Ep 82: Keeping Your College-Bound Kid Safe with Carrie Pasquarello
Transcript

[0:00] Music.

[0:29] And welcome back to the Heartful Parent Podcast. I have something a little different for you on the podcast this week that I think you will find very interesting. But before I dive into that and before I introduce our speaker, I want to let you know about a little change that is coming to the Heartful Parent Podcast in future weeks. So for those of you who are on my mailing list, and if you're not, why aren't you? For those of you who are on my mailing list, you would have seen an email that went out a couple weeks ago asking, what is your big parenting question? What is the thing that you would love to have somebody in the parenting space answer for you? And I got a ton of answers or a ton of people emailing me with their big parenting questions, things that they're wondering about or would love support around.

[1:23] And as I was thinking through the best way to answer these, whether it was in short snippets on social media or emailing people back, what I really realized or thought through is I think the best way to get these questions answered and to give both the people asking the questions and the rest of you a sense of how I answer questions and give a fair answer to the question and give you a sense of of what kind of questions we address and how I answer things inside the Heartful Parent Academy, I thought, what better way than to answer these big parenting questions here on the Heartful Parent Podcast? So not this week, but in future weeks, what you will start to hear is we'll start our episodes out with a big parenting question.

[2:13] And then we will dive into our guest or the topic for the week. So if you have a big parenting question and you aren't on my mailing list or you didn't respond to that email, something that you'd love to have answered, please feel free to drop me an email at christy at theheartfulparent.com and I will do my best to get that answered for you live on the podcast.

[2:42] All right. So that's the change that is coming. With that, I want to introduce our guest for this week. So as I said, this is something a little bit different. And this is geared towards those of you who have slightly older children, although I think there's still value for those of us with younger kiddos. But if you've got those middle schoolers, high schoolers and beyond, really leave those kids that are starting college. This is the perfect episode for you. And if this is the first year that you've sent your child away to college and you're thinking, oh my goodness, they're away from home, I don't have the same kind of oversight that I'm used to having. And I'm worried this is the exact right episode for you because we are talking today to Keri Pasquarello, who is the CEO and co-founder of Global Secure Resources, EEC.

[3:36] Carrie, her entire focus is on helping parents keep their kids safer at college and when they study abroad. But as you'll hear in this conversation, many of the tools, many of the conversations that we need to be having with our kids start well before they ever go to college or ever study abroad. on. Carrie is a victim advocate who took her overseas experience with the State Department and through Global Secure Resources Incorporated, turned it into a platform to help others like you and me navigate safety. Carrie manages the development of security standards, emergency action plans, safety protocols, and crisis intervention strategies for use by businesses, nonprofit organizations, and individual consumers, right? Those of us who have kids out in the world.

[4:29] Carrie directs the analytical preparation of the Individual Threat Assessment Plan, ITAP, and Safe Student Abroad Assessments, SA. Carrie was invited to the White House to discuss safety and is a fierce advocate for legislation protecting our students. She is also the author of a new book called Study Abroad Safety, A Parent's Guide to Sending Your Child Abroad. And we really dive into a bunch of things today related to safety, including those conversations that we need to have with our children as they grow and when they go off to college. Carrie will also share some products or the information about products that you might want to consider if your kiddo has just started college, including things like railings or their bunk beds if they are sleeping in an elevated bed as many college students today are.

[5:25] Which I gotta be honest with you, is not something I had ever thought about before. So I'm really excited to dive into this conversation. I think you will hear as Keri and I are talking, she is super passionate about this. She gets really excited talking about safety and has some phenomenal tips to share. So without further ado, Keri Pasquarello. Welcome to the podcast. I'm so thrilled that we are making this happen.

[5:47] Thank you so much for having me today. I'm excited to be here. I'm excited to have you. And I know you and I, we messaged back and forth and then we met not too long ago. So it's great to finally be here and bringing this conversation to parents today. Obviously, I read your bio, which is the more formal side of things. But I'd love to give you just a second to expand on that and let listeners know who you are and how you came to this work, why it matters so much to you. Yeah. So thanks for asking that question because safety and security has always been a part of my life since I was a young girl. Within our family, we were always taught about risk mitigation, about situational awareness, and that carried throughout my life. And it helped in so many different instances in my life. It helped with personal situations with stalkers. It helped in my personal life before I moved over to Europe and worked for the State Department. I was in real estate and strategizing my safety as a young woman, taking individuals into new homes or different locations on my own.

