

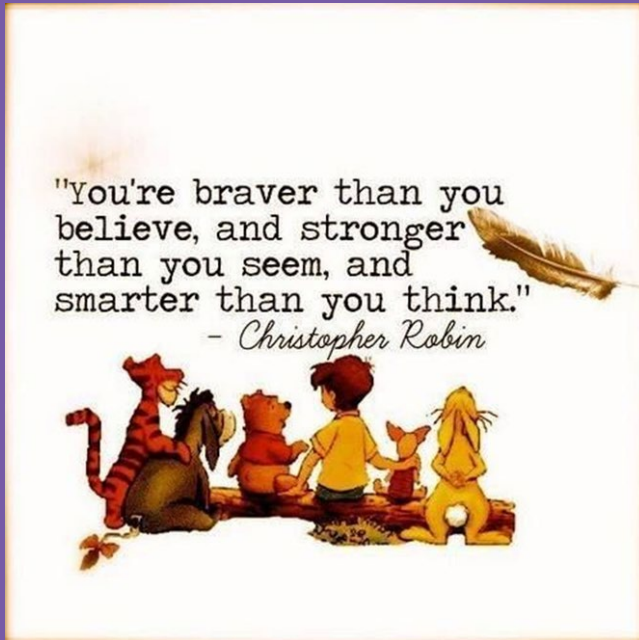
When to let go and when to hold on

# Transitioning to College

Presentation by Dr. Erin Robinson, Associate Dean of Students/Director of Health Services

# Presentation Overview

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- Student experience through the lens of resilience
- Contradictory roles as a parent/caregiver
- Developmental tasks of a college student
- Freshman year transitions
- Coping strategies
- Tips to help your student be successful
- What to do if you are concerned

# #ResilientYOU

- Health Center program that focuses on strength –based approaches, present problem-solving, and moving through adversity
- Focused on supporting each other
- The Comeback is Greater than the Setback



## Contradictory roles

“There are only two lasting bequests we can hope to give our children. One is roots; the other is wings.” ~Hodding Carter

- It is a challenge to find a balance between building closeness and fostering independence
- You need to protect less, which may also mean worrying more
- To reach independence- students need freedom, and with that comes learning responsibility
  - This is a process of trial and error
  - Two parts of you: rational and scared
- **Your role:** provide information, support, and encouragement, and remind yourself you created a human capable of success and did a GREAT JOB!

# Developmental tasks for college students



- Separation & Individuation
- Identity Formation
- Achieving Intimacy with Peers



# Separation & individuation

- Ideally this is a gradual process... not this:



