The transition to college is an exciting time for both students and parents. It can also be an anxious time. It is hard not to worry when your son or daughter is in charge of his/her own life for the first time. Here are some suggestions on how to support your college student during this first year at Cal:

• **Stay in touch** — be available to talk and listen, set up a regular time to talk.

• **Be aware of the stresses your son/daughter faces** — this is a time when students often struggle to develop a sense of identity, independence, manage emotions, make new friends and negotiate the new freedom to make decisions.

• **Be realistic** — It often takes students several semesters before they can learn what is expected and master their coursework. Often it takes several years to identify a major or career path.

• **Encourage your son/daughter to problem-solve** and to trust his/her own abilities rather than trying to solve the problem yourself.

• **Allow space** — let your son/daughter set the agenda of conversations and have a voice in the frequency of contact. Don't insist on daily contact.

• **Be prepared for change** — Your son/daughter will be different than when he/she lived at home.

• **Don’t panic** — When your son/daughter calls home unexpectedly in tears, give it a day and see if it passes.

### Know when to be concerned

Here are the warning signs/symptoms that your college student is in significant distress:

- Crisis persisting after 6 – 8 weeks
- Student overwhelmed: everything is a problem, tearful calls outnumber the others
- Impaired sleeping: too much or insomnia
- Eating problems
- Changes in appetite or weight
- Hopelessness about future
- Worthlessness- extremely low self-esteem, self-criticism
- Irritability, frequent arguments, physical acting out
- Excessive fatigue or lethargic mood
- Extreme increases in energy, rapid speech
- Difficulties with concentration, memory, decision-making
- Recurrent thoughts of death, thoughts of suicide, giving away possessions, suggestions that they won’t be around in the future

### What parents can do

- Express your concerns directly.
- Suggest and encourage counseling.
- Visit our web site to become acquainted with Counseling and Psychological Services (CPS): [uhs.berkeley.edu/students/counseling/cps.shtml](http://uhs.berkeley.edu/students/counseling/cps.shtml). CPS offers crisis intervention, brief counseling for personal family, career and academic concerns. Students can call to make an appointment Monday-Friday 8am- 5PM PST.
- Consult with CPS counselors. If you are unsure whether your son/daughter needs help, call 510/642-9494 between the hours of 8AM and 5PM PST.
- Whenever possible, allow your student to take the next step.