

A young woman with long brown hair, wearing a white long-sleeved shirt and purple patterned shorts, is riding a light blue bicycle on a paved path. She is positioned in the lower center of the frame, moving from left to right. The path is surrounded by tall, slender trees with thin trunks and sparse, light-colored foliage. The ground is covered in green grass. The overall scene is bright and natural, suggesting a peaceful outdoor setting.

SKIDMORE
C O L L E G E

Health & Wellness

A GUIDE FOR SKIDMORE FAMILIES

C R E A T I V E
T H O U G H T
M A T T E R S

Welcome to Skidmore!

The adventure your student is about to embark on here at Skidmore is an opportunity and a challenge, both for them, and for you, as a family member. Life at Skidmore is intellectually stimulating, exhilarating and filled with change and growth. Staying healthy physically and psychologically helps students get the most out of their education.

This guide is co-written by Skidmore students and Health and Wellness staff for families as an introduction to some key wellness-related challenges students typically navigate during their time on campus. We hope it will provide you with knowledge about Skidmore resources as well as ideas about how to balance support, encouragement and stepping back so that your student can transition successfully and thrive in college.

Moving-in day is filled with excitement, anticipation, anxiety and some sadness (along with the inevitable confusion, sweat from hauling boxes and mini-fridges and too much information from too many people to possibly remember). Please take this guide home with you, to review after you leave campus. If you have questions or concerns about your student's health and wellness, staff members at Health Services, the Counseling Center and Health Promotion are always happy to help families with information, support and options.



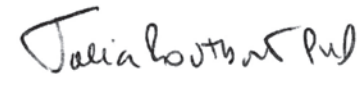
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“I honestly don’t remember much of moving in day, it was all just a big blur. I think the fact that I was actually in college didn’t really hit me until about two weeks into the semester. Now, I can’t believe I’m a senior. If I could give advice to any first year, I’d encourage them to slow down and enjoy.”

Starting Strong: Wellness Matters

We know that how students engage in their first semester of college can set the foundation for their next four years. We also know that the first few days on campus are a whirlwind, so at Skidmore, we help students focus on their well-being in a thoughtful and more extended way. The “Weeks of Welcome” program is designed to help students make a successful transition to Skidmore by encouraging them to explore the many opportunities related to health and wellness available to them their first two months on campus. Our hope is that students will take advantage of the program to get to know their classmates, their communities and themselves more fully. This self-awareness and connection build confidence and a sense of belonging, which in turn will help students thrive in all the dimensions of wellness.

The “Weeks of Welcome” program is built around eight dimensions of wellness; social, intellectual, emotional, diverse and inclusive, physical, environmental, occupational and spiritual. Each week of the program takes one of those dimensions as a focus and offers a wealth of programs and activities that will provide opportunities for engagement, exploration and connection. For instance, during the week that focuses on environmental wellness, we’ll be inviting first year students to participate in a Farmer’s market cooking class, visit the Sustainability Office and participate in a community garden work party. They will get to know key staff members and students who are passionate about sustainability and explore that aspect of Skidmore in depth.

We encourage students to power their potential by making choices to foster, maintain and optimize those areas of wellness that matter the most to them. Students will be getting regular updates about the “Weeks of Welcome” program, including an initial booklet with key events and subsequent weekly booklets with schedule information and resources. Encourage your student to check out one or more of these activities as a complement to their academic life.



skidmore.edu/weeksofwelcome

STUDENT TIPS

Be open to your student asking some serious questions.

College is a time where people are trying new things, whether that be new courses or new relationships. If your student comes to you with some questions or comments about things they have been exploring, it really helps when parents have an open mind. We want your support, that is why we came to you to talk about it!

Remember, some students will call when things aren’t going well, not as much when they are.

Connections:

At Skidmore, students meet roommates, classmates, professors, advisors, Peer Mentors, Resident Assistants and staff members all in their first few days on campus. Orientation has a mix of structured and unstructured time that will help build a sense of community and belonging for all our students, but it is not unusual for students to walk away from orientation feeling a bit overwhelmed and homesick. If your student is struggling initially, let them know they are definitely not alone. It takes time to put down roots. Encourage them to be patient and also to keep reaching out academically and socially. Over time, we know that students who are involved and connected to clubs, professors, and mentors on campus consistently report more rewarding experiences in college.

Living on campus—Peer Resources:

Skidmore has both an organized and an informal culture of students helping students. We want our students to learn from and teach each other and we work to create a community where all students feel comfortable asking for and giving help.

First year students live in triple and double rooms throughout the residence halls. Each floor has an RA (Resident Assistant), a highly trained student who can act as a peer role model and liaison between students and administrators. RAs are supervised by full-time, live-in professional staff members. RAs will help all first year students define their roommate expectations during the first few days on campus so that they can negotiate with each other about living preferences, expectations and priorities. Sometimes our students are paired with roommates who end up being close friends, but this doesn't always happen. If challenges arise, RAs are great resources. RAs will also host socials and other events to develop a floor community.

