



SELF-HELP NOTES
UI COUNSELING & TESTING CENTER
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HOMESICKNESS

What is Homesickness?

Homesickness is one of the most common adjustment problems new college students experience as they move away from home for the first time. Most students feel some degree of homesickness during their academic career. Even students who have experienced successfully leaving home before may experience it. Feeling homesick is normal and usually passes during the first semester, often within the first few weeks of school. Students feeling homesick may have a strong feeling of longing for home or someone familiar; may feel anxious about being away from loved ones and familiar surroundings. Students may feel distressed when thinking about home and may even begin to question whether going away to college was a good decision. At times, these emotions may feel overwhelming. Those who experience homesickness often report feeling more depressed, anxious, have obsessive thoughts, especially about home and may even have minor physical complaints. Students have different levels of tolerance to change and have different ways of coping with new situations.

What Can I Do to Help Cope with My Feelings of Homesickness?

- Acknowledge and accept your feelings of homesickness. Remember it is a very natural and common response to moving away from home.
- Believe that the feelings are probably short term and will eventually pass. Take steps to help the feeling change.
- Recognize that it might take you time to adjust to being at college and away from home.
- Talk with someone about your feelings. You will probably be surprised the number of students who can relate to your experience. Many other students will be having similar experiences.
- Evaluate the amount of contact you have with home. For some students frequent contact helps them adjust to college life and feel better. For others infrequent or little contact is better (often because contact makes them feel worse).
- Keep in touch with people from home on a regular, limited basis. Establish times to call or e-mail family and friends. Share your experiences at college with them.

- It may help to keep familiar items like photos, blankets, pillows, etc. that remind you of home in your room.
- Set a date to go home for a visit. This may help minimize your feelings of being homesick.
- Establish a routine as soon as possible. Minimize change, especially during the beginning of the semester. This helps students feel more settled and secure.
- Learn effective ways to manage stress. Change increases the amount of stress you feel.
- Familiarize yourself with your new environment. Walk around; get to know the campus and local community.
- Begin meeting new friends and engaging in new experience and activities. Consider joining a student club or organization, or participating in intramural sports. Making friends and getting involved is a big step to alleviating homesickness.
- Stay healthy. Get enough food and sleep. Exercise regularly at the Student Recreation Center. Proper rest and nutrition are important to your emotional and physical well-being.
- Set realistic expectations of what you want from your college and academic experience. Work toward a balance of work and fun. Your college experience is about learning and enjoying your experiences.
- Explore and affirm your reasons for being at the University of Idaho. Make a commitment to your academic goals. Most people adjust well to college and experience being homesick for only a short period of time. However, some students decide it is not the right time to be away from home and make the decision to leave school and go back home.

Need Additional Help?

If your feelings of being homesick continue to intensify and do not subside and interfere with your academic and social life, seek professional help. To help make the decision about going home and leaving college, you may want to consult and get advice from the Counseling & Testing Center.

The University of Idaho **Counseling & Testing Center** offers counseling for Coeur d'Alene based students. For more information about how to schedule an appointment, call the **Counseling & Testing Center** at **208-885-6716**
Website: www.uidaho.edu/ctc