

Summer: Stress or Sizzle?

The return home for college students and their parents can be a time of enjoyment and reconnection. It can also be very stressful for everyone involved; the parent, the student and siblings remaining at home. Your student has become used to new freedoms and new adult responsibilities over the last several months. Returning home can be a break from the pressures that these freedoms and responsibilities bring, it can also be the source of power struggles between students and their parents. It is your home and you will want and need to continue to have boundaries for everyone who lives there. Then again, realize that your student has experienced independence and accountability for their decisions over the past several months.

As much as possible, seek to have a conversation where everyone can communicate regarding expectations and responsibilities. Schedule a time early in the summer (before if possible) to discuss some of the following topics:

- **Curfew:** Do they need one or not? If so, what is it?
- **Consequences:** What if your student goes against your wishes or established boundaries? What will happen? They are young adults, but it is still important to be clear about what is “out of bounds.”
- **Household Duties** (for both the student and the parent): Will your student be expected to help around the house? Parents, your student are not a guest in your home. They can still be asked to do their share. Also, what are you willing to do for them? Laundry, mending, car maintenance?