

CONVERSATION TIPS FOR COMMUNICATING WITH FAMILY MEMBERS

Research shows that family support can make a difference in a student's success. Communicating with family (and friends!) who care about your well-being and provide a listening ear or piece of advice is a great start to your success this semester.

Be honest with your family about your stressors and successes! Help them understand the expectations of your college experience so they know how they can support you.

Have a conversation with family members about when and how you will communicate as well as discussing boundaries and other issues to ensure you are all on the same page.

1

DON'T SHY AWAY FROM DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS.



Recognize that stressors from home can impact your life at school, especially during COVID 19. Take the time to discuss boundaries with your family - including when they should involve you or when you need some space from things going on at home. When you are ready, share your difficulties with your family - after all, they know you best!

2

DON'T BE AFRAID TO TO BE CHALLENGED AND, SOMETIMES, TO FAIL.



College is very different than high school. Make time to sit down with family members and explain the difference in rigor between high school assignments and college work. Sit down with family members and walk them through the requirements for each course (for example, how long you will have to be online for each course). Generally, for every hour in class, students are expected to study three hours outside of class.

3

TALK TO YOUR FAMILY ABOUT HOW TO TALK TO YOU.



Help your family know how to best support you as strive to meet your personal and academic goals - teaching family members how to listen and best address your needs is an essential part of your success. Both their expectations and yours will have to change during the semester. Be clear about your needs but mindful of how this may impact your family's expectations.

4

DEFINE SUCCESS IN YOUR TERMS.



Identify what success means to you. For some this simply means happiness, which only you can define. Being independent allows you to articulate and identify how you wish to become successful by creating your own goals and plans for the future. With the support of your parents, friends and university affiliates you can refine your definition of success.

5

MAKE TIME FOR YOURSELF.



This conversation is important for all your family to have as this pandemic is affecting everyone differently, including siblings and extended family members. Sharing the importance of self-care with family is a good technique. For example, taking time to cook for one another or taking a brisk walk to the supermarket can help clear your mind.

RESOURCES:

- [COUNSELING.UCMERCED.EDU](https://counseling.ucmerced.edu)
- [STUDENTAFFAIRS.UCMERCED.EDU/DEAN-STUDENTS](https://studentaffairs.ucmerced.edu/dean-students)