

SENIOR STUDENTS' ADVICE FOR JR./SR. PARENTS

Junior and senior year are really stressful for us, and we need your help. We understand that as parents, you have your own worries, but try not to add on to ours. Help us find a communication strategy that works for our family, but take our lead and give us a lot of space. Ask us what you can do to help reduce our stress level. And help us maintain perspective -- college isn't the only thing that will impact our future.

Here is a list of suggestions students would like parents to keep in mind:

- Take our lead on talking about college. Ask us what role we'd like you to play in the college/post-high school process. Ask family members, relatives, family friends not to talk about what we are doing after high school or what school we are applying to.
- Don't ask where our friends are applying or who is getting in where -- we will let you know if we want to talk about it. And don't get caught up in sideline conversations with other parents -- simply say we've asked you not to discuss the specifics of our college process with others.
- If you're worried we need help following through on college applications, set up a time once a week to talk about college, and don't bring it up other times.
- Don't take it personally when we are grouchy and snap at you or if we hide up in our room and need space.
- Understand that even with a long list of things to get done, we may also need to down time.
- Cut us some slack over chores -- it's hard to shift gears from homework to doing laundry.
- Remind us to calm down and keep things in perspective, to remember the big picture, that whatever the outcome, it will be fine. Don't feed into our anxiety about grades or where we will get into school.
- We really appreciate when you do little things for us -- bring a snack, give us a ride, help us print out a paper.
- Understand that college visits can be very stressful, that we may not be ready to visit schools in the fall of junior year. Some of us may not be ready until fall of senior year -- this may stress parents, but try to support us where we are. Between the fall of junior year and the fall of senior year, we will go through a lot of changes. And when we do visit a school, let us own the process. Let us ask the questions and reserve comment until we've had a chance to process a little. Some of us might be OK with a quick check in after each college visit. Others might like an evaluation system (maybe 5-10 factors to consider). But let us enjoy the process and help make traveling together fun.
- Keep in mind -- we may not let you know, but underneath we may be scared to leave home.

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