[6:56] This was one of the ways for me to stay safe no matter where I was. And I always say that stay safe around the corner or the world. And so it really was an amazing adventure to go overseas and then have all my experiences culminate into me returning back to the states and launching global secure resources to keep other people safe and secure as they explore this world. I love that. And one of the things that I talk about all the time in a variety of places is the right of every child, really every

human, to grow up and to be both brain and body safe. And safety can mean a lot of different things. So I love that we're talking about it from this angle. As I told listeners in the intro, we're really diving in attention to safety at college. But I want to make clear for anyone who's listening to this, if you don't have a kid in college yet, that's okay. In fact, now that means you're getting this information at the right time, right? So that you're going to have the conversations and do the prep for when they do get off to college, right? Yes, absolutely. And we talk about this oftentimes, even when parents are thinking about giving their child their first cell phone. You really should be talking about phone safety a couple of years before you ever hand over a device, right? Yes. So it's always great to be proactive. Proactive.

[8:21] Proactive. And the other thing that I say on the flip side of that is if you do have a child at college or you've already given your child the cell phone or whatever it is, it's never too late. It's better that you have these conversations at some point rather than never. Yes, absolutely. Gary, as we dive in and we talk about, I want to start by talking about dorm safety and something you call the red zone. But before we do that, I have to share this story with you because as I was preparing for our interview today, I had this memory that just popped into my brain of when I was going off to college and I went out of state for college. We lived in Washington at the time, not that far from where I live now, actually. And I went away to Colorado for college. And the school that I went to was a big outdoor school, right? So there There was a lot of people who were into rock climbing and hiking and backpacking and skiing and doing all of those things. And it was one of the things that really attracted me to the school. So I was super excited about getting all of my outdoor gear.

[9:25] So my father, who I always call Mr. Safety Guy, teasingly, because I was the first kid anywhere in my neighborhood that his parents made them put on a bike helmet. And I was the first kid whose parents made me wear a ski helmet and all of those kinds of things, which now is normal for all of us. But back in the day, I was like the pariah. So we go. My dad wants me to be super safe at college. And I was living in a dorm. My first year of college, I was on the third floor. So my dad takes me to REI. And I think this is awesome. We're going to get all this great outdoor gear. I'm going to be ready to go. And we go to the climbing section and he approaches this guy who's working at REI, who's probably a pretty decent climber. He's selling this equipment. He's familiar with it. And my dad says, we need to buy a rope. And at this point, I know where this is going. And I'm standing there hanging my head with my eyes covered. I'm so mortified. Because the customer service guy saying that your standard climbing rope is, and I can't even remember now how many feet, 150 feet, let's say. My dad wants a rope that's 60 feet long. And the climbing guy, not going to do you any good. And he's, oh no, that's not for her to go rock climbing. That is for her to tie to her bed and get out of her dorm room if there's a fire.

[10:48] Now, how my father thought I was going to tie a rope to the leg of my bed and then shimmy down it to get out of the third row dorm, I have no damn idea.

[11:00] And all I remember is this mortification. And he made me take the damn thing to college and he made me put it under my bed. And as soon as he dropped me off and left, I was like, I'm shoving that

somewhere where nobody can see it because it wasn't good for anything. thing. But she was at least thinking about some of the risks that could happen while living in a dorm, which I got to give him a little credit and a little love that he was doing that. So talk to us a little bit about what should parents be aware of when they're first sending their kids out of their home to go live in a dorm and to be at college? Yeah, I'd like to start first with the red zone. The red zone is the first four months of every academic year. So this is August, September, October and November. And this is where the majority of the crimes as sexual assaults and other types of harm happen. up in. And so this is a really important conversation to start with our children, because this is a time in your life where they're going to be exploring so many new aspects of their life. They're going to be making new friends. They're going to be making new decisions. They're going to be choosing whether to drink alcohol or not, whether to try drugs or not. And these are the conversations we want to have with our children before they leave the house so that they can prepare to be proactive, prepared, and protected with their safety and security.

