offer customers free food samples? (At least they did pre-COVID.) Stores have promotional items and brands each week that they're trying to sell, and they know that customers are more likely to buy an item if they try it first. Frozen meatballs may not be on my grocery list, but it's hard to resist buying a package if my taste buds have told my brain, "YUM — you need these!"

Your student might not initially want to open up about their struggles, but they'll be more likely to do so if you ask a "free sample" question first. Lead with a question that will get you halfway there and build a connection.

Some scenarios:

- **What you want to know:** Why did you get a D in English?

The question you ask first: What did you think of your classes this semester? What was your favorite class? What was your least favorite class? What do you think made that class so difficult?

- **What you want to know:** Why did you spend \$1,000 on food delivery to your dorm?

The question you ask first: What do you think of the dining hall food? What hours are they open? When you don't eat there, where do you like to eat?

- **What you want to know:** Why do you procrastinate and start your assignments the night before they're due?

The question you ask first: Do you have a lot of short-term or long-term assignments this semester? What's your process for tackling long-term assignments? I think your college has a writing/tutoring center that can help you break big projects into smaller ones — let's look at their website together.

3. Recognize your body language

Once you've set the stage and your college student has started talking, your body language will be a factor in whether or not they keep sharing or pull away.

I've noticed that when I walk into my daughter's bedroom and stay standing with my arms crossed instead of sitting on her bed, she is less likely to talk with me. In the moment, it can be challenging to step outside ourselves and be aware of our body posture, stance, facial expression, tone, and voice volume as a teenager would perceive them. But we must recognize our hidden habits that might sabotage our ability to have meaningful conversations with our teens.

For example, studies in the psychology of communication have shown that an imbalance in the height and perceived authority of two people having a conversation can affect the willingness of one person to communicate with the other. If your teen is sitting on the couch, on the floor, or on their bed, and you initiate a conversation while standing above them, your stance alone can shut it down before it starts.

I recommend asking your teen if you can sit next to them before starting a conversation. If they're having a cup of hot chocolate on the couch, consider making a cup of tea and asking, "You look comfy — mind if I join you?" Paying attention to this aspect of communication can improve the quality of your conversations with your student.

4. Lead (don't push) your student to the answer

When I coach college students struggling socially or academically, I always have a goal or skill in mind that

I know will help "solve" their problem. Through talking with students, I can pretty quickly identify negative habits affecting students' success.

However, if I were to tell a student, "Here's what you're doing wrong, and here's what you need to do about it," the student would probably respond defensively and not listen to me again.

Even if I can identify a problem area right away, I see my role as guiding my students to identify the problem themselves and the solution on their own. This takes strategic questioning (see #2 above) and patience, but it's the path to learning.

As parents, it can be difficult to listen without judgment and to resist the urge to offer a quick solution. We all want quick fixes. But there is so much more value in responding with, "How do YOU think you would solve that problem?"

Little by little, you are shifting your communication style.

As your teen becomes more independent, your communication style with them will gradually shift from a parent who problem-solves and offers solutions to a parent who listens and offers support.

It may be hard to hang back and not jump into action. You may feel the urge to solve your student's problems by offering suggestions. Or you may be tempted to intervene by contacting their academic advisor or their roommate's parents when issues arise.

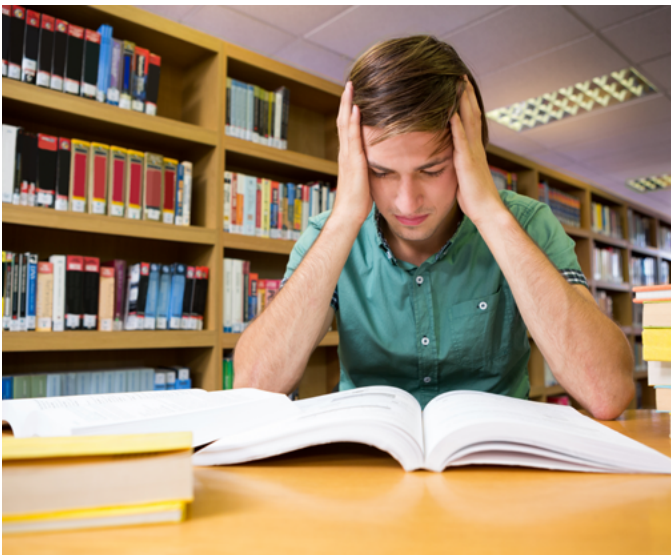
After all, you may have been in the driver's seat during your teen's high school years. Recently, a parent shared with me that they've spent the last 18 years solving their son's problems, and it feels unnatural to sit back and let him face challenges on his own. But when your teen opens up and shares their struggles, they may be looking mostly for affirmation that they can figure it out on their own.

