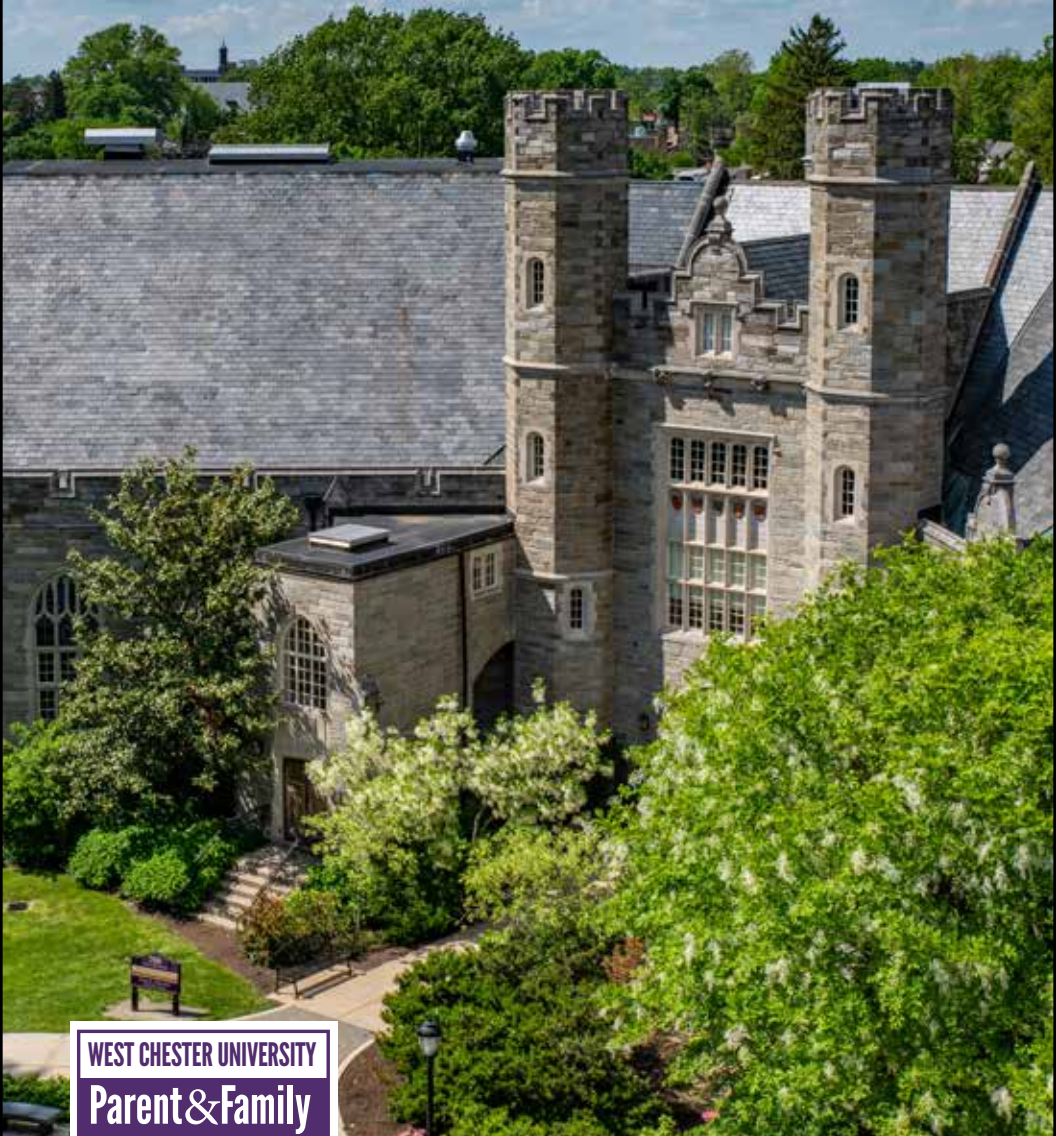




# RAMFAM

**WELLNESS RESOURCE GUIDE**

**Essentials for WCU Parents & Families**



**WEST CHESTER UNIVERSITY**  
**Parent & Family**  
**RELATIONS**



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## Welcome to the Ram Fam!