[12:29] And it all starts with a conversation.

[12:32] One other really interesting fact is each year, more than one in 10 students are assaulted on their college campus. And these incidences can range from harassment to stalking to assaults, and of course, sexual assaults. So these are the things we need to know before we go so that we can be safer and have a more successful experience at college. Yeah. I love that you say that because I tell the story about my dad. And on the one hand, he was Mr. Safety Guy and wanted me to have the rope to climb out of the dorm room. But we never had conversations. My parents never had conversations with me about alcohol, right? Like I wasn't a drinker in high school. And so it was almost like they assumed that we didn't need to discuss that as I went into to college. So we didn't talk about alcohol. We didn't talk in any great length about sexual assaults or safety in dating or any of those things. And it wasn't because my parents were neglectful, clearly. I had a damn rope to get out of the window. But I think they didn't know what conversations to have or how to have them. And knowing that those first four months are so critical.

[13:44] I think, can spur parents into some of these conversations, perhaps.

[13:48] And oftentimes, I like to start with two questions that I like to focus on. The first is, can you enter college, like, how can you enter college with the best strategies in place to keep you safe? And then the next is, how can you identify risk mitigation strategies in order to accomplish that mission? So with those two questions in mind, I always like to set up some objectives, right? So first, we want to identify red flags, let's say, and also the red zone, which includes a number of harms, including, let's say, hazing. We have to talk about hazing. Another thing is binge drinking. You're going to be either exposed to somebody binge drinking, right? Right. So it's really critical that we have a conversation about it. What does binge binge drinking look like? What does hazing look like? And more importantly, how do you have what is your strategy out of something that seems a little a little dangerous or that you're starting to feel uncomfortable with the situation around you? And one of my parenting strategies was and my children are grown now. I have three children. they're all in the safety and security field.

But as we were, as they were growing, I did one rule and I said, listen, anytime you ever feel uncomfortable outside our home while you're at college, call me.

[15:16] Doesn't matter if you're in college, high school, whatever. If you call me and say, mom, pick me up now, I will pick you up and I won't ask questions. Like you need to have that safety line out there for your children that if for some reason they don't feel comfortable, people, they know they can call you and they're not going to get in trouble. Right. And one day I had one of my children call me at 2 a.m. And I went out, I picked them up, I brought them home. I didn't ask much question, but I knew I had a feeling about what the situation was that they were in. And we were able to avoid the disastrous situation that could have been. Yeah. It's funny because I was just having this conversation with my older daughter the other day about that if I will come pick you up, and if for any reason I can't come pick you up, I will send an Uber, I will send whatever to come get you. So anyway, we were driving in the car, and I can't remember what prompted this conversation, Carrie, but I was talking with her about the idea that we would pick her up at anywhere, that she wouldn't be in trouble. We wouldn't even discuss whatever it was that happened until the next day, until everybody was safe, rested, whatever. And that if she was away at college or working away for the summer, whatever it was, she could call and we would get her a cab of cab or an Uber or whatever.

[16:36] So I love that you said that because I'm like, woo, I got that right. Yes, absolutely. We need to be that backup, right? We want to be there for our kids. We want them to explore the world, go out and do amazing things in this world. But you know what? As they're growing, their mind is still maturing. And we need to give them that space, but also the safety structure to be in place that they can pull if they need. And that's what it's all about. Yeah. And I will also say, when we're talking about these focuses, besides the red zone and the hazing and the binge drinking, we want to make sure that they know how to reduce their risks of harm, how to get out of situations, how to listen to their intuition. One of my favorite books is The Gift of Fear by Galvin D. Becker. This is one of the best books ever. And it goes through how important fear is. It's not that we don't want to go out and be fearful of this world. We want to go and blaze our trail. But if we sense fear, we need to take a pause and listen to it and get out of the situation. And so being able to talk about that is really important. And then lastly, we want our students to have resources. We want them to know who to call in case of an emergency. We need them to know the mental health numbers, right? And I'll make sure I leave them all at the end.

