

Safe Spring Break

CONVERSATION STARTER

INTRODUCTION

Spring break is a time for college students to retreat and relax from midterm exams and classwork before finishing the rest of the academic year. For some, this may involve returning home to decompress and recharge. For others, this may include socializing and planning trips away from campus with friends. This conversation starter will help facilitate conversations with members on ways to make safe and healthy decisions during spring break and avoid risk.

Questions to ask and points to make verbatim are in **bold**. Notes and instructions for facilitators are in *italics*. Use the Safe Spring Break PowerPoint to guide you and your members through discussion.

CHAPTER DISCUSSION

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What are your plans for spring break this year?

Ask for 4-5 responses from participants to large with the large group. Responses may include: staycation, community service, camping/outdoor adventure, domestic trip, international travel, study abroad program, etc.

 *Advance slide.*

How can you plan for a safe spring break experience?

- Research your destination in advance.
- Share your travel itinerary with a parent, guardian or friend who is not traveling with you. Provide contact information for those who will be traveling with you in case they need to reach you in an emergency.
- If you plan to be outdoors, pack sunscreen, sunglasses, protective clothing, lip balm with SPF and a water bottle.
- Leave expensive or valuable belongings secure at home or in your campus residence.

 *Advance slide.*

If you are driving:

- Have your vehicle checked or inspected by a mechanic for maintenance.
- Create a back-up plan if you have car troubles while on the road (e.g., flat tire, dead battery, engine overheating, etc.).
- Map your route ahead of time.
- Drive on heavily traveled interstates and freeways instead of less-traveled roads or highways.
- Budget time for stops and breaks between driving.
- Travel during daylight hours rather than at night.
- Rotate drivers if traveling long distances. Plan to have at least one passenger awake with the driver at all times.
- Lock your vehicle with your windows up when you are not driving.

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If flying or traveling abroad:


- Take a copy of your identification (driver's license, visa, passport, etc.) and plane ticket in case the original gets lost or stolen.
- Bring a small portion of funds with you in the local currency for emergency use.
- Check for travel warnings before departure/arrival and when entering/exiting another country.
- Verify your cell phone carrier service while abroad.

What are ways to ensure your personal safety and well-being during spring break?

Allow 1-2 minutes for participants to share tips with another participant next to them. Ask for 4-5 participants to share in the large group.

 *Advance slide.*


- Follow all federal, state and local laws. Educate yourself on any local guidelines that may be in place based on your location.
- Practice safe drinking if you are of legal drinking age. Strategies include:
 - Alternating alcoholic drinks with nonalcoholic beverages
 - Eating a meal before consuming alcohol and snacks while drinking
 - Monitoring your drink amount
- Keep your ID on hand and know where your driver's license is at all times.
- Be discrete when using your credit card or an ATM in public places.
- Only use taxis, shuttle buses or ride-share services (Lyft or Uber) with people you know. Be alert and aware of your surroundings while in route.

 Advance slide.

- Travel in a group with those you trust. Leave with the same friends you arrived with when traveling between sites.
- Drink plenty of water to avoid dehydration.
- Wear sunscreen. Reapply every 2 hours to prevent sunburns.
- Do not swim alone, in the dark or after consuming alcohol. Be cautious when swimming in open water.
- Contact emergency personnel if you need help or immediate assistance.

How else can you make your spring break a safe and memorable one?

Allow 1-2 minutes for participants to brainstorm ideas with another participant next to them. Ask for 4-5 participants to share in the large group.

 Advance slide.

- Check in with those back home regularly and provide updates.
- Avoid sharing personal information with individuals you do not know well or have just met.
- Protect your location on social media. Sharing too much information on apps (Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, Twitter, etc.) in real time may endanger your safety and others.
- Be mindful of what you post online. Even if your accounts are private or you delete the post later, what you share on social media may never go away.
- Understand the impact of your decisions. Although spring break is temporary, your choices and actions may have permanent outcomes.

CONCLUSION

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Remember to be aware, responsible and alert during spring break. These safety tips and strategies can help you and our sisters better prepare for safe spring break experiences ahead. Whether you travel far from campus or stay close to home, the goal of spring break is to return healthy, refreshed and ready to end the year on a positive note!



RESOURCES

- [“Safe Spring Break Survival Guide/Travel Safety”](#) from the University of Illinois Springfield Counseling Center
- [“11 Spring Break Safety Tips for College Students”](#) from Collegiate Parent
- [Spring break issue](#) of the Ramapo College of New Jersey Department of Public Safety newsletter