When you hear about a small problem that doesn't require immediate adult help, you may want to try, "That sounds like a tough situation you're in. I'm here to help if you want to talk more."

Empowering your student demonstrates that you trust and have confidence in their ability to solve their own problems. When they recognize that you trust them, they'll be more likely to share details with you — the good and the not-so-good — in the future.

First-year students and the one tough class

Vicki Nelson, [CollegiateParent.com](https://www.collegiateparent.com)



From [CollegiateParent.com](https://www.collegiateparent.com):

We received a question from a new college parent that we know many readers will relate to, especially at this point in the semester.

The question:

I am a first-time college parent with a student attending a private college. My student completed the first major week of tests and was greatly surprised by one of the classes where the professor tested on things that were not in the syllabus, not discussed in class, not in the book, or on the study guide. The teacher is a visiting professor filling in for a professor on sabbatical. The class has all freshmen, and the teacher struggles to teach the material so the students understand. This is a fundamental class for my student. What is the parent's role in this situation? So far, I've just listened and offered advice.

We reached out to CollegiateParent contributor Vicki Nelson, a longtime higher education and student success expert who teaches at a college in Massachusetts. The following is her response.

Although it's difficult, I'd suggest that the parent not get involved. College officials and faculty are not very sympathetic when they get calls from parents — especially about classroom issues. It sounds as though this parent is serving in exactly the correct role of listening and offering advice.

In such a situation, start by asking your student what they've already tried. Here are suggestions to share (and this will involve genuine commitment and self-advocacy on your student's part):

1. Talk to the professor.

Take the syllabus, textbook, lecture notes, test. Be specific about what material on the test doesn't seem to be included in any of the other sources.

The student's attitude is important, so rather than complaining about the material on the test, the approach might be to say, "I want to do better and I seem to have missed where I should have gotten this information. What can I do next time to make sure I find and study the material that I need for the test?" Since the professor is filling in, they may not realize that students are missing some basic knowledge.

2. The comment states "the instructor struggles to teach the material so the students understand."

This might require another visit with the professor — perhaps a couple of students going together. Again, being as specific as possible without being accusative is important. Why aren't the students able to understand? How does the teacher "struggle?" Does the teacher go too fast, cover too much material, include technical material, lecture too much, or not enough? If the students take the attitude that "we want to learn but we're struggling in class" rather than "you're not teaching us well," the instructor may be open to feedback.

3. Form a study group.

Are other students in the class struggling as well? Is the student studying with others or forming a study

group? A few students working together might bring different perspectives and different understanding of the material that will help all of them.

4. If neither of these approaches seem to help, I'd suggest that the student (or several students) go to the chair of the department to talk.

As with other approaches, rather than going to “complain” about a professor, going with the open attitude that “we want to learn but we’re struggling” will help. The chair may be able to speak to the professor to help the professor understand what the students need or what some issues might be. This is especially important with a visiting instructor who may be used to a different type of student at another institution.

5. Finally, it's simply a fact that many first semester freshmen struggle in classes.

They haven't yet learned enough about how to “do college.” Their first tests aren't good. They aren't sure how to take notes in class beyond what may be on a Power Point slide. Things that may seem like casual conversation or an aside about the subject may actually be information that they are expected to get. They may not be used to reading college level texts.

So it's frustrating not to be doing well in a foundational class, and your student should certainly address the situation but should also understand that the frustration is not uncommon. They can use this experience as a learning situation to build good study skills — and the ability to work with different kinds of professors — for the future.

In all of this, it's on the student, not the parent.

As uncomfortable as it may be to sit on the sidelines, that's the appropriate place for a parent. But offering advice can help your student see that they have options for action and aren't just stuck.

Financial Aid Information

Spring fees

Spring semester tuition, residence hall fees, and meal plan fees will be posted to student accounts in Campus Connection in early December. Spring semester fees are due to be paid in full by Wednesday, Jan. 25. Students can view a detailed list of their charges for a specific semester by clicking on Account Summary under the Financial Account tile in Campus Connection.

