

Student Stages of Transition

INITIAL STAGE – HONEYMOON PHASE

- Filled with exhilaration, excitement and some anxious anticipation
- Lasts about 1-3 weeks
- Excited about arrival on campus
 - Meet to friends
 - Try new experiences
- Sense of freedom is often exhilarating
 - No one is telling them what to do, when to come home, eat or study

SECOND STATE – EMOTIONAL LETDOWN

- Begins in the 3rd to 6th week at the college
- Reality of college life
 - Challenges in classes, roommate issues, finding ways to become more engaged on campus diminishes the initial excitement
 - This is a great time to check-in; remind them that they are prepared for this and the adjustment takes time and can be challenging but it's worth it

THIRD STAGE – INITIAL ADJUSTMENT

- Begins after mid-terms (mid-October)
- New routines are established
- Identify their self-created “comfort zone”
 - Found good places to go to study
 - Understand academic expectations
 - Becoming familiar and comfortable with campus services and layout
 - Begin to participate in activities on campus
 - Find the late night food services and study areas
 - Established a common group of friends
 - Gaining confidence and developing self-assurance

FOURTH STAGE – MENTAL ISOLATION (November/December)

- Maybe things just aren't so great after all
- Student complains about a professor, doesn't feel they have any good friends, roommates aren't cutting it anymore
- Student begins making comparisons to home
- Is college really for them
- Student questions major or career choice
- Student feels they are the only one having these feelings
- Adult's job – listen carefully and encourage delicately - support and reassure but know that if this really isn't the right fit plans can be altered

FIFTH STAGE – ACCEPTANCE AND INTEGRATION (January/February)

- Student feels strong connection to campus
- Less dependence on parents and less connection to former peers
- For the majority of new students, college eventually becomes the student's home