

Supporting Asian American Youth in Academic and Career Decision-Making



COMMUNICATION TIPS FOR PARENTS

PERCEPTION OF PARENTAL SUPPORT MATTERS

Parental support is a key driver of healthy teen development. Teens need their parents' support, but just as crucial as receiving support is a teen's perception that their parent supports them.¹⁻³

Parents support their teens in different ways, including emotional, financial, and informational (e.g. academic or career advising) support.¹

There is a tendency among Asian parents to place less value on emotional support and to emphasize support that is more practical (e.g. providing allowance) or implicit (e.g. sharing meals).¹

Nonetheless, a teen's perception of their parent's emotional support matters, especially as teens navigate tough decisions about their future (e.g. choosing a major, applying to a job).¹

Emotional support can include expressions of love and praise, asking questions, or collectively resolving problems.¹

Emotional support increases a teen's sense of autonomy, competence, and self-esteem, leading to higher academic achievement.³

Perceived parental warmth and affection have been linked to a lower incidence of depressive symptoms and aggression among youth.³

IMAGINE YOUR TEEN'S PERSPECTIVES⁴

TRY OUT MENTALIZATION

- ▶ Imagine yourself in your teen's shoes. How would you feel in a similar scenario?

RESIST THE URGE TO COMPARE

- ▶ Refrain from comparing your teen to others, even if your point is important to convey. Keep the conversation between you and your teen.

BE CURIOUS AND NON-JUDGEMENTAL

- ▶ Ask open-ended questions to show interest in your teen's feelings and opinions. Really listen to them before you speak.

VALIDATE YOUR TEEN'S OPINIONS

- ▶ Find language that validates your teen's thought process and feelings.

Examples:

- "I see what you're saying."
- "That does sound stressful."

REGULATE EMOTIONS⁵

RECOGNIZE YOUR FEELINGS

- Recognize your feelings (e.g. anger, sadness, worry, disappointment) before and during your conversations with your teen.

REALIZE THE CAUSES

- Where are those feelings coming from? (e.g. Is there a particular worry on your mind about your teen's career interest or choice?)

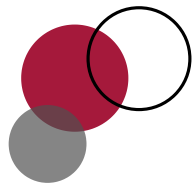
REMAIN CALM

- Consider deep breathing or taking a quick walk before speaking with your teen.

A meaningful conversation requires a mental state to be calm and reflective.

Being upset makes it difficult for you and your teen to listen to each other, and the conversation can become unproductive.

Be mindful of each other's emotions prior to the conversation. Are you ready to be "emotionally present" to each other?



EMPATHIZE WITH EACH OTHER



BE OPEN AND ASK QUESTIONS

- Make the effort to understand the motivations behind your teen's interests.
- Refrain from discouraging or invalidating their passions or career choices.

Examples:

- "What excites you about this field?"
- "What do you want to do with this degree?"
- NOT - "Why would you do that?"
- NOT - "That's a horrible idea."

BE PATIENT AND LET YOUR TEEN FINISH THEIR SENTENCE

- Don't interrupt. Take time to process what your teen has said before giving a response.

Examples:

- "So what you're saying is..."
- "It sounds like..."

BUILD MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING

- Find language that conveys support and consideration for your teen's well-being.

Example:

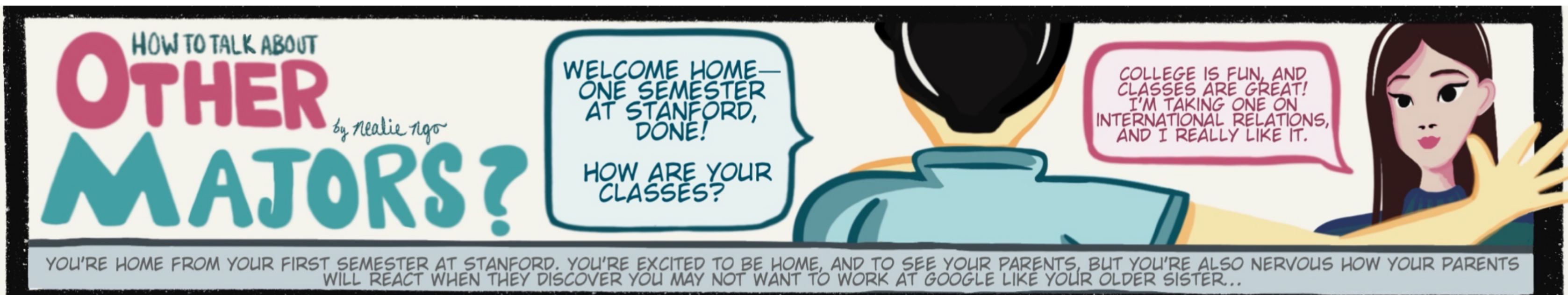
- "I am worried that... What are your plans for this?"

LISTEN TO YOUR TEEN'S PLANS BEFORE GIVING ADVICE ON FUTURE STEPS

- Give your teen the freedom to explore, while emphasizing the importance of responsibility.
- Help them articulate and set goals AFTER connecting. Advice only works if a teen feels heard.

Examples:

- Ask your teen to research their chosen field and profession. Help them find opportunities to build the necessary experience and skills.
- Encourage your teen to visually represent their short-term and long-term goals on a planner.



MORE INFO:

- MGH Center for Cross-Cultural Student Emotional Wellness: www.mghstudentwellness.org
- Let's Talk: talkhgse.org
- CHATogether: chatogether.org

- For the full version of the "How to Talk about Other Majors?" comic by Nealie Ngo, visit talkhgse.org or www.mghstudentwellness.org.
- This information sheet was collaboratively developed by Let's Talk, MGH CCCSEW, and Compassionate Home, Action Together (CHATogether).
- For flashcards and other resources by CHATogether, visit <https://www.facebook.com/CHATogetherWithUs>

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