At West Chester University (WCU), parents and family members are trusted partners in fostering student success and development. You are our most powerful referral agents, so we are committed to making sure you are aware of all services and resources we offer.

We know that this will be a time of discovery and growth for you and your student. Our objective is to assist you during this important transition in your life and theirs. This pocket guide has been designed as a quick guide to which you can refer throughout your student's time at WCU.

Please do not hesitate to contact Parent and Family Relations for any reason, big or small! We are here for you, and only a quick call or email away.

*Rams Up!*



**Lexie McCarthy, Director**

Office of Parent and Family Relations

[AMcCarthy@wcupa.edu](mailto:AMcCarthy@wcupa.edu)

610-436-2698



# PARENT AND FAMILY RELATIONS

West Chester University's Office of Parent and Family Relations supports the mission and vision of the University and the Division of Student Affairs by recognizing our WCU community of educators includes parents and families, as we share a common goal of fostering student learning, development, and success.

The Office of Parent and Family Relations is committed to building lasting collaborative partnerships with parents and families by providing intentional information and meaningful engagement opportunities to ensure that students are supported in their personal and professional success.

## Values

- All parents and families should have access to accurate and timely information about WCU's services, programs, and opportunities that contribute to student success.
- Parents and family members provide invaluable expertise and wisdom that can be harnessed to support and further University, Division, and department goals.
- Intentional partnerships with parents and families strengthen and enhance the student experience and are integral to fostering student success, retention, and lasting affinity to the institution.

## Communication

**Website**

**Monthly Newsletter Ram Fam Monthly**

**Facebook Page**

**Email**

**Phone: 610-436-2698**



# PARTNERING WITH WCU

We recognize and value the key role that you have played in the life of your student prior to arriving at WCU. We would like this role to continue, so we are committed partnering with you and equipping you with skills needed to advise and coach your student throughout their college career.

## OUR COMMITMENT TO YOUR STUDENT

West Chester University is a community of educators that develops graduates to succeed personally and professionally and contribute to the common good.

### Upon graduation, WCU graduates will be able to:

- Apply scientific reasoning and demonstrate quantitative and qualitative literacy
- Collaborate with others to solve problems and address societal needs
- Communicate effectively and participate in civic discourse
- Engage inclusively in a diverse society
- Understand the ethical implications of decisions and the world in which they live

## Your Role – The Big 7

**Many incoming students see their family members as trusted coaches and sources of support, which is not likely to change when they begin their WCU career. Students need you to support their growth, development, and independence.**

- **Support Student Autonomy** – Support your student’s autonomy by relinquishing unnecessary control and encouraging personal responsibility. When a problem arises, allow your student to learn how to fix their own problems and advocate for themselves.
- **Stay Connected** – Expect that your student will not respond to all your contacts, but they certainly appreciate hearing from you. Visit, but not too often...Family Weekend is a wonderful time to reconnect with your student.
- **Embrace Exploration** – Allow your student to explore new ideas, viewpoints, and perspectives without being judgmental. Changes are to be expected, but if you suspect bigger problems, trust your instincts, and contact the Office of Parent and Family Relations to discuss intervention options.
- **Be Knowledgeable about Campus Resources** – You are powerful referral agents for your student. Make use of the resources available at [wcupa.edu/ramfam](http://wcupa.edu/ramfam) to refer your student to appropriate on-campus offices and empower them to take action to solve their own problems.
- **Continue Difficult Conversations** – You continue to influence your student’s behavior, even when they are college students. While you will not be able to make decisions for your student, you can create an atmosphere of open communication by listening and sharing family expectations.
- **Recognize Challenges** – The first year can be full of indecision, insecurities, disappointments, and mistakes. It is also a time of discovery, inspiration, fun, and excitement. The reality is that your student will likely experience all these things (sometimes all at once), which is normal and to be expected.
- **Welcome Change** – Your student will change and so will you. Accept this change and try to support your student’s decisions. Trust your student and trust the job you have done preparing them for this new journey.

# CRITICAL CONVERSATIONS

## Interpersonal Violence & Sexual Assault

Does the thought of talking with your student about anything related to sex make you uncomfortable or does your family already discuss these topics regularly? Regardless of whether this is a new or established conversation in your household, it is critical that you approach it specifically as your student transitions to college.