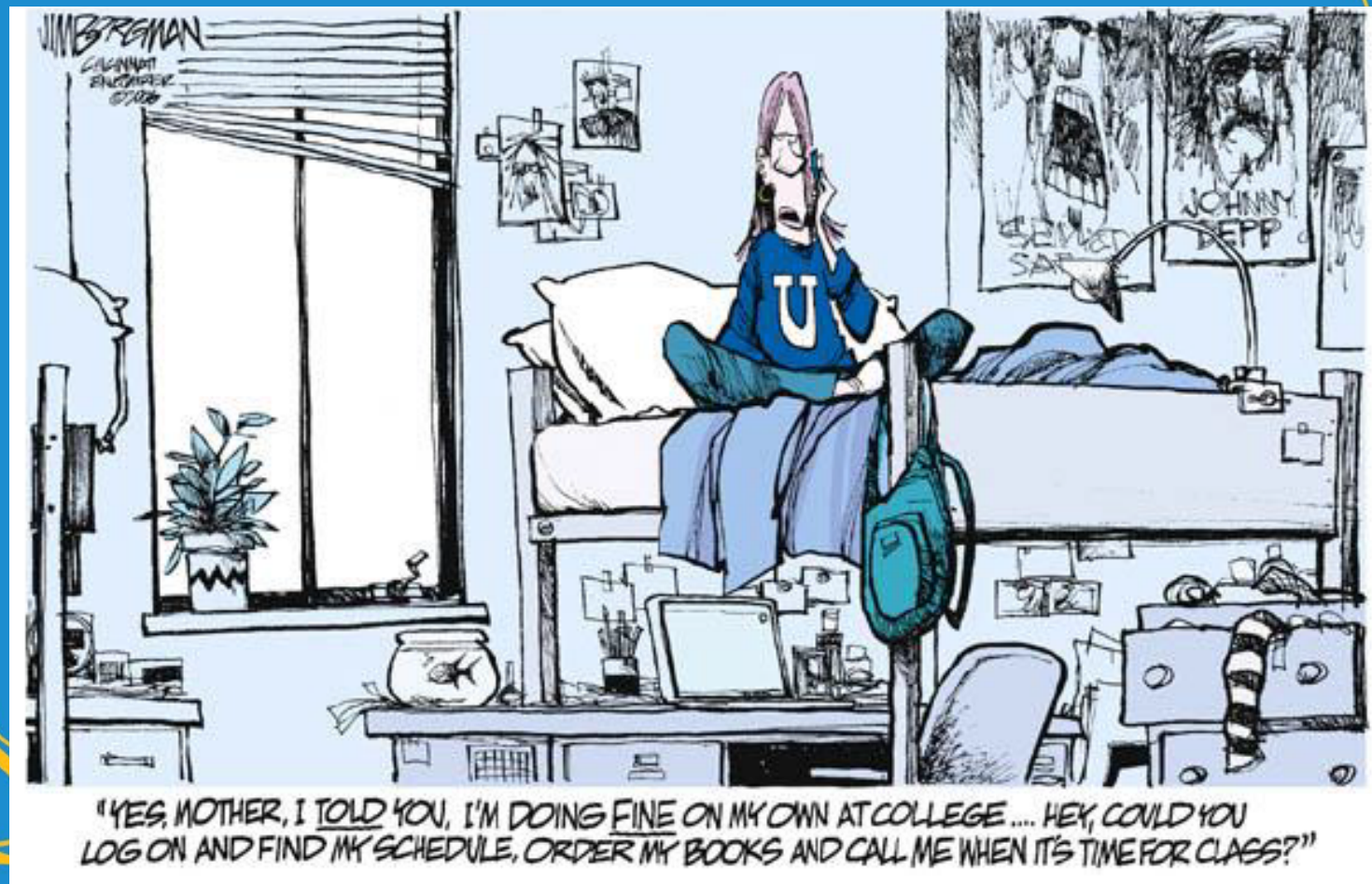
OR



# Separation & individuation

- Defined as physical and psychological separation from home (often for the 1<sup>st</sup> prolonged period of time)
- Already been practicing since toddlerhood
- To be successful, there needs to be less and less reliance on parents for everyday affairs...

While support is vital, research shows that students who struggle to separate enough from their parents have a harder time meaningfully investing in the college experience and later functioning as independent adults







# Achieving intimacy with peers

- Highly significant facet of development
- Time of exploration and solidification
- Need for intimacy during this time is primarily met through peers rather than family
- All those life lessons are now, hopefully, foundational in guiding student's interpersonal choices



# First year transition: the beginning



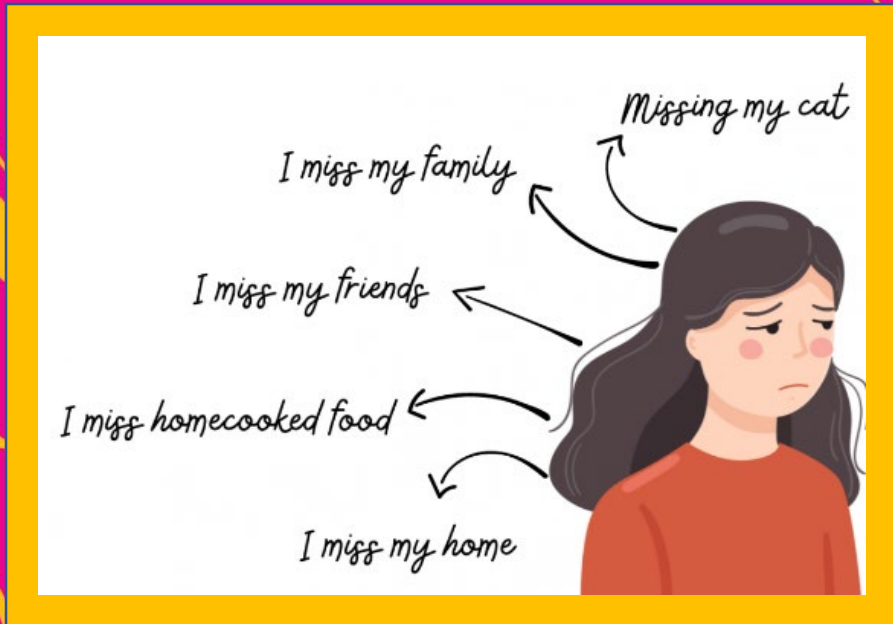
- **Issues:**

- Imposter syndrome
- Developing a new social group and separated from old friends
- Living with new people
- Feelings of anonymity
- New academic expectations and standards

