Tips for Students with Histories of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Concerns

Because We Care

CMU recognizes the transition to college can be stressful.

This adjustment may lead to emotional, psychological, or substance abuse issues or cause a relapse of these problems.

You Are Not Alone

If you have a history of mental health or substance abuse concerns or currently take psychotropic medication, you may find comfort in knowing that you’re not alone. Many students received psychological, psychiatric, or substance abuse assistance while growing up; others experience their first behavioral health concerns in college. Some students need ongoing treatment.

While the university provides limited support services, students are encouraged to proactively address their mental health and substance abuse concerns prior to arriving on campus. These recommendations will help students with past or present mental health or substance abuse challenges prepare for the transition to college.

Recommendations

Plan ahead. Start planning now for a healthy transition to college.

Don't wait. If you have put off getting help, don't wait any longer. The stresses of leaving home and the transition to college may result in the worsening of your symptoms.

Seek help. Meet with your psychiatrist, medical doctor, and/or mental health professional(s) to review medications you currently may be taking, discuss anticipated stresses related to this transition, and develop relapse prevention strategies.

Try counseling. Contact the Counseling Center or a Counselor in Residence and make an appointment to develop an action plan. Our counselors provide short-term counseling and crisis assistance and will help you connect with other campus and community resources.

Continue treatment. Consider continuing to meet periodically with your current mental health professional during your first semester at college rather than starting counseling with someone new.

Take proper meds. Take your medication as prescribed. Be careful to not self-medicate using alcohol, other drugs, or food.

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Get adequate rest. Lack of sleep is often a factor in the recurrence of a mental health or substance abuse concern.

Manage stress. College is stressful. Follow a stress management and self-care plan.

Connect with others. Maintain or develop a strong support system of family, friends and others. Be involved daily in activities you enjoy.

Know your symptoms and what to do. Know what you are going to do if symptoms of your condition begin to recur or intensify. Respond quickly. This can minimize the possible negative impact of a relapse on academic and social activities.

Explore services in advance. Familiarize yourself with campus and local mental health and substance abuse resources prior to coming to campus. Residence Life staff members are excellent sources of assistance and referral for students living in campus housing.

Disabilities. If you have a disability, you are encouraged to register with the CMU Student Disability Services Office.

The following websites provide information that may be of use to students, their families and other support people:

Campus and Community Resources
Central Michigan University Counseling Center https://www.counsel.cmich.edu
Transition Year: You’re Source for Emotional Health in College http://transitionyear.org/ (for students and parents)
U of M Depression Center http://www.depressioncenter.org/
Virtual Pamphlet Collection http://counseling.uchicago.edu/page/virtual-pamphlet-collection

CMU CARES https://www.cmich.edu/ess/studentaffairs/CMUCares/Pages/default.aspx
    When concerned about the wellbeing of a CMU student
CMU Take Care https://www.cmich.edu/ess/studentaffairs/TakeCare/Pages/default.aspx
    Help create a caring community. Take care of yourself and others.

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