

MINNESOTA  
INDEPENDENCE  
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**MICCC**

Learn Skills. Experience Life.

# What If.... Scenarios

Savannah Sisk

Advisory Program Manager

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# Scenario 1: Homesickness

# Student has a difficult time transitioning to MICC, sends 300 texts a day, and asks to come home each weekend.

## Student Response

- Ask your advisor and family for help.  
Homesickness is normal!
- Commit to engaging in MICC weekend and social activities.
- Make a “homesickness” kit.

## Family Response

- Let advisor know what you see.
- Establish boundaries for communicating and visiting.
- Encourage peer social activities.



# Scenario 2: Problem Solving

# Student calls family daily and weekly asking for help with various problems, both big and small.

## Student Response

- Practice independent problem solving:
  - Identify problem
  - Identify 2-3 solutions
  - Try one out!
- Advocate for help from you advisor if needed.

## Family Response

- Don't call or email staff on your student's behalf every time.
- Instead, encourage student to directly advocate for the help they need.
- Encourage them to problem solve independently.



# Scenario 3: Mental Health

# Student seems anxious and depressed (unable to think, panic attacks, negative, not interested in activities, isolating, etc).

## Student Response

- Anxiety in young adults with Autism is common. College is a big transition!
- Ask for help! Your advisor can refer to a local therapist.
- Work with your advisor on coping skills.

## Family Response

- Anxiety is not just a part of Autism – it is distinct and treatable.
- Many therapies exist: talk, art, horse, group, medication, etc.
- If your student already has a therapist, keep them!



# Scenario 4: Roommates

# Student doesn't get along with roommates, and calls family crying about roommates being mean and begging to move.

## Student Response

- Remember that conflict is normal.
- During Apartment Circle, advocate for how you feel and what you need.
- Commit to finding a solution.
- Work with your advisor to understand the differences between bullying, conflict, and misunderstandings.

## Family Response

- Share your concerns with advisor.
- Recognize there are rarely innocent/guilty parties, and that misreading social cues is common.
- Roommate changes only happen when absolutely necessary for safety.



# Scenario 5: Dating

# Student is dating for the first time, and reports relationship drama and interest in being sexually active.

## Student Response

- Pay attention during SEL classes to learn about healthy sexuality.
- Talk with your advisor about relationship conflict to work on having safe and healthy boundaries.
- Talk to your family about your values.

## Family Response

- Know that MICC cannot restrict students' social lives, and that dating is developmentally appropriate.
- Talk with your student about your family values and making safe choices.
- Encourage student to talk with staff.



# Scenario 6: Lost

# Student calls saying they took the bus somewhere but are now lost. It is late at night/cold/bad weather.

## Student Response

- Practice problem solving steps.
- Call advisor, transportation instructor, or activities staff.
- Be open to coaching – staff want you to learn how to handle being lost and will not rescue you every time.

## Family Response

- Remain calm.
- Encourage your student to call staff for support.
- Recognize that this is part of learning, and so staff may pick them up or may coach them by phone.



# Scenario 7: Ride requests

# Student calls family asking for a ride to the Mall of America this weekend, to be adventurous and hang out with friends.

## Student Response

- Think about how else to be adventurous and social without relying on family.
- Can you take the bus? Staff will help you plan your route.
- Can you go somewhere you can walk to?

## Family Response

- Affirm their desire to get out and about!
- Don't just drive them, even if you are a little uncomfortable about them taking the bus.
- Encourage student to work with advisor and transportation instructor to come up with a plan.



# Scenario 8: Starvation

# Student runs out of food, and calls home to say they are starving and need help.

## Student Response

- Check your pantry, fridge, and freezer – are you really out of food or just out of food that is easy to cook?
- Talk with your healthy living instructor. They have extra food, although it might not be your favorite.
- Commit to working on meal planning so that you buy enough groceries in the future.

## Family Response

- Empathize but don't assume the worst. Ask for pictures.
- Don't buy them groceries or Uber Eats! Tell them to advocate to staff.
- Knowing how much to buy when shopping is part of learning. We won't let them starve.



# Scenario 9: Money

# Student wants more allowance money for pop and snack food. They are spending over \$50 a week.

## Student Response

- Talk with healthy living instructor about why they have certain rules for grocery shopping class.
- Talk with advisor about how to budget your money so you have enough.
- Commit to earning money, not just demanding it.

## Family Response

- Set limits on weekly fun money: \$20-\$30 is common.
- Know that learning how to budget is an important, but hard, skill.
- Connect money with attendance/exercise/socializing/etc.
- Try Greenlight, True Link, Mint.



# Scenario 10: Internet

# Student is up all night playing games and searching the internet. They fall asleep during the day.

## Student Response

- Work with advisor to set a healthy sleep schedule.
- Be willing to try new strategies: therapy, data limitations, removal of technology, apps, reminders, etc.
- You are here to learn, and you can't learn if you are too tired!

## Family Response

- Recognize that this is a normal challenge but should not be underestimated.
- Talk to advisor about what you see.
- Be willing to try setting limits in the short-term to help create healthy habits.



# Questions?

# Remember:

- College is really hard! Challenges are normal.
- College is when students test their freedom, make mistakes, learn new skills, and experience all kinds of different situations.
- MICC staff are here to help, and sometimes that means letting a student do the hard work of struggling through a problem.
- Safety, however, remains a critical priority.
- Your advisor is a key partner in all of this!

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