Interpersonal violence and sexual assault are about power and not sex. However, it may make it easier to talk with your students about these topics, if you have established patterns of open communication in relation to sexual activity. Each year, far too many students' academic, mental, physical, and social health declines as a result of interpersonal violence. We encourage you to engage your student about interpersonal violence and sexual assault, regardless of their gender identity or sexuality. We invite you to

challenge any assumptions you may hold about the relationship between gender, sexuality, and who can be a victim and/or perpetrator of violence. We offer a range of resources below on these topics but encourage you to do additional research to best support your student. The Center for Women & Gender Equity offers additional resources on their website and can be contacted for additional materials and resources. There is no fool proof plan for preventing interpersonal violence and sexual assault, but engaging in proactive dialogue using the tips below may be helpful:

- Encourage your student to set expectations and boundaries in all of their relationships: with friends but also with platonic, romantic, or sexual partners. Ask your student to think about “What would be acceptable or unacceptable in your relationship?”



## Substance Use

- As on any college campus, alcohol is a reality, but in no way is it a necessity. The legal drinking age in Pennsylvania is 21 and WCU is a dry campus. Additionally, under federal law, recreational and medical use of marijuana is illegal and any possession or use is a violation of student conduct.
- **The Student Code of Conduct can be found at [wcupa.edu/conduct](http://wcupa.edu/conduct)**
- It is up to you to provide opportunities to discuss realistic standards and expectations for your student about substance use. Understand that what works best for your family may not be what works best for their friends' families.
- There are other things to do at WCU besides drink or use drugs – WCU has over 280 campus student organizations, as well as various community events happening throughout the year. Encourage your student to seek out opportunities to get involved.
- Your student may feel pressure to use alcohol or other substances in order to “fit in,” and may also overestimate the rate of substance use of their peers. Remind your student that not everyone uses substances; 25% of college students last year reported never using alcohol and 58% never used marijuana (National College Health Assessment Data, Spring 2019). Cultivate open and honest dialogue about perceptions of use and what “fitting in” means. Most importantly, share the facts.

What would happen if your partner does not agree or has different expectations?” Remind your student that all partners must agree about their wants, needs and limits.

- Talk with your student about informed and enthusiastic consent for all types of interactions, with a particular emphasis on those of a

sexual nature. Anything other than an explicit and verbal “yes,” means “no.”

- Conversations about interpersonal violence and sexual assault can be a part of the safety conversations you are already having with your student, like knowing when to speak up, how to take care of friends, and listening to your gut.



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## » Critical Conversations «

- Use specific examples from the media. Ask your student’s opinion about something in the media as an opportunity to show respect for their opinions and open the door for additional conversation.
- Talk about sexual assault directly by addressing rape myths and misconceptions that students may have picked up. For example, eight out of ten sexual assaults are committed by someone the victim knows. Explain that no one ‘looks like a rapist.’
- Encourage your student to be an active bystander and intervene if they see something that makes them uncomfortable.
- Focus on offering support when your student seeks you out on these issues- offer a listening ear and ask non-judgmental questions
- Proactively express to your student that you will always serve as support to them if they or someone they knows experiences violence (for example, “I will not blame or judge you because I want to support you in this”)
- Have these conversations regularly.

**For more in-depth guide(s) of how to talk to your student about interpersonal violence and sexual assault, check out the following resources:**

- [Parent Toolkit](#)
- [Confi Conversation Guide](#)
- [Supporting LGBTQ Survivors](#)
- [“Talking with Your Daughter”](#) Article
- [“I’ve talked with teenage boys”](#) Article
- [Rape, Abuse, Incest National Network \(RAINN\)](#)



# MENTAL HEALTH

**Do not panic over every call or text.  
Your student may just need to vent after a tough day.**

## How can you help?

- Be a sounding board, rather than jumping to “fix” the problem – listen non-judgmentally.
- Ask open-ended questions, instead of questions that can be answered with “yes” or “no.” Avoid “Did you have a good day?” type questions.
- Talk about mental health regularly to increase comfort around these topics.
- Encourage your student to get involved on campus.
- Help your student to set social goals— for example, talk to one new person each day.
- Encourage them to stay on campus rather than coming home for weekends (if you live nearby and/or if your student is living on campus).
- Help your student understand when they need to seek counseling using the “Is your student in crisis?” table— building resiliency is important, but it is okay to ask for help and we have counselors ready to assist.

