How to be a Supportive iCharleston Parent

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Transitions

High school to college
- Academics
- Social networks
- Emotions

Home to abroad
- Culture shock
- Communication

Abroad to home/CofC
- Reverse culture shock
- Academics at CofC
- Social networks
Stages of Culture Shock and Reverse Culture Shock

![Diagram of stages of culture shock and reverse culture shock](image-url)
Prior to departure

Skills your student will need:
- Waking up on their own
- Grocery shopping
- Cleaning
- Cooking (not as much in Kelowna)
- Laundry
- Budgeting
- Setting up their own routine

What can you do?
- Use the summer to help them start to establish their independence
- Have discussions about spending while abroad
  - Setting up an allowance vs credit card
While your student is abroad

Set up a communication routine
  • Skyping/Facetiming once a week
  • Sending letters

Encourage them to monitor their spending

Questions to ask:
  • How are your classes? Are they different than what you’re used to or what you were expecting?
  • How is your relationship with your roommate(s)?
  • What new place have you been to since we last spoke?

If your student is struggling with something, please encourage them to reach out to their resources!
The Site Director Role

Site Directors are chosen for their:

- Personal study abroad experiences with the College of Charleston
- Knowledge of the College and the resources available for first year students
- Prior work experience with first year students on–campus and in abroad settings

Site Directors will:

- Encourage and advise participants
- Meet regularly with participants
- Receive updates from iCharleston faculty on academic progress of students
- Enroll in a required course with iCharleston students
- Organize events throughout the host city to help participants develop a better understanding of the customs and traditions of the host country/city/campus
The Site Director Role

Site Directors will not:

• Perform maintenance or security functions in the residence hall
• Act as a residential advisor for iCharleston students
• Assist with homework assignments or projects
• Make administrative decisions such as grades, living situations, admission to the College, etc
• Cook or shop for food for iCharleston participants
The iCharleston blog was created to keep family members, friends, and members of the College of Charleston up to date on the experiences of the iCharleston program. Each week iCharleston students complete blog posts where they reflect on their experiences thus far.
When your student arrives back home

- Allow them plenty of time to reflect on their experience
  - Try to avoid: So, how was it?
- Reverse culture shock may take a while to appear
- Classes at College of Charleston will be different
- Meeting new people at Cofc
  - The myth: Everyone already has their friend groups
  - The reality: Friend groups are always flowing and changing
  - It will take **effort** and **time**
- Freedom
Reverse Culture Shock

- **Voluntary** versus **involuntary** reentry: involuntary is worse
- **Expected** versus **unexpected** reentry: unexpected is harder
- **Age**: reentry may be easier for older people who have been through more life transitions.
- **Previous reentry experience**: the first time is worse.
- **Length of the overseas stay**: the longer the sojourn, the greater the chance for adaptation; hence the harder it may be to leave and come home.
- **Degree of interaction with the overseas culture**: the more involved you become in the local culture the harder it may be to leave it behind.
- **The reentry environment**: the more familiar and supportive the easier the reentry.
- **Amount of interaction with the home culture during the overseas sojourn**: the more familiar the returnee is with changes in the home culture the easier the reentry.
- **Degree of difference between the overseas and the home culture**: the greater the difference, the harder the reentry.
Final thoughts

• Listen

• Show that you are there for them, but refrain from doing everything for them

• Keep it positive as much as possible
Questions?