Bookstore charging

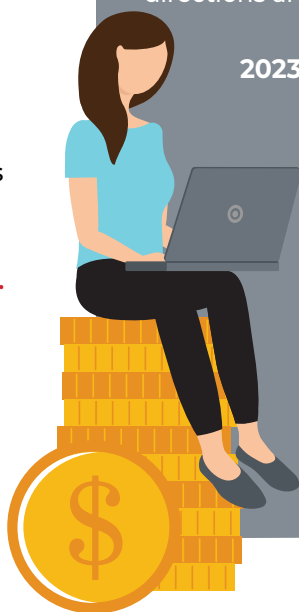
A new opportunity exists for all students who have enrolled for Spring 2023 classes to charge their books at the [MSU Barnes & Noble Bookstore](#) from Monday, Dec. 27 through Thursday, Jan. 19, regardless of whether the student has financial aid available or not. This change makes it possible for all students to easily acquire textbooks needed for their academic success.

Direct deposit of excess financial aid

Students who expect to receive a refund of excess financial aid, which occurs when the total of the student's financial aid is greater than the amount owed to Minot State, are encouraged to sign up for direct deposit rather than receiving a paper check. With direct deposit, the funds are deposited directly in the student's bank account and the check is never lost in the mail. Students can enroll in direct deposit in Campus Connection by selecting the Financial Account tile, then choosing Direct Deposit. Additional directions are available at MinotStateU.edu/busoffic.

2023-24 Minot State scholarship application

The Minot State general scholarship application will open to accept applications for the 2023-24 school year in early December. The application form will be available online at the Minot State financial aid website, MinotStateU.edu/finaid. The application deadline is Feb. 15. All returning students are encouraged to submit the general scholarship application every year.



What to do when your student's GPA crashes

Amy Baldwin, Ed.D., CollegiateParent.com

For the student who needed advice about his GPA, I walked him through all of the considerations including calculating what he could possibly make this semester and how that would affect his academic standing and his future plans to go to medical school. I wanted him to realize that he could make improvements to his GPA and that doing so could help him reach his long-term goals.

- **Talk with financial aid.** Any time your student has a dip in their GPA, check in with the financial aid advisor to see how it may affect scholarships, grants or loans. If it is the first time the GPA has taken a nosedive, there may be a grace period in which your student has time to improve before aid is taken away. Note that there may be different GPA requirements for different types of aid. For example, your student's scholarship may require a 3.25, but your student's major may require a 2.0.
- **Talk with an advisor.** A low GPA can affect your student's ability to gain entry into or graduate from an undergraduate degree program. An advisor can help your student troubleshoot potential issues related to progressing through a degree plan.
- **Review what happened.** Find out why your student's GPA bit the dust. Academic struggles may be just one explanation. Other reasons can include mental health issues, lack of motivation, a misunderstanding, or a careless but costly mistake such as forgetting to turn in an assignment. The more your student knows why it happened, the more likely they can make changes next time.
- **Create a plan to improve habits that will improve GPA.** Talk with your student about what steps they will take to improve their GPA. Will they go to tutoring? Will they eliminate distractions? Will they check in with you if they need some guidance?

Grade	Grade Points	Credit Hours	Quality Points
A	4	3	12
A	4	3	12
A	4	3	12
A	4	3	12
D	1	1	1
Total		13	49
GPA			3.76

How to calculate GPA

Grade points: the grade translated into points. A = 4, B = 3, C = 2, D = 1, F/NC (No credit) = 0

Quality points: the grade point multiplied by the number of credit hours.

Example: 4 grade points for A x 3 credit hours = 12 quality points

Grade point average: the total quality points divided by the total number of credit hours. For example, two A's and three B's in 3-credit-hour courses results in a 3.4 GPA for that semester.



UPCOMING EVENTS & DEADLINES

DECEMBER

6 – Minot State University scholarship application opens; deadline is Feb. 15

12-16 – Final exams

26 – University closed

DEC. 17 – JAN. 5 – Sodexo dining closed

JANUARY

9 – Classes begin after 4 p.m.

10 – First full day of spring classes

16 – Martin Luther King Day, University closed

19 – Last day to add classes

19 – Last day to drop a class or withdraw from all classes and receive a 100% refund

View more dates, deadlines, and events at MinotStateU.edu/calendar.