## » Mental Health «

### Is your student in Crisis\*?

\*A crisis is an emergency situation in which there is an immediate safety concern

#### Crisis

##### Definition:

- Wanting to die
- Wanting to harm self or others
- Being recently physically or sexually assaulted, or experiencing another recent traumatic event

##### Steps to Take:

*If it is Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.:*

- Encourage your student to walk to the Counseling Center.
- They will need to tell the front desk that they are having a “mental health crisis.”
- They will fill out crisis form when asked.
- They will fill out paperwork on computer if asked.
- If they are told that they will be seen by a counselor ASAP, they will sit in the waiting room until a counselor is ready to meet with them.

*If it is any other time (e.g., evenings, weekends, holidays):*

- Call Public Safety at 610-436-3311 or 911 or encourage your student to call.
- Your student should tell the operator that they are having a “mental health crisis.”
- They will need to follow instructions.

#### High Distress

##### Definition:

- High stress or anxiety
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Feeling sad or crying
- Experiencing an unexpected change
- Relationship problem
- Academic problem

##### Steps to Take:

*If your student has a therapist:*

- Contact your therapist.
- Wait for your therapist to respond.

*If your student does not have a therapist:*

- Encourage them to walk to the Counseling Center.
- They will need to ask the receptionist for a walk-in appointment for that day or the next business day.
- If the Counseling Center is closed, your student will have to visit the Center on the next business day.



## HEALTH & SAFETY RESOURCES

### Center for Women and Gender Equity

In collaboration with West Chester University students, faculty and staff, the Center for Women and Gender Equity actively promotes and advocates for a campus community that values the safety, equality, and intellectual advancement of women and other historically marginalized groups. The Center for Women and Gender Equity is in Lawrence Center 214 and is open 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

To find out more, visit Center for Women and Gender Equity website, via social media on Facebook and Instagram: @wcu\_CWGE, via email the center at [cwge@wcupa.edu](mailto:cwge@wcupa.edu) or call 610-436-2122.

### Counseling Center

*The Counseling Center ascribes to a brief therapy form of treatment. Once students have had a triage appointment and been assigned to a counselor, they will work in conjunction with that individual to determine their level of need.*

Students must walk in during triage hours (Monday – Friday 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.) to begin counseling appointments. It is first-come/first-served, but students can arrive early in the morning to “reserve” a triage slot for that day. Plan accordingly, as many triage slots fill up prior to 1:00 pm. Any after-hours emergencies must go through Public Safety (610-436-3311).

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## » Health & Safety Resources «

### Public Safety

Contact the police dispatcher at 610-436-3311, dial x3311 from an on-campus extension, or use any of the campus emergency phones located across campus and inside most of our buildings, parking lots, and parking garages. You can also report incidents in person at our station located at 690 South Church Street.

### Student Health Services

Student Health Services provides a wide-range of clinical care. Appointments can be made via phone at 610-436-2509 or in person. There is a \$12 visit fee and possible additional fees for medications and supplies. Charges for visits will automatically be posted to your student's account and can be paid either online or at the Bursar's Office. Charges will not reveal any personal health information.

**Medication Maintenance** – WCU does not have an on-campus pharmacy, so work with your student to develop a plan for how they will continue to get their prescription drugs while on campus. There are several walkable pharmacies in the Borough of West Chester.

### Wellness Promotion

The Office of Wellness Promotion engages students in intentional opportunities to cultivate life-long learning and a community of well-being and is comprised of experienced professional staff, graduate students, and undergraduate certified peer educators who provide resources, programs and services to help student make informed choices that support their personal, academic and professional goals and thrive in our campus community. Through educational workshops, campus-wide programming, and individual consultations, we provide meaningful engagement opportunities for students to connect with other WCU students and gain knowledge and skills on a variety of well-being topics including alcohol, tobacco and other drugs; sexual health; sleep; and stress management.