- **Suggestions:**

- Be in contact, listen, provide reassurance, note common experiences, encourage your student to use their resources
- Encourage your student to get to know their faculty and staff
- Stick to the basics: sleep, exercise, eat, go outside

## First year transition: settling in



### • Issues:

- Homesickness intensifies
- Disenchantment
- Academic reality sets in
- Conflicts with others
- Worry about family and not being home

### • Suggestions:

- Come for a visit
- Send a care package
- Reassure feelings are normal
- Don't jump in and fix it
- Convey confidence in their ability to be successful



## First year transition: end of first semester



### • Issues:

- Increased academic stress,
- Managing feelings about the holidays, finals, separation from new friends,
- Thinking about navigating rules back at home
- Self care declines (i.e. all nighters)

### • Suggestions:

- Encourage your student to talk about their experiences
- Encourage self-care
- It's never too late to use Ringling's amazing resources
- Proactively discuss winter break plans

# Coping strategies for parents

- Embrace the “feels”- there are a lot of them
- You are going to worry from time to time- that is NORMAL and shows you care
- Sit back and enjoy the ride- you brought up an incredible human and you have a front row seat in watching them become an adult- pretty cool!
- It’s ok to focus on yourself now
- Ringling is here to support your student. You know them best, if something feels off- let us know!

**It is not what you do for  
your children,  
but what you have taught  
them to do for themselves,  
that will make them  
successful human beings.**

**Ann Landers**

# Tips for supporting your student

## Please DO:

- Stay in touch
  - Clear communication
  - Listen first
- Be encouraging
- Be realistic
- Allow space to grow
- Be prepared for change
- Be proud and trust their upbringing

## Try not to:

- Panic
- Hover
- Jump in to rescue them/take over and assume their responsibilities
- Make assumptions
- Tell them what to do
- Put an undo amount of pressure on your student

# When should you be concerned?

**You know your student best:  
if something seems off, it probably is. Please let us know!**

- Signs to take seriously and address:
  - Social withdrawal
  - Marked change in appearance/hygiene
  - Excessive self-criticism
  - Tearful calls outnumber others
  - Hopelessness
  - Excessive fatigue or increased energy
  - Trouble concentrating
  - Dramatic change in grades
  - Making comments about death or self harm



# What should I do?

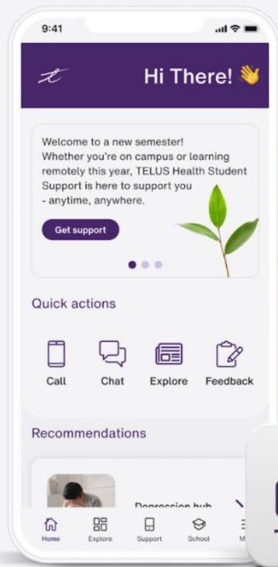
- Listen
- Express concerns directly, using concrete behavioral examples
- If concerned about immediate danger, contact Public Safety (941-359-7500)
- Encourage your student to come to the Peterson Counseling Center
  - Normalize seeking help
  - Let them know it is not a sign of weakness
  - We see A LOT of students because having support = success

# The Health Center

- **Peterson Counseling Center**
  - Free and confidential
  - Resilient YOU drop in sessions
  - Group and individual therapy
  - Psychiatric medication management
  - Outreach & programming
- Contact the PCC at:
  - (941)893-2855
  - [counseling@ringling.edu](mailto:counseling@ringling.edu)
- **Medical Service**
  - Appointments are free
  - No appointment necessary
  - Flu shots
  - On campus medication delivery
  - Student may use any SMH walk-in clinic
- Contact Medical Services at:
  - (941)309-4000
  - [medical@ringling.edu](mailto:medical@ringling.edu)



# Health Center: Student Tools & Programming



## Get the support you need with the **Student Support app.**

Downloading the free Student Support app is quick and easy. Browse health and wellness resources on the go, start a live chat or speak with a counsellor – anytime, anywhere.



### **Save time and money:**

- Talk to a Board Certified Physician 24/7/365
- No appointment necessary but scheduled appointments available
- 13 minute average consult time
- No consultation fee for UHCSR members\*
- \$40 consultation fee for non-UHCSR members
- Avoid trips to the doctor's office, urgent care or emergency room
- Share consult results with your PCP
- Use whatever device is convenient - smart phone, tablet, computer, etc.\* \*



September 13<sup>th</sup>  
October 11<sup>th</sup>  
November 8<sup>th</sup>



For more information, call 1-855-870-5858 or visit [www.telehealth4students.com](http://www.telehealth4students.com)



# Questions?

How lucky I am to have something that  
makes saying goodbyes so hard.  
- Winnie the Pooh



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