



# HOW TO COPE

as your child begins their journey at Huron

## PLAN AHEAD

In the time leading up to your freshman's departure, you may decide to take up some new hobbies, start a new exercise program, or have a weekly get-together with some of your friends. This is a great way to get into the habit of focusing your time on your interests and needs before your child leaves for Huron. It will also make the change feel less drastic when your child goes to university.

It's important that you prepare yourself mentally for your son or daughter leaving and don't avoid thinking about it. While our children are often our focus and provide much energy in our lives, it's important that you work out how to provide your own energy and find new ways to keep yourself busy. You may decide that you want to increase your hours at work so you don't feel the loss as much when your child goes to Huron, as you'll be busy with your schedule and commitments.

## SHOW SUPPORT AND SCHOOL SPIRIT

With your child going to university, you shouldn't feel that your child moving away means that they're about to embark on a new chapter that doesn't involve you at all. Just because you won't be living with them full-time doesn't mean that you won't be an essential part of their life. You may even find that they now need you more than ever.

Help them to build their confidence as they embark on their journey at Huron and into adulthood.

A great way for parents to get involved in their child's university experience is by getting into the school spirit. For example, if you want to get your child a going-away gift, consider giving them some Huron merchandise such as a Huron mug, sweatshirt or water bottle.

## BE KIND TO YOURSELF

You shouldn't be too hard on yourself if you're struggling to cope with your child heading off to Huron and leaving your family home. Try not to feel silly or guilty for feeling down or missing your child. Although you're happy for them, it's normal for you to miss them and wish they were still at home with you. Even when we know they're safe and are making the right choices, parents can't help but worry about their children. However, it's important to remember that you've brought them up well and have given them the life lessons they need to navigate their own way through the adult world. In time, you may even embrace some new found time and dive into projects or hobbies you've always wanted to try. Just remember how much fun and the growth you were experiencing at your child's age! It's great for your child to experience the same or better during their own time at university.

## **THINK ABOUT THE POSITIVES**

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Even though initially you may feel negative, worried, and anxious about your child going away to university, in time you'll start to acknowledge the many positives that come with this change. You should remind yourself how well your child has done to gain a place at Huron and be proud of them for how hard they've worked to obtain it. By going to Huron, your child is getting the skills and qualifications they need to be successful in the future, and you should be proud of them for that. When your child goes to university, it isn't just the start of something new and exciting for them, but also for you. You may find that this is the perfect opportunity for them to understand and appreciate everything you have always done for them. It may help to strengthen your relationship now that you're no longer under each other's feet. They say that absence makes the heart grow fonder, so this may be exactly what your relationship needs in order to progress from a child relationship to an adult relationship.

## **EMBRACE TECHNOLOGY**

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It doesn't matter how far away your child is, you can still communicate as if they were in the next room. Thanks to technology, you don't have to worry about going weeks or even months without seeing your child once they move to London. Your child will always be at the other end of your cell phone, so be prepared for morning phone calls asking how to make eggs or late-night texts about how to work the washing machine and dryer. Technology is a powerful tool for connection. If you're struggling with their absence, then you should embrace everything that technology has to offer. You may even find that you end up speaking to and seeing your child more while they're at university than you did when you were both living under the same roof. Plus, you'll both have plenty to talk about since you're both having different experiences rather than experiencing every day together.

## **SCHEDULE PLANS FOR FAMILY VISITS**

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A great way to cope with your child going to university is to make plans with them in advance. While this may not be as achievable if they're moving a significant distance away, you may also be surprised at the different opportunities there are for visits.

While it's important that you don't just show up on campus during the school year without letting your child know, you can make plans to visit them and explore their new home. Seeing that they are happy and safe in the university environment can really put your mind at ease and make you feel better about the situation.

You'll be glad to know that the academic year is divided by different holiday seasons. It is only a matter of weeks until your child will be heading home to enjoy Thanksgiving, fall reading week, winter vacation, and spring break with you and the rest of the family.

Now that your child has moved away to London, you can find new ways to spend time together, start new traditions, and enjoy new experiences, together.

## **GIVE THEM SPACE AND BE PATIENT**

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While you may be anxious to start planning visits as soon as your child leaves for Huron, it is important to appreciate their need to carve out their own space and get used to their new surroundings. Similarly, you also need to become familiar with life without them being around every day, and you won't be able to do that by planning trips to London every weekend.

Try not to suffocate your child when they move away, as not only do they need to learn how to cope on their own, but you may find that this has a counterproductive effect on your relationship. Allow your child the space and time they need when they head off to Huron, and let them come to you when they need you. This approach will benefit your relationship in the long run.

It may take a while to adjust to your child being away at university; this is normal. Be patient with yourself, and don't expect to adapt right away. You may become teary in the grocery aisle when you no longer need to buy your child's favourite snacks, but this will pass in time.