[17:59] But whether it's a rape crisis hotline, whether it's a mental health, Samaritans, a phone number, a text number where our kids can reach out, this is one of the most important things we can give them. And I tell you, one of the ways that I share resources with all the students that I teach, but also my children, is when I'm giving them these resources, I say to them, you know what? One day you might have a friend that needs this. So it's really important for you to have that so that you can share because I know you'll want to help your friends and as they're gaining these resources they have them for themselves as well yeah that is such an effective strategy in so many different ways when we talk to our kids or talk with our kids about things that are really important but we do it through the lens of you might need to help someone else or what would you tell this other person to do because it makes

It makes it so much less personal and scary for them to think about it in that context. And I've seen that will sometimes open up those teens a little bit more. Yeah. And I think another really important thing to think about as we're sending off our children to study, either abroad, at college, at high school, is that accidental injuries are the leading cause of death on campuses. And second to that is suicide. assign.

[19:24] So once again, making sure that our students have those numbers that are readily available and that they know where to reach out. And it's okay to understand that when they're going off to a new environment, things are going to get hard. They're going to be difficult. They're going to be making new friends and maybe it might take longer than they really want, but we have to be able to identify depression.

[19:50] Anxiety, any of these internal feelings that can really hinder our success at college. We understand that the red zone, whether it's an assault, sexual assault or physical assault or some type of violence or interpersonal violence with boyfriends and girlfriends and relationships, that all of these things that are happening, we need to be able to discuss them so that our kids can make exit strategies, right? And so that's another really critical point. And so I don't know if you'd like me to go over maybe a few exit strategies to help share. Yeah, I would love to do that because I want to come back to the idea that you said that the majority of deaths are like this accidental thing. And I know you have some things or some recommendations that you can make to prevent some of those at any rate. But yeah, let's dive into, because it's real easy for all of us to say to parents, oh, you got to give your kids strategies. And I can hear people listening right now saying, fantastic, what are the strategies that I should give them? So yeah, let's lean in there, Keri. Something as simple, and I say this, it's okay to say a lie if you have to get out of a situation.

[21:02] If you need to get out and it's going to be a problem, you can pretend you're getting a text. You can signal to a friend that you really need to go to the bathroom where you can discuss something outside that group with another individual. And I always say you're only as good as your weakest link. So if you're out in a group and you start to get those red slats and things are going bad, but yet your friend isn't seeing those red flats and wants to stay on, what do you do in that type of situation? I always say it's really a great idea to make sure that your friends are all on the same board. You say, as we're going out, if one of us feels uncomfortable, We all leave.

[21:41] Stay together in a group. That's one of the most important strategies that we give to people. But then on the other side, we have to say, you might be alone. So what do you do if you're alone? One of the great strategies, and I go into those strategies, tools, and techniques, is one of the safety items I have. It's called a Invisaware, like this little bracelet. I love it. So if I push this button twice, it will send my GPS location to two of my emergency contacts. Contacts what they do is they'll know exactly where i am they'll see that i'm in need of help they'll try to call me if i don't answer at least they have a starting point to get help to me now there's a number of different items out in this world whether it's another type of beacon where you can push a button and send a gps or even on your cell phone you have those emergency sos buttons that you can push and as we're talking about that for our students

that are going away, we want to make sure that in their phones, they're adding their emergency contact to their list. That means if you ever dial 911 with your telephone, that emergency contact will get your location and be notified that you've called 911.

[22:54] That's a really great handy tool to have in your toolkit. Okay, I'm going to back up because I did not know that my cell phone would do that. So if someone is listed as my emergency contact. Yes. Is this true for both Android and iPhones? I use my iPhone as my Apple, but you can figure it out on the Androids as well. So make sure you're going into your health app and then you put some vital information in there. You're adding your emergency contacts.

[23:27] And this way, once again, that's an added feature that many people don't know about. Yeah, I'm an iPhone user and I wasn't aware of that feature. So it sounds that sounds so easy to do. And for me, obviously, my husband would be my emergency contact. So if I call 911, he gets a notification of that. Yes, absolutely. That's wonderful.

