Student Connections: Building Community, Belonging, and Life Skills

Family Orientation

Parent Breakout Session
Presenters

Lisa Samuelson, Student Activities
Jen Kacere, Residence Life
Stephen Dahl, Wellness Center
Brooks Hetle, Residence Life
Let’s Connect
What struck you?
Why does making connections matter?

- Connections make you feel like you belong to a group or community
- Connecting with others builds your network which leads to opportunities
- Connecting with others expands your knowledge, skills, and abilities
Connection Building Starts Immediately
But the reality is…

- Honeymoon
- Initial Adjustment
- Culture Shock
- Mental Isolation
- Acceptance & Integration

Connections with whom?

- Roommate/Suitemate/Floormates
- Classmates
- Peers with similar interests/backgrounds
- Peers with different interests/backgrounds
- Resident Assistant
- Faculty and Staff
Tips for Making Connections

• Show up
• Be approachable
• Encourage them to go where others’ gather and use common space(s).
• Reassure them that meeting new people is uncomfortable for everyone, it’s normal, and sometimes takes time.
• Be patient and realistic - making connections and friendships take time. It typically doesn’t just happen without some effort.
Ways to Make Connections

- Talk to people
- Attend an activity/event
- Joining a club or organization
- Class or study groups
- On-campus job
How do I help?

- Ask your student questions
- Encourage them to step-out of their comfort zone
- Be aware of campus resources to point your student towards – great information exists in the New Student Guidebook
- Encourage your student to be on campus as much as possible
- Join the NDSU Class of 2026 Family Facebook Page
Action Items

• On the car ride home today:
  – Ask them how they feel about meeting new people when they return in August
  – Ask them what they think they might do to make connections when they come back
• Encourage them to participate in all Welcome Week Activities
• Check-out myndsu.ndsu.edu to explore student organizations and campus events
Questions?