

Student Stress Calendar

August/September

- Homesickness– especially first year students
- Roommate conflicts caused by personality differences– lack of understanding and unwillingness to compromise or the new experiences of living with someone for the first time.
- Initial adjustment to academic environment– feeling of inadequacy and inferiority develop because of the discrepancy between high school status and grades and initial college performance
- Values exploration– students are confronted with questions of conscience over conflict areas of race, drugs, alcohol, experimentation, morality, religion, and social expectations.
- International students sense confusion, vulnerability, and lack of any advocate in higher positions while trying to make a successful cultural and academic transition.
- “In-loco Parentis Problems”– students feel depressed because of real or perceived restrictive policies and regulations of the college.
- Campus familiarization– includes becoming familiar with the campus, your classroom’s building, meeting places.
- Test anxiety develops with students taking their first college exams, and/ or their first test of the semester.
- Dating anxieties result from not being asked out, or not being successful in finding dates
- Time management frustration builds with students trying to strike an equitable balance between their social and academic schedule.

October

- Freshmen begin to realize that life in college is not as perfect and they were led to believe by parents, teachers, counselors, etc.
- Academic stress from midterms builds with the great demand for studying and preparation.
- Roommate problems continue, but they are smaller in scope than in previous months.
- Values exploration continuing, especially in the area of sexuality.
- Non-dating students sense a loss of esteem because so much value is placed on dates. For women who date, the pressure to become sexually active increases and consequently increases feelings of rejection, loneliness, and guilt.
- Job panic for mid-year graduates.

November

- Academic pressure is beginning to mount due to procrastination, subject difficulty, and/ or lack of ability.
- Some students have ceased to make attempts at establishing new friendships beyond two or three parasitic relationships.

- Economic anxiety. Funds from parents and summer earnings begin to run out.
- Depression and anxiety increase because of feelings that one should have adjusted to college environment by now.
- Roommate problems may start to emerge again. This is mostly due to the pressure of school; tempers become shorter and people are less tolerant of others.
- Deteriorating health can start affecting a student's performance. Reasons include the changing weather and either lack of nutritional food choices or the negative feelings about institutional food.

December

- Extracurricular time strain- seasonal parties, concerts, social service projects, and religious activities drain student energies.
- Anxiety, fear, and guilt increase as finals approach and papers are due. Increase use of alcohol and drugs is related.
- Financial strains because of holiday gifts and travel costs.
- Pressure increases to perform socially because of the approach of vacation and extended separation. Friendship tension becomes high with the onset of final exams.

January

- Post-holiday depression after leaving home security and positive stakes.
- Some students experience unwanted weight gained over break with the holiday food and home cooking.
- Anxiety about second semester performance begins because they did not do as well as expected the previous semester, and have added pressure of doing well to be able to stay in school or keep their grades competitive with their colleagues.
- Reincorporated social and academic life is difficult at first with not having to worry about school for an extended period.

February

- Many students experience optimism because second semester is perceived as going "down-hill."
- Vocational choice causes anxiety and depression.
- Couples begin to establish stronger ties or experience weakening of established ones.
- Depression may increase for those who have not succeeded in establishing social relationships or achieve a moderate amount of recognition.
- Social calendar is non-active.
- Depending on the weather, some people will experience cabin fever if the weather forces them to stay inside for a lengthy period of time. Anti-social behaviors can begin to occur.
- Planning for Spring Break –trips, jobs, etc.
- Fall housing planning begins with trying to tentatively decide about living arrangements for the upcoming year.

March

- With the pressure of the end of the semester approaching students may start to increase their use of alcohol and drugs.
- Depression may begin due to anticipation of separation from friends and loved ones at college.
- Academic pressure increases.
- Existential crisis for seniors– Is my education worth anything? Was my major a mistake? Do I really have to leave college? Why go on?
- Senior job interviewing causes increased level of anxiety
- Living arrangement anxieties occur with the forcing of decisions– Should I move out? Live in the same building? Stay with the same roommate? Will a friend be left out of the plans?

April

- Academic pressures increase with the end of the semester approaching.
- Papers and exams approach.
- Summer job pressures continue.
- Senior job recruitment continues.
- Financial strains from spring break could affect social life.
- Many students are forced to pick a major and are not sure what field they would like to enter.
- Social life pressures increase parties, concerts, etc.
- Many students go through rejection or fear of rejection or envy towards those with significant others.
- Frustration due to registration for the fall. Getting into the right classes.
- Some students may go on crash diets because they have gained weight during the winter and or the school year.

May

- Increased anxiety develops because of the realization that the year is ending and a deficiencies in a number of academic areas may still exist.
- Finals pressures are at a critical level with papers, take-home exams, and studying.
- Senior job pressure increases for those who have not yet found one.
- Depression over having to leave the friends and people that they have grown so close to during the school year.
- Anxiety of having to go home after having been independent the past year, especially if they are having conflicts with their parents

This is adapted from the "Student Stress Schedule," Illinois State University, Office of Residential Life, RA Handbook and Resident Advisor Training for the Department of Residential Life at Lewis & Clark College.

