

College Homesickness

Homesickness occurs when there is an actual or anticipated separation from home and the people you are familiar with. This can cause distress and possibly functional impairment.

In the United States, there are currently more than 15 million students enrolled in colleges and universities. Homesickness affects approximately 1 million, or about 7% of those students, and you may be one of them. It is important for you to understand the signs and symptoms of homesickness, and this will hopefully help you to cope effectively with it. If you believe you are experiencing severe homesickness that is influencing your ability to function normally then please seek help from the references listed.

You may be experiencing homesickness if you are trying to adjust to an unfamiliar environment. As a college student you experience many new adjustments all at one time. For example, you may be facing some of the following changes, some for the first time:

- Independently managing your own life
- Establishing new friendships
- Experiencing a large college campus environment
- Adjusting to a new schedule
- Striving to succeed in academics, athletics, or artistic pursuits
- Adopting to a new geographical setting

Homesickness may leave you feeling depressed, anxious, and withdrawn. It may also lead you to experience social and behavioral problems, symptoms of depression and anxiety, coping deficits, academic difficulties, low self-esteem, feelings of helplessness, and obsessive thoughts and behaviors. It is important to know that you are not alone.

Sources:

wellbeing.rice.edu/homesickness

goaskalice.columbia.edu/answered-questions/homesick-%E280%94having-trouble-adjusting-college-life

www.beaumont.edu/press/news-stories/2012/8/parents-and-colleges-can-help-first-year-students-adjust-to-new-lifestyle

Journal of American College Health:

www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/07448481.2012.673520

If you or someone you know is experiencing homesickness you may find the following tips helpful.

- **Get involved!** Consider joining a UNI student group, organization, or sport club. You'll make new friends, learn new skills, and feel more connected to UNI! [Check out the UNI Student Involvement Center webpage](#)
- **Keep close communication with your family and friends.** Make regular phone calls; send emails, or even video chat.
- **Make yourself at home.** Decorate your residence with pictures and keepsakes from home.
- **Make time for you.** Be sure to set aside some time to partake in activities that help you relax and relieve stress. Whether it's exercising at the [WRC](#), joining an [intramural](#) team, going on a [UNI Outdoor Recreation](#) trip, or writing in a journal, treat yourself.
- **Invite visitors.** Invite your friends or family members to visit you at UNI.
- **Stay on campus as much as possible.** The more time you spend getting to know the campus and your new friends, the more you'll feel "at home" while at UNI. Take advantage of the endless opportunities you have as a student, and enjoy the social events on campus. Check out the [UNI Student Life webpage](#).
- **Seek Support.** Talk to an RA or an upper-classman. Contact the [UNI Counseling Center](#) at 319-273-2676 to schedule an appointment with a professionally-trained counselor.