[23:48] And so those are just a few ways. Once again, staying in a group, having the ability to make up a Sib if you have to. I remember, and this goes internationally as well, I remember sometimes being in some cabs overseas and I would always pretend I was talking on the phone and I would say, oh, you're waiting for me? Yeah, I see the taxi. We're going to be there in five minutes. Yes, I'll make sure that they drop me off right in front since you're right there. Like I always would add these extra levels of safety. I would also take a picture of the lights as plate and send it because you never can tell. And I have to tell you, I've had situations with Uber drivers in America where I felt very uncomfortable. That's another story that I love to share another day. But it was very, very scary. But I had everything in place. I had somebody following my ride. And at one point, I had to jump out of the Uber car.

[24:47] Because they're going to take me back on a freeway the wrong direction. And I knew something was up. So these things happen everywhere in this world. But if we're not looking out for these red flags and these issues, and we don't have situational awareness, we won't be as successful as we can be. And that's what we want for our students. For sure. So let's talk about situational awareness just a little bit more, because I think whether whether we're talking about a middle schooler or a college student or anywhere in between.

[25:19] What I see so often, and this is for adults, well, I see this with adults too, right? Is that those handy cell phones that might have some safety features can also make us unsafe because we walk around, we're on our phones, right? We're following, either following a map or texting or talking or doing whatever, playing Pokemon Go or whatever kids are doing now. Yeah. And that, to me, seems to detract from an awareness of what's going on around them. So how do we go about teaching our children of varying ages what we mean by situational awareness and then how to really be situationally aware? Yes. So this is one of my very favorite conversations with parents. And I do online student safety for younger students all the way up to college level. So I'm always talking to parents about doing iSpy with my little eye when they're younger. Get them off the cell phones. Make sure they're observing their environment. This is one of the best things we can do with our kids. Okay, next,

as we get older and we're teaching situational awareness, I do it in two ways. I teach with the two R's, which is risk and resource, and I also teach with the baseline, the baseline check. So these are two different skill sets, but they're improving your situational awareness daily. So I'll just give you really quickly the two R's, which is risk and resource, and I'll make it really simple.

[26:44] You're always looking for two risks and two resources every single time you change location or environment. So let's say you're at the movie theater. You look for your two risks. Your two risks could be there could be an active shooter or there could be a fire. So very quickly, I come up with two resources. I see where the exits are. I understand Dan Runhyde fight, the FBI strategy for active shooter. I've already identified that in my mind. I'm done.

[27:11] I'm watching my movie. That literally took me less than 30 seconds to improve my situational awareness when I was there. Let's say I get into the car. I'm doing the same thing. I'm looking for two risks. I'm looking at my gas level and I'm looking at that my doors are locked. Okay. And that would be my resources. I'm locking the door because I'm going to avoid carjackings and running out of gas. So I mean, once again, boom, I'm done 30 seconds or less. And I've strengthened in my situational awareness by looking around and doing some positive things to keep me safe. Yeah.

[27:45] I just love that because it's so quick. It's so easy. And it doesn't have you sitting mired in fear, but just saying, hey, here's what the risks are. Here's what I would do. Okay, great. I'm going to enjoy my movie. I'm going to drive my car, listen to my podcast, whatever, right? Yes. And I have a really funny story. So the other day I was in Boston. I'm down in North Carolina right now, but I was up in Boston and I was driving. I came to a stop sign. There was a crosswalk and a man was crossing the street. He stopped directly in front of my car. He was texting and he was really into his text. And I'm amazed by this because I teach situational awareness. So this was great. Instead of honking like the majority of people do in Boston, I sat there and I started counting. I got to 30. Okay. I got to 30 seconds when he finished and send, send or whatever he did, he looked up and he saw my face and he threw his arms up in the air and he ran to the sidewalk. Now, this was really remarkable because he was a man, a businessman out and about. He was a perfect target for criminals and he was a perfect target for a victim of harm. OK, he could have been hit by a bicycle, hit by a car. He could have been punched, his cell phone taken and his briefcase taken as well.

[29:03] This amazes me. Every single day I go out in this world and I look for people who don't have situational awareness and I identify them and I just sit back and I just, it's really shocking because another really bad situation is with the selfie deaths. Around our world, we have people dying every weekly by not being aware of your situation, right? Daily. we have people killed in crosswalks, people crossing streets, right? And they're oblivious to what's happening. But then we have the selfie deaths where somebody's taking a picture and they accidentally fall backwards off a cliff. And we read about these things all the time. And so how can we protect our kids? We talk about situational awareness. We say that wherever you go, take 30 seconds, look around. Before you're going to take that selfie, look around, see where you you are.