All first year students will also connect with a Peer Mentor (PM), who will be attached to their specific Scribner Seminar. Peer Mentors are trained to offer academic guidance and support as students transition to Skidmore. Some Peer Mentors have office hours, some organize field trips with their professor for students, and all of them will know about on-campus resources.

Finally, Peer Health Educators (PHEs) are available to talk with students in the Student Wellness Center on the third floor of Case Center. These students are trained to provide anonymous, peer-based support around a wide range of health related concerns, including sexual assault, drugs and alcohol and stress management. The Wellness Center also hosts therapy dogs regularly throughout the week, so if your student is missing a cherished family pet, it is the perfect place to stop by for a visit.

Asking for Help:

As family members, you are uniquely situated to encourage your student to reach out and connect with resources. Students do best when they take responsibility for their own health and wellness, but we know that can feel overwhelming at first (for students and for families).

Know where to direct your student for services and help, and know that they will need to ask for that help independently.

At any point, if you are concerned about your student's health or well-being, please know that you are very welcome to contact Health and Wellness staff members to consult about options and resources. In the event of an emergency, Campus Safety (518 580 5567) is available as the 24/7 resource on campus.

Resources:

Office of Health Promotion	518-580-5684
WIECKING HALL, 1ST FLOOR	
Health Services	518-580-5550
JONSSON TOWER, 1ST FLOOR	
The Counseling Center	518-580-5555
JONSSON TOWER, 1ST FLOOR	
Office of Residential Life	518-580-5765
ROUNDS HALL, 1ST FLOOR	
Office of Campus Life and Engagement	518-580-8338
CASE CENTER	
Dean of Students Office	518-580-5760
CASE CENTER	
Student Academic Services	518-580-8150
STARBUCK CENTER	
Campus Safety	518-580-5567
GROUND FLOOR, JONSSON TOWER	

Getting Involved:

Skidmore offers over 100 student clubs and organizations that cover a huge range of topics and interests. Most of our students are involved in something on campus in addition to their academics. Club Fair, on the first Friday after the start of classes, is a great opportunity for students to spend time learning about the wide variety of clubs, sign up for email lists and get information about upcoming events. There is also an online platform, SkidSync, students can access at any time in order to join clubs and be informed about all the events and programs on campus.

There are two student groups specifically dedicated to health and well-being that we want families to know about:

- **The SOURCE:** One of the biggest challenges your student will face in college is finding a group of friends who share their values and interests. The purpose of the SOURCE is to connect students who share similar interests, by creating communities for students who are substance-free, or who are looking for alternatives to the stereotypical college party scene. The SOURCE keeps students informed about events and activities primarily off campus, and hosts SOURCE-specific events and gathering several times a year. Students can sign up at



theskidmoresource.com

- **Peer Health Education:** Skidmore's Peer Health Educators (PHEs) serve as resources, referral agents, and role models for their peers. They provide positive, interactive, fun, non-judgmental programming aimed at empowering Skidmore students to make healthy, informed decisions about their physical and emotional well-being. If your student is interested in learning more about how to become a PHE, encourage them to reach out to the Office of Health Promotion on the first floor of Wiecking Hall. The training program is competitive and applications are accepted every semester.



STUDENT TIPS

Sign up for BikeMore

If you want to travel downtown, sign up for BikeMore on campus to borrow a bike for free. It's a great way to see the city and it is a fun, healthy alternative to using the bus!

Use your resources.

Connect with a trained peer to get extra support during the first semester. I loved my Peer Mentor and she really helped me figure out where to study and how to balance my time. She had just come back from studying abroad and helped me think ahead about where I might want to go in my junior year. I have a friend who got really close to her RA, who helped her with a challenging roommate situation.

Get involved.

Skidmore is a small and pretty friendly campus. Some of my best friends turned out to be people I met kind of randomly, in line at Club Fair and at the bookstore. I was pretty homesick, but I pushed myself to go to club meetings and events and it really did help.

Balance:

The new living situation and schedule that come with college can change students' eating, sleeping and exercise routines, sometimes in extreme ways. As family members, you can encourage students to pay attention to how they are balancing classes, activities, relationships and their emotional and physical well-being. If a student gets sick, feels overly stressed or would like peer support and guidance related to health and wellness topics like nutrition, exercise or sexual health, Skidmore has excellent resources available right on campus. If a student requires more specialized care or intensive treatment, both Health Services and the Counseling Center can provide tailored referrals for local treatment options.

Knowing about the resources available on campus means you can encourage your student to get help when they need it.

Counseling Center

[JONSSON TOWER, 1ST FLOOR | 518-580-5555](#)

Typically, almost half of our graduating seniors will have received support from the Counseling Center at some point in their time at Skidmore. The Counseling Center provides a range of clinical services to more than 600 students every year, including: one-at-a-time individual therapy appointments, tailored referrals, consultations, emotional health workshops and emergency services (including after-hours on call telephone consultations). Making a first appointment is easy. We ask students to come to the office during business hours, fill out a brief assessment and then we can schedule them for an appropriate appointment.

