The issues of consent, hazing, alcohol and mental health can impact every aspect of your student’s life, and can act as barriers to their success.

This booklet will provide suggestions for how to have open discussions with your student about these topics. It also includes important information on UTC’s policies and resources.
More than 11 percent of college students reported a diagnosis or treatment for anxiety in the past year, and more than 10 percent reported a diagnosis or treatment for depression.

The Conversation
• Talk to your student about coping techniques to help alleviate stress, including:
  - Exercise
  - Deep breathing
  - Meditation
  - Listening to music
  - Connecting with friends and classmates
• Ensure that your student knows when and how to seek help for themselves or others. Some signs that a student may need to seek support include:
  - Physical symptoms (e.g., stomach problems, difficulty sleeping, fatigue, headaches)
  - Loss of interest in activities they once enjoyed
  - Changes in eating habits
  - Emotional and cognitive changes, including mood swings, unwanted or repetitive thoughts and difficulty concentrating
  - Altered sleep patterns – sleeping much more or much less than normal
  - Relationship problems

“Hey, I would like to talk with you about…”

Mental Health

AS A PARENT, YOU ARE AND WILL CONTINUE TO BE THE PRIMARY INFLUENCE IN YOUR STUDENT’S LIFE. THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING YOUR STUDENT AND FOR HELPING THEM MAKE A SMOOTH TRANSITION TO COLLEGE.

As a parent, you are and will continue to be the primary influence in your student’s life. Thank you for supporting your student and for helping them make a smooth transition to college.
Hazing refers to any activity expected of someone joining a group (or to maintain full status in a group) that humiliates, degrades or risks emotional or physical harm, regardless of the person’s willingness to participate. According to the results of a national study, 55 percent of college students involved in clubs, athletics and organizations reported experiencing hazing.

The Conversation

• Talk to your student about the dangers of hazing and ways they can respond to and report any concerns.
• Encourage your student to research the organizations they are considering utilizing University resources, including University websites, and by having informal discussions with on-campus leaders. Their research should go beyond social media.
• Ask your student direct questions about their involvement with an organization. If your student is unwilling or unable to provide you with specifics, that may be a warning sign. Other hazing warning signs include: sudden decrease in communication with family and friends, change in sleeping or eating habits, and exhaustion.
• Encourage your student to maintain friendships across multiple settings, not just in one group or organization.

Despite the fact that legal drinking age is 21, your student may need to make decisions regarding alcohol use. In a recent survey, 83 percent of 10- to 18-year-olds said their parents were their leading influence in their decisions about drinking.

According to the National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, 1,825 college students between the ages of 18 and 24 die each year from unintentional, alcohol-related injuries.
Although the media sometimes portrays college life as alcohol-fueled, over 75 percent of UTC students report drinking three or fewer alcoholic beverages a week.

**NOT ALL DRINKING IS THE SAME IN TERMS OF RISK.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low-Risk</th>
<th>High-Risk</th>
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<tr>
<td>Designating a driver.</td>
<td>Drinking and driving.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alternating non-alcoholic and alcoholic beverages.</td>
<td>Playing drinking games.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Keeping up with how many drinks you have consumed.</td>
<td>Not knowing what you are drinking and how much alcohol is in it.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Knowing how your alcohol impacts your medications.</td>
<td>Mixing alcohol with medications.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Not drinking under age.</td>
<td>Drinking under age.</td>
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**Medical Amnesty**

*If your student calls for help during an alcohol or drug-related emergency, they will not be subject to disciplinary action by the University.*

**The Conversation:**

- Ask your student about their views on alcohol and college life.
- Share facts and debunk myths.
- Discuss with your student your family’s history of alcohol use or misuse, but avoid telling your student drinking stories from your own college years.
- Help plan ways for your student to handle peer pressure, and brainstorm ways in which your student can respond to offers of alcohol (e.g., “No, thank you. I have a big test tomorrow.”)
“Hey, I would like to talk with you about…”

Consent

Consent is defined as an ongoing, affirmative and voluntary agreement to engage in a specific sexual act.

Consent is a complex topic that can be difficult to talk about, especially when alcohol is involved. UTC addresses alcohol and other factors in terms of incapacitation, a temporary or permanent physical or mental state in which a person cannot make informed, rational judgments. A person who is incapacitated cannot give consent. In addition, alcohol can impair your student’s ability to judge whether they have obtained consent. The overwhelming majority of sexual assaults reported by college-age students are facilitated by alcohol.

Amnesty

A student who reports sexual misconduct, relationship violence or stalking to UTC will not be subject to disciplinary action for personal consumption of alcohol or other drugs at or near the time of the reported incident.

For full definitions and additional information about incapacitation and consent, please see UTC’s Policy on Sexual Misconduct, Relationship Violence and Stalking, available at utc.edu/sexual-misconduct.

The Conversation

• Talk with your student about asking for consent. The process of obtaining consent can be broken down into four easy steps:
  - STOP
  - Ask for consent
  - LISTEN
  - Get consent
• Talk with your student about ways they can articulate their boundaries. Communication and respect for boundaries is an important aspect of healthy relationships.
• Talk with your student about the intersections between alcohol and/or drug use and consent.
Stay Connected

Call. Give your student a call frequently during their first few weeks away. Research shows that parents who communicate regularly with their freshman student, especially on weekends, affect student behavior in a positive way. Pay special attention to experiences and activities during the first six weeks of school. It is during this critical period that students are learning how to manage their time appropriately.

Text. Send a text to wish your student good luck on a test or ask how things are going. It’s an easy, nonintrusive way to show that you are thinking about your student, and gives them an easy way to respond.

Email. Students can often be more connected to their email than their voicemail. Drop your student a quick email to check in and see how they are doing.

Visit. If you live a reasonable distance from campus, plan a lunch or shopping date with your student. Attend Family Weekend and other campus events that are open to parents. While you are there, ask to meet your student’s friends.

Share. If you have concerns about your student’s health, safety or well-being, you can share your concerns with the University and seek support for your student.
On-Campus Resources

Online reporting
utc.edu/coc

Office of the Dean of Students
399 University Center
(423) 425-4301

Survivor Advocacy Services
350 University Center
(423) 425-5648

UTC Police Department
Administrative Services Building
(423) 425-HELP/4357

Title IX Coordinator
Stephanie Rowland
206 Hooper Hall
(423) 425-4255
Stephanie-Rowland@utc.edu

Counseling Center
338 University Center
(423) 425-4438

Student Health Services
205 Maclellan Gym
(423) 425-2266