[29:56] Yeah, such good advice. And because I do, I see it as well with people just not aware. My favorite example is Costco on a Sunday. Nobody else seems to be aware that there's 5,000 other people at Costco on a Sunday. And I say that jokingly, not from a, I know the safety issue isn't as prominent in that situation, but people are just doing their own thing. And I feel like We were traveling with my girls last summer, and I had to constantly say, move to the right, move to the right, kids, move to the right, to where people are walking. Yeah, so true. And another byproduct of improving your situational awareness, it improves your critical thinking skills. And isn't that something we want our kids to have in their toolbox? For sure. Yeah. For sure. So there's so many little things, and they're very simple. ball. But the only way we're going to really be able to help our kids be successful is starting those conversations, being a safe place for them to share with us what's going on in their life, making sure that they have the resources to reach out if they need help with their mental health, they're having any issues with depression, if they're having any issues with boyfriends or new girlfriends, whatever it may be.

[31:13] And also, as we talk about intimate partner violence, we need to share with our kids, even in middle school, high school and above, is how do you get out of a relationship successfully? If you're breaking up, how can you do this? And one of the most important things is also to be able to identify when another person is doing things that may be harming you. If there's any name calling. And this all goes back to setting up your values and your boundaries, right? Send your kids off with making sure that they understand their values and their boundaries and ask them. Oftentimes people don't talk about this, but once a student really identifies what are their values in life, what are the things that they would allow to happen around them or what are the things that they won't allow to happen around them? And as they're setting up their boundaries in their mind, this will actually help them in life. This is a great life skill. Yeah, yeah. Okay, I want to go back just ever so briefly, because as we were talking about situational awareness, you mentioned the two R's and looking for two risks and two resources. And then you also mentioned the baseline strategy.

[32:27] Can you just touch briefly on what that is? Right. The baseline check means that every time you go into a new environment, you're trying to look for something that's above the baseline or below the baseline. And it's a little bit more in depth that it takes a lot more longer to go through a whole presentation and really get people to understand more about the baseline. Line, but just as a very quick example, let's say you go into a coffee shop and you walk into that coffee shop and people know what the baseline is. There's going to be a barista, there's going to be tables, there's going to be people drinking coffee most likely, right? And this is the same around the world. Now, if you walk into that coffee shop and you find something above that baseline or below that baseline, maybe above that baseline might be there's a group of men and it's 80 degrees outside and they have puffy coats on. That's above the baseline. When you're thinking about like the average temperature, why would they have coats on? Very simply, maybe they're fixing the freezers in the back. Okay. Or maybe they're robbing the place. Either way, you have to determine if it's a threat or not. If it might be a threat, just get the heck out. We have to make sure that we have our exit strategy set. Same goes with below the baseline. You go in that same coffee place. There's no customers and there's no barista.

[33:52] So that is below the baseline. So once again, you just have to identify and figure out whether it's a threat or whether it's not a threat. Get out if you need. And so that's exactly the baseline. Every place you're going, you're setting up your new baseline.

[34:11] And you're looking for things above or below. And once you find the things that are above and below, you just determine if it's a threat. Love it. I love it. Because we all know, like for most of the places that we go, grocery store, coffee shop, Costco on a Sunday. Like we know what that should look like. And we know in really dire situations, seconds can save your life. Yeah. So we want our kids to know if there's a situation, they can get out and we get to safety. It's an ICE formula. This is what I use. Identify, calculate, escape.

[34:45] Or identify, calculate, and empower, right? This is what we want. These strategies that are super simple for our kids to remember, and they can go to it with a second's notice. Yeah. What strikes me about all of these different strategies, like all of the ones that you've been describing, whether it's the two R's or the ICE strategy that you just noted, they I'll come back to this idea that I talk to parents about when it comes to keeping our kids safe from child sexual abuse, which is, and it's something that I think is often trained out of us, but Gavin DeBecker talks about it in The Gift of Fear, which is to trust that gut, to trust the intuition, and then to not ignore it because it's not socially.

