Greetings Ram Fam,

Many of our families are sharing similar feelings of disappointment that classes will be virtual again in the spring. Again, another loss that our students and families have to tackle. It can feel helpless as many of our students have lost their independence, their social lives, their freedom, and their ability to fully explore and take advantage of the college experience in the traditional way.

I do not doubt that we can get through this pandemic if we work together. It takes a village. It takes all of us. Helping your student can mean doing things differently and taking actions that you may never have thought of before. But your support is needed and you can make a difference.

Here are some tips to consider:

1. **Stay Connected:** Plan activities that will bring your family closer together, just like you did during the summer months. Any way you can make your student feel included, supported, and cared for will help. Our students need to know that you are there for them and that you are proud of them.

2. **Stay Involved:** Keep an open line of communication with your student. Check in often, but don’t be intrusive. Your college student has had many losses all pile up in a short amount of time and that can be overwhelming. Many of our students have lost their independence, their social lives, their freedom, and their ability to fully explore and take advantage of the college experience in the traditional way. It is also a time of transition for your student and should know the available resources too. With your help, faculty and staff must work as a team to support your student’s success.

3. **Be a Role Model:** Role-model how to use relaxation strategies to manage stress. Encourage your student to stay engaged with schoolwork and other extracurricular activities. The Faculty Senate is working to develop guidelines for managing stress and creating a safe environment for students to explore mental health issues. Your involvement is crucial.

4. **Be Prepared:** Help your student to be prepared to deal with the unexpected. Keep an emergency fund and have a plan in place. Your student needs to know that you are there for them and that you are proud of them.

5. **Stay Engaged:** Stay engaged with the campus activities that are taking place. You can help with, encourage them to seek counseling support.

6. **Support Counseling Services:** Direct them to counseling services. This is the time of the semester when things can get hectic and when students can feel overwhelmed. It is important to encourage your student to seek help. Students can contact the Counseling Center at (610) 436-2301.

7. **Be Patient:** Be patient and understanding. Your student is learning to navigate a new world and is doing the best they can.

8. **Maintain the Health and Safety of Our Students and Employees:** That said, we must all continue to follow the COVID-19 guidelines and protocols to ensure the health and safety of our students and employees. We must work together to make our campus a safe and healthy place for everyone.

I wish you a healthy and happy holiday season, and seeing your Ram soon!

If you have any questions, please reach out to AMcCarthy@wcupa.edu.