



Homesickness

Very few people are immune from homesickness. Kids going to summer camp, people relocating to new jobs, vacationers traveling abroad, and college students leaving home are all subject to yearnings for the comforts of home. Feeling "homesick" may include sadness, loneliness, nervousness, insecurity, missing loved ones, or apathy towards your new environment.

In most cases, periods of homesickness (especially just after a transition) are normal. Not only are you experiencing a major **adjustment** to your new environment, but you are also experiencing a **loss** of what was comfortable and predictable. Homesickness can be triggered by major losses, or changes in geography, sleeping/eating patterns, peer groups, living situations, activities, classes, and living accommodations.

Here are some tips that may help you in your transition:

Give yourself permission to be homesick!

Realize that a period of "homesickness" is a natural response to your transition. Being homesick doesn't mean that you're a "baby", that you're immature or that you're a "mama's boy/daddy's girl". And guess what - others who are in the same boat likely having similar feelings.

Familiarize yourself with your new surroundings

Once you know your new environment, find your way around, see where your classes are located, and discover some fun hang-outs and activities, you will likely feel more comfort and in control of your situation.

Explore activities!

Make a list of all the things you like to do and explore what clubs or organizations are available to you. Chances are you'll find one, and if you don't, talk to your residence hall staff or student government about starting one!

Bring familiar things with you

Sprucing up your apartment or residence hall room with familiar or sentimental items can help ease the shock of a new environment. Having pictures, memorabilia, or favorite possessions with you in your new living space can help facilitate a smoother transition.

Be open to NEW opportunities

Try to avoid comparing your new environment to home - it's different! Be open to exploring new situations, opportunities, people, classes, and choices. The more open you are to NEW things, the less you might miss PAST things.



Invite others in your explorations

Getting involved with others and making friends can help you feel less alone. Inviting roommates, classmates, and neighbors to explore the new environment with you can be a great way to initiate new connections, and others in the same situation are likely to join you. Approaching others with a friendly attitude and inviting them to "check out the campus" or "see what's downtown", can often lead to a positive response.

Keep in touch with friends

Stay in contact with friends and family via e-mail, real mail, and phone calls (as your budget allows!) Tell them all about your new experiences and encourage them to do the same with you.

Make plans to visit home

Knowing that you have an upcoming trip home set for a specific time may be comforting and allow you to focus on your goals while on campus. It also prevents those impulsive trips home and encourages you to invest in your new life at school. Trips home can be relaxing, but it's important that they don't become your sole focus.

What if NONE of this stuff works??

If you find that you are having trouble adjusting, or continue to feel homesick after a reasonable amount of time (4-6 weeks), you may need to talk to someone. Some things to look out for:

- Intense or long-lasting sadness/depression
- Frequent nervousness or social anxiety
- Low energy or motivation
- Trouble sleeping
- Increases/decreases in appetite
- Feeling like