[35:29] Acceptable to follow it. Like you get into an elevator and there's somebody in the elevator that makes you feel uncomfortable. uncomfortable, too many of us go ahead and get in the elevator because we don't want to make a scene or we don't want to be weird or whatever. And what we really need to be doing is just listening to that intuition, right? Yes, that is one of the best gifts we've been given. And so to be able to listen to it and fine tune it, because with the daily usage of the baseline or the two R's, the risk and resource, you're improving the way that you're identifying your situation. And that is going to be, in some cases, it could be the difference of life and death. And one of the things that I've noticed is with a lot of the terrible situations that have happened up on campuses.

[36:22] Parents have taken that pain of losing a child or having a child gravely injured, and they've turned it into proactive groups to help others stay safe. And there's a number of moms that I know. For instance, Rachel's First Week. Have you ever heard of Rachel's First Week? No. Rachel was a beautiful, wonderful young lady, and her mom, Angie Feej, started a nonprofit prophet in her name to try to help other students be safe. And what happened to her daughter, Rachel, once again in that red zone time, was at a campus off-campus party and she fell down a flight of stairs and nobody called the emergency services. They thought they'd let her sleep at all. And so this is another really important conversation for our kids is if there is any any alcohol poisoning, if there's anybody that slips and falls and hurts their head and they're trying to sleep, that the majority of colleges have laws that will protect you, even if it's underage drinking. Call 911. Stay with them and get them help. It could be the difference of your friend living or dying.

[37:39] And so this is really an important topic for our kids. And there's just There's just too many. For instance, the other non-profit, which is Rail Against the Danger, and that was started by Maureen

Jacob, which is Clark's mother. And Clark is a perfect story of why I talk about how bunk beds need to have the protection, which is the rails for those beds, because every year we have students roll off those high beds and get traumatic brain injuries.

[38:11] And so Clark had a terrible brain injury. He had to relearn how to eat. He had to relearn how to walk. And it was a simple fix that colleges could do, put a rail on a bed so a child or a student doesn't roll out. And we have these accidents every single year. So that is a huge thing that parents should think about once they get into that dorm. Look, if that bed's off the floor, get a rail. Yeah. Okay, so we've gone into this other space that I'm so glad we're getting to because we've talked about the conversations that we need to have with our kids and the things they need to understand about calling 911 for a friend or the situational awareness piece and the we'll always come get them or make sure somebody comes to get them, all of those conversations. And you also mentioned the intimate partner violence and so many things that we hopefully are talking with our kids about all along the way. But as you've just pointed out, there's also some really practical things.

[39:08] Like dorm room things that can make our kids safer, bunk bed railings being one of them. You talk about a couple of other things I know when it comes specifically to that dorm room where our child is going to be living presumably for at least a year. What are those things? Check the locks. Make sure your students are locking the doors when they go to bed. Have a doorstop for the bathroom in case they need it. Because once again, when I talk about you're only as good as the weakest link. If your daughter or son is in a room and their roommate is having friends over that maybe they are getting not a very good feeling with, how are they going to protect themselves when they're sleeping?

[39:53] A doorstop can really help. When you're in the restroom, you can use the doorstop. When you're in your bedroom, your private room, you can use that doorstop. And another thing is making sure that the fire alarms work. You want to make Sure, because we have another mom start another organization. It was because her son was in a dorm when a fire occurred and they didn't have the proper safety that was needed to protect the students in that dorm. So it's the parents' responsibility to double check these things and teach the students how to check for themselves as well. Well, I'll need to be on board. And if a school doesn't have it up to our levels, we better speak up and get an additional fire alarm ourselves, an additional type of alarm that we need. But once again, checking those locks, making sure that everything will lock properly, making sure that when the kids are out late at night, that they're with a buddy. But once again, coming up with the strategies of what do you do by yourself? Okay. And that kind of takes us back to the three A's. I always call it sort of the Bermuda Triangle, which is alone, alcohol alone and at night.