Health Services

[JONSSON TOWER, 1ST FLOOR | 518-580-5550](#)

Provides primary health care, travel medicine, sports physicals, immunizations and referrals for a wide variety of physical health issues. For urgent concerns, students are welcome to walk in to be seen by a clinician. For specific health needs (annual exams, travel medicine, chronic health issues), students are encouraged to make appointments.

Health Promotion

[WIECKING, 1ST FLOOR | 518-580-5684](#)

Health Promotion provides campus-wide programming, alcohol and other drug related education, victim advocacy services, wellness coaching and oversees the Student Wellness Center with a student staff of over 60 trained Peer Health Educators. Students are welcome to stop by or call to make an appointment to learn more.

STUDENT TIPS

If your student is finding a class particularly challenging, encourage them to:

- ask the professor to meet with you and go over material (use those office hours!)
- get a tutor from Student Academic Services
- form a study group with fellow classmates
- make sure everything is organized prior to class

I totally overcommitted my first year at Skidmore. Encourage your student to build some relaxation time into their schedule. If they do get sick, remember that Health Services is there to help.

If you feel as though things are getting to be too much and you don't know how to get yourself situated, the Counseling Center is a great option. Their services are included in tuition, so you don't have to worry about using insurance.

During times of high stress and low sleep, aka college, the chances of getting sick are high. Health Services sponsors flu shot clinics each Fall.

Choices:

The choices students make during the first weeks on campus set the stage for their college career. At Skidmore, we encourage students to make healthy and responsible decisions for themselves and for our community. Inclusion, sustainability, affirmative consent and bystander intervention matter here on campus in ways both big and small. Students will learn from their first day on campus that they are part of a community where their actions impact everyone. Skidmore expects students to take responsibility for their choices and to learn from any mistakes they make along the way.

Skidmore shapes our campus community so that healthy and responsible choices are part of the environment available to all our students. Examples of this culture of health and wellness include our bike share program, our 2018 “Change Direction” student athlete campaign combating stigma around mental health issues, sustainable and local food in the dining hall, yoga and mindfulness offerings in Wilson Chapel, substance free housing, credit bearing classes focused on stress reduction and fitness and access to the CDTA bus service from campus. Skidmore students play a large part in shaping their environment, from the Peer Health Educator program, to our Sustainability Reps to student leaders of the more than 130 clubs and organizations on campus.

Drugs and Alcohol:

We know that more than half our students arrive on campus identifying themselves as non-drinkers who want to seek out social activities that do not involve drugs or alcohol. If your student is a non-drinker, reassure them they are in good company. We know that our students have misconceptions about their peers' use of alcohol and other drugs and those misconceptions can sometimes shape their behavior in negative ways. Throughout their time here, students will be educated about alcohol and other drugs, social norms, protective strategies and bystander intervention, beginning with the online course they take prior to starting their semester. Also, during the first few weeks on campus, your student will receive specific information about Skidmore's alcohol and other drug policy.



[skidmore.edu/alcoholandotherdrugspolicy](https://www.skidmore.edu/alcoholandotherdrugspolicy)

We encourage you to have conversations with your student that include asking them about their choices regarding drug and/or alcohol use. If you are concerned that your student's substance use is negatively impacting them, please know you are welcome to reach out to professional staff at the Counseling Center and/or Health Services for consultation.

Health Promotion offers a program called BASICS (Brief Alcohol Screening and Intervention for College Students) which is a two session educational intervention designed to help students take a closer look at their own substance use and how it is affecting their lives. Students can contact the office to schedule an initial BASICS session. Some students will be required to complete BASICS as an educational sanction following a policy violation. Regardless of their level of alcohol or drug use, students report BASICS is a positive experience for them. We know from our own research that a majority of students will alter their use in positive ways after completing BASICS.

Affirmative Consent:

If students choose to engage in sexual behavior (and we know that most of them do at some point in their time at Skidmore), we expect them to be guided by the core principle of affirmative consent. New York State law and college policy require that the initiator of any sexual behavior is responsible for obtaining affirmative consent for each sexual activity desired. Sexual consent is communicated either verbally and/or through actions, and can be withdrawn at any time. It must be mutually understandable and clear. Silence is not affirmative consent. Someone who is incapacitated (lacks the ability to knowingly engage in sexual behavior) cannot give affirmative consent.

The overwhelming majority, 98%, of our students tell us that they prioritize affirmative consent in their personal lives. Skidmore students will have sustained education about the college's expectations around affirmative consent, beginning with the online education they completed prior to coming to campus, followed up with programming during orientation and continuing with events aimed at educating students about affirmative consent, including poster campaigns, workshops and peer led discussions throughout the year.

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