**To find out more, visit [www.wcupa.edu/wellness](http://www.wcupa.edu/wellness), email [wellness@wcupa.edu](mailto:wellness@wcupa.edu), or call 610-436-0730.**



# QUICK RESOURCE GUIDE

As one of your student's most trusted sources of support, they will likely contact you when they hit a bump in the road. They may share about a disappointing grade, a roommate issue, a challenging class, etc. Do not try and solve their problem; it is important for students to advocate for their own needs and learn how to solve their own problems. If your student shares an issue, you should listen, encourage problem solving, and support their decision (even if you don't agree). If you aren't sure who to contact, call or email Parent and Family Relations at 610-436-2698 or [parentfamilyrelations@wcupa.edu](mailto:parentfamilyrelations@wcupa.edu).

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## Academic Problems

Is your student attending class regularly? Encourage your student to meet with their professor and/or academic advisor to discuss grades, attendance, test preparation, or other related issues. All faculty hold weekly office hours for student meetings. The LARC offers tutoring and study groups to students.

\* *Academic Advising:* [wcupa.edu/advising](http://wcupa.edu/advising)  
*LARC:* [wcupa.edu/larc](http://wcupa.edu/larc)

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## Alcohol or Substance Use

Share your views on illegal and/or excessive drinking. Talk with your student about how much they are drinking and how it might be affecting their health, safety, and academics. Ask your student if they would make an appointment to talk with someone in Wellness Promotion.

\* *Wellness Promotion:* [wcupa.edu/wellness](http://wcupa.edu/wellness)

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## » Quick Resource Guide «

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### Bias, Harassment, and/or Discrimination

If your student shares an incident of racial/other bias, harassment, or discrimination, they should report it by visiting [wcupa.edu/icare](http://wcupa.edu/icare). Students can connect with a variety of resources for support.

\* *Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: [wcupa.edu/odei](http://wcupa.edu/odei)*

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### Conduct/Legal Issues

When a student participates in behaviors that may violate the Student Code of Conduct and/or local, state, or federal law, there may be consequence through both the University and local law enforcement. As you provide support to your student through these processes, review the Student Conduct website. For situations that occur in the residence halls, Residence Life may be an appropriate resource.

\* *Student Conduct: [wcupa.edu/conduct](http://wcupa.edu/conduct)  
Residence Life: [wcupa.edu/residencelife](http://wcupa.edu/residencelife)*

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### Dining Concerns

It will take your student some time to adjust to on-campus dining, especially if they are used to your homecooked meals! Encourage your student to be open-minded and to try new foods. Students have two weeks at the beginning of each semester to adjust their meal plans.

\* *Bursar: [wcupa.edu/bursar](http://wcupa.edu/bursar)*

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### Disabilities

Your student should contact the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities as soon as possible. Provide testing documents or medical reports to your student.

\* *Services for Students with Disabilities: [wcupa.edu/ossd](http://wcupa.edu/ossd)*

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### Dropping a Class

Remind your student to check the course withdrawal deadline date and consult with their academic advisor. Discourage dropping a class until every other possibility is exhausted, as dropping a class can impact your student's financial aid.

- \* **Academic Advising:** [wcupa.edu/advising](https://wcupa.edu/advising)  
**Financial Aid:** [wcupa.edu/finaid](https://wcupa.edu/finaid)
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### Faculty Issues

Encourage your student to talk with their professors to discuss issues. If there is no resolution, they should consult with their academic advisor and contact the chair of the academic department.

- \* **Academic Advising:** [wcupa.edu/advising](https://wcupa.edu/advising)
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### Family Emergency

Keep your student informed about any serious family illnesses, if possible. Make sure your student is not alone when receiving tough news. Encourage your student to seek help if they are struggling to function and/or feeling distressed at the Counseling Center. Families can also submit a Concerning Behavior Report at [wcupa.edu/icare](https://wcupa.edu/icare).