[41:02] And this combination has been in so many different harmful situations. And so if we're talking with our children and we tell them about the 3As, don't put yourself in that situation because what it does, our safety is our own responsibility. We want to make sure that we are doing the best for ourselves because on the outside in this campus, there are people that are there that are harming others. We look at the statistics, right? The statistics are showing us that violence does happen on campuses around the world. So how can we be our best advocate? And it's by looking at these

strategies, tools, and techniques, building our safety kit with that bed rail, with these items that I just mentioned, but also...

[41:51] Having small personal alarms. That's another thing to have. For instance, and all we have to do is look back at the situation with Lake and Riley. She was out jogging on her own. She should be able to jog on her own, right? But unfortunately, there was a person who was there to do harm to her. And one of the things that she did was she pulled out her phone to make an emergency phone call. And unfortunately, it was taken away from her. And that's why I like these personal type of alarms. The WanderSafe is another one where it's a Bluetooth connection to your phone. So you don't have to pull out your phone. And the person who is trying to do some harm to you won't know what the heck it is. And that's the idea is we have to be smarter than the criminals. Unfortunately, that's where we are.

[42:38] As you say, we know that violence and crime happens on campuses just as it does in all of our other spaces. Right. And the scary thing about that for so many parents, that it's the first time that their children are going off into the world on their own for any length of time, right? For in most cases, to a place where those crimes can and do occur. So I love, I love, Carrie, that you are, that you're talking about this and helping parents be aware of it, not to instill fear, but as a way of empowering. I also know that we've only scratched the surface here and that there really are so many other little nuances here. If parents could walk away from this podcast conversation today with just one.

[43:26] Piece of wisdom that you want them to know? What would that one piece of wisdom be? Start the conversation. Start the conversations with your children about safety. And we want people to look at risk and safety from a new perspective. We want it to be empowering our students. So when they go out, they blaze their trail, they're successful, and they come home with amazing life stories.

[43:52] Oh my gosh, that is such a beautiful note to end on. I do want to take one moment for you to mention the book that you recently wrote that is designed to support parents in this same space.

[44:05] Oh, thank you so much. I will put it right up here. But I took a lot of time to write Study Abroad Safety, A Parent's Guide to Sending Your Child Abroad. And that was based on my 12 years of living overseas and really focused on my own children being successful out there. And so it has all these wonderful tools, but it's not for just abroad. It's for your children around the corner or the world. And I love it because we talk about boundaries and values. We talk about domestic violence, about interpersonal violence and how to combat these things in this world. so we can be, once again, successful and blazing our trails. So thank you so much for mentioning that. Oh, you're welcome. Thank you. And I have a copy, as I just showed, and there really are some incredibly valuable tips in there. So thank you. Carrie, it's been a pleasure to be in conversation with you. I am always inspired by other people out in the world that are working in a variety of ways to keep our children safer. I frequently say that every child and every human, and I think I said it once already today, that we all have the, I think, what should be the inalienable right.

[45:24] To be both body and brain safe. And the tools that you've shared today will help parents ensure that for their kids. So thank you so much for joining us. Thank you so much. All right, parents, I hope that conversation with Carrie was really helpful for you, that you learned something new or thought about something in a new way, conversations that you might need to have with your child about situational awareness, safety, how to think through things, especially as they get older. And if you know me at all and have listened to the podcast for any length of time, you hopefully know that my goal is never to make parents feel more afraid or more fearful. It is to empower you with skills, tools, information so that you can go into a situation, know how to keep your kiddo safe and move on to the fun. And I think Carrie talked about that today as well, that this doesn't have to be big and scary and that there are some really simple things that we can do to help our children keep themselves safer safer to help our children know what to do, how to get out of dangerous situations or things that don't feel good to them, and then ways to just keep them safer physically in the spaces they inhabit in a college, like in dorm rooms and the like.

[46:39] I know I learned something from this conversation. I hope you did too. So you can pick up a copy of Carrie's book, Study Abroad Safety, safety on amazon.com or wherever you buy books. And if, as I said, and I said this at the beginning, if you have a big parenting question related to what we talked about today or anything else, please drop me an email, christy at theheartfulparent.com and make sure that you get on my mailing list at theheartfulparent.com so that when your question is answered, you'll know it's coming up. All right. Take care and cheers.