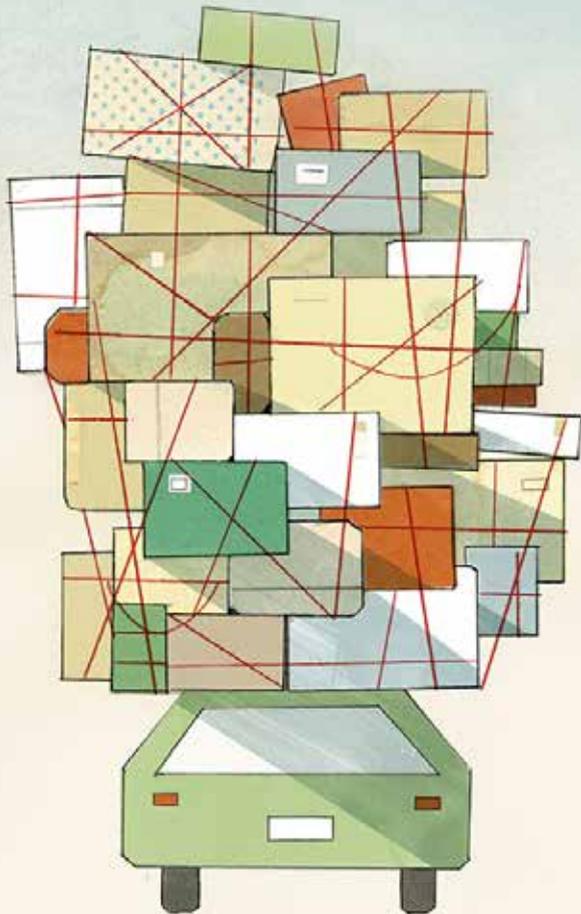


Off to AMDA: A Guide for Parents, Guardians and Families



SUPPORT ON CAMPUS

Student Success Advisors

Each student is assigned a Student Success Advisor. Their Advisor is one of their biggest advocates on campus, and can help your student navigate life at AMDA. Students can email NYStudentSuccess@amda.edu.

Licensed Mental Health Counselors

For students experiencing mental health related concerns, they can email CounselorNY@amda.edu to set up an appointment with a Licensed Mental Health Counselor on campus. Mental health services are free for currently enrolled AMDA students.

Accessibility Services

Students with disabilities who find that they are facing barriers to access in the educational environment may request reasonable accommodations to help mitigate those barriers. We highly encourage students who think they may need accommodations to reach out to NYAccessibility@amda.edu as soon as possible with any questions and to get the conversation started.

Student Affairs Office

For academic/behavioral issues, students can email StudentAffairsNY@amda.edu. For Housing related questions or concerns, the email is NYHousing@amda.edu. If a student is a survivor of sexual violence, assault or misconduct, they can reach out to NYTitleIX@amda.edu.

Resident Advisors (RA's)

If a student lives on campus, they will have an RA on their floor that they can turn to for peer support.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

As your student moves on to this new chapter in their lives, your role will change. Remember that your student still needs you for support and advice (even if they don't ask for it). Here are some ways you can help:

- Recognize the effort they are putting in at school; express interest in their area of study
- Listen to your student when they confide in you; try not to interrupt them
- Be knowledgeable about resources on and off campus so you can encourage help-seeking behaviors. Focus on helping your student find solutions, rather than solving problems for them
- Highlight opportunities to socialize on campus and encourage your student to get involved
- If your student takes medication, ensure that there is a plan in place for continued care in New York
- Be available; but not too available. Constantly texting/talking with your student may inhibit them. Being clear regarding expectations for communicating will help set healthy boundaries
- Ask questions and continue to have difficult conversations (eating habits, dating, drugs/ alcohol, sex, etc.). Your student will be facing these topics and they may need guidance on how to make healthy decisions.

Remember that your student is not alone.

They have many support services on campus, as well as peers, faculty and staff. And, they have you.

We're in this together.

NAVIGATING THIS TRANSITION

As a parent, guardian, or family member, you may feel concerned/anxious/nervous about your student's transition to AMDA NY. Starting at a new school can be an overwhelming experience, at first, and being in Manhattan poses its own unique challenges. Your support during this time is critical to your student's success.

It is important to understand that AMDA's program is unique to other school curriculum since it is an accelerated program. Your student may have a schedule where they are in class from the morning until evening. Additionally, they are expected to schedule rehearsals and complete other assigned homework outside of class. So, if your student says they are busy, believe them!

This program is physically, mentally, and emotionally demanding, which is important to be aware of. It is beneficial to check in with your student to see how they are feeling, in all three of these areas.

Some parents anticipate that they will know exactly what is going on with their student with regard to academics and their health, but this is often not the case. Given federal laws (including but not limited to FERPA-the Family Educational and Privacy Act), students over the age of 18 have a right to privacy, and thus it is up to the student what information is shared. Having an open conversation about this early on is essential, so that you can navigate this transition together.

COMMON ELEMENTS OF ADJUSTMENT

Some students thrive with newfound independence, while others struggle to manage classes and outside commitments. This may be the first time a student is living away from home and making their own decisions. It can be challenging to allow them to make their own choices and sometimes, mistakes.

It is developmentally appropriate for students to seek independence as this is a time where they are fostering/forming their identities. Students may share new things about themselves during this time. It is crucial to listen to them with an open mind.

Please try to be patient as your student expresses their opinions and feelings, even if they differ from yours.

Many students experience difficulty in the following areas:

- Newfound freedom
- Time management
- New schedule
- Homesickness

The issues above are expected during the transition to adulthood, but if they persist or are accompanied by feelings of anxiety or depression, further professional assessment is needed.

Most symptoms of mental health conditions are present by the age of 24, so being aware of some common symptoms/warning signs can help you look out for them.

SUPPORTING YOUR STUDENT

The following are some signs that a student might be in distress:

- Depressed mood
- Changes in appetite
- Heightened anxiety
- Changes in mood or behavior
- Excessive weight gain/loss
- Low energy
- Decreased motivation
- Changes in sleep patterns
- Increased frequency of illnesses
- Hopelessness
- Increased irritability
- Talking/joking about death or dying/suicide

It can be hard to distinguish whether a change in your student is something more urgent or concerning, so it's best to be direct with what you've noticed. Say "It seems like you are struggling to get out of bed in the morning. Can you tell me what you're feeling?" This opens up a dialogue and lets your student know you care about their well-being.

Sometimes, students are not ready for the AMDA experience. In these instances, a student may benefit from taking a semester off from school, and returning when they are able. Other students may come to realize that AMDA is not the right fit for them. This can be a difficult realization to come to, as many students are excited by the prospect of starting school. Support your student's decision.