- \* **Counseling Center:** [wcupa.edu/counseling](https://wcupa.edu/counseling)  
**Concerning Behavior Report:** [wcupa.edu/icare](https://wcupa.edu/icare)
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### Homesickness

Prepare your student before school starts; schedule a time when they will visit home or when you will visit campus; encourage out-of-class activities; reassure your student that homesickness is normal and encourage your student to seek help at the Counseling Center if necessary. Let your student know that the feelings will subside as they feel more connected to people, classes, and groups on campus.

- \* **Residence Life:** [wcupa.edu/residencelife](https://wcupa.edu/residencelife)  
**Counseling Center:** [wcupa.edu/counseling](https://wcupa.edu/counseling)
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## » Quick Resource Guide «

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### Illness

Your student should visit Student Health Services. Reassure your student that antibiotics are not always necessary and will not be given unless there is evidence of a bacterial infection. In the event of an emergency, they should call 911.

\* *Student Health Services:* [wcupa.edu/healthservices](http://wcupa.edu/healthservices)

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### Lost Ram Card

Fees are charged for replacing lost, stolen, or damaged Ram Cards, as well as if you would like to change the picture or name on your card. Contact the Ram Card office for a list of current fees.

\* *Ram Card Office:* [ramecard.com](http://ramecard.com)

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### Roommate Conflicts

Encourage your student to take time to work through conflicts; discuss the educational value of learning to get along with someone who is different, and encourage open communication. Remind them to use their resident director and resident assistant as resources.

\* *Residence Life:* [wcupa.edu/residencelife](http://wcupa.edu/residencelife)

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### Safety Issues

West Chester is a relatively safe community, but students must remain alert and aware to protect themselves. Encourage your student to lock their door, to not leave their laptops and phones unattended, and to walk in groups at night.

\* *Public Safety:* [wcupa.edu/dps](http://wcupa.edu/dps)

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### **Sexual Misconduct or Assault**

If your student is a victim of sexual misconduct or assault, listen to them and let them share what they feel comfortable sharing. They can seek confidential medical and emotional support on campus. Encourage your student to report the incident to the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

If your student is accused of sexual misconduct, it will be a stressful time. Provide support as your student goes through the investigative process. They may be sanctioned if found responsible.

- \* *Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: [wcupa.edu/odei](http://wcupa.edu/odei)  
Student Conduct: [wcupa.edu/conduct](http://wcupa.edu/conduct)*
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### **Talk of Transferring**

It is not uncommon for students to talk about transferring, especially during the first year. Be patient, listen, and help them evaluate their options.

- \* *Academic Advising: [wcupa.edu/advising](http://wcupa.edu/advising)  
Counseling Center: [wcupa.edu/counseling](http://wcupa.edu/counseling)*
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### **Unhappy/Lonely/Uncertainty about the College Experience**

Some students may struggle to fit in at the beginning of their time at WCU. Try to get to the reason for their unhappiness or uncertainty. Is it social or academic? Encourage your student to get involved outside of class, seek help, or even just keep their door open (literally), when they are in their room to meet other students. Send a care package from home. Nothing makes friends faster than a box of homemade cookies to share.

- \* *Residence Life: [wcupa.edu/residencelife](http://wcupa.edu/residencelife)  
Student Leadership and Involvement: [wcupa.edu/involvement](http://wcupa.edu/involvement)*

## » Ram Fam Most-Requested Contacts «

Affiliated Housing (USH) .....	610-430-4988
Bursar .....	610-436-2552
Center for Women and Gender Equity .....	610-436-2122
Counseling Center.....	610-436-2301
Financial Aid.....	610-436-2627
Health Center .....	610-436-2509
On-Campus Dining .....	610-436-2161
Off-Campus and Commuter Services .....	610-436-2361
Parking Services .....	610-436-3345
Public Safety .....	610-436-3311
Registrar.....	610-436-3541
Traditional Housing and Residence Life .....	610-436-3307
Wellness Promotion.....	610-436-0730

WEST CHESTER UNIVERSITY

Parent & Family

RELATIONS

Phone: 610-436-2698

Email: [parentfamilyrelations@wcupa.edu](mailto:parentfamilyrelations@wcupa.edu)

Web: [wcupa.edu/ramfam](http://wcupa.edu/ramfam)

Social: [facebook.com/WCUramfam](https://www.facebook.com/WCUramfam)





