

Lesson 4 of 5: “Staying Safe and Healthy On Campus”

ABSTRACT

Crime happens everywhere even on college campuses. As a leader, make your students aware of the common threats in the college environment. Also, while some exam stress is normal there are ways to combat excessive stress students experience while test taking. Below are suggestions you can give them.

Campuses Are Not Free of Criminals

Students often think campuses are safer places and as a result do not take precautionary measures. One of the most effective ways to stay safe on campus is for students to stay in groups or share their daily schedule with a trusted friend. This creates a “buddy” system. This way someone will know their whereabouts at all times. Advise them to take their phone everywhere and make it a point to store emergency numbers at the top of the address list.

Even on campus, it is risky traveling alone at night, so if they must take night classes, using a shuttle service and avoiding secluded “shortcuts” are a must. Again, traveling in groups is wise.

Students should also know the emergency procedures on the campus. They should make sure their dorm room is locked when sleeping, or heading out and never allow strangers inside without first checking in at the front desk.

Responsible Drinking!

Drug and alcohol abuse is rampant on most campuses and contribute to 90% of crimes therein. While the prudent avoid drugs and alcohol, those who over indulge can create many problems. Alcohol or drugs overuse can lead to violence, date rape, excessive hazing, car accidents, poisoning and death. Even students who are not involved can be affected or expelled due to the unscrupulous behavior of peers.

If your students want to stay clear of problems, they must exercise caution when drinking or traveling with those under the influence. Many sexual assaults involved the date rape drugs GHB and Rohypnol that are often placed in drinks. So, when attending parties, advise them to never leave their drinks unattended. Of course, they should never get into a car with a driver who is under in influence. Is it worth their life?

Encourage students to be aware of alcohol and drug prevention efforts on their campus. If they realize everybody is not doing it, this will give them the confidence to avoid the pressure to over-indulge or be influenced by those who do.

Stress

Research claims that 85% of students experience high levels of stress during exams. Though some stress is inevitable, they must learn stress management techniques or this can lead to illness.

The best way to combat “test stress” is being prepared. The anxiety associated with rushing and crash studying causes stress. If they develop a plan for studying each day, this will greatly reduce exam stress. Below are the top three techniques for students to combat stress.

Deep breathing: When stressed, we naturally breathe hard and fast. Deep breathing is a technique where you cautiously slow down breathing and make it deep. This calms us down and reduces stress. You can teach this to your students, so they can do it regularly. Sit straight, put your hands on your stomach, and start with inhaling slowly and deeply through the nose. During this time, the stomach should expand to its fullest. Hold your breath for a few seconds and then begin exhaling slowly and let your stomach deflate. Do this a few times and watch stress vanish!

Laughter: Laughter is a great emotional medicine and is highly recommended for stress. It naturally calms down the body and relaxes the muscles. When stress strikes, tell your students to rent a video of their favorite comedian. By the end of the video, they will be more relaxed ready to face their challenges.

Exercise: While many think exercise is stressful, but it is really one of the most effective ways to relax! Exercise will use up the excess adrenaline pumped due to stress. Aerobic exercises like running, spinning, etc. are great stress busters, since they release this adrenaline!

Other great stress busters include a massage, sleeping, praying and listening to calming music.

Summary

I was a student once and the last thing I wanted to hear was a safety lecture from my parents or teachers. However, it made me think twice before doing certain things and I avoided many pitfalls as a result. You may feel you are preaching to yourself, but some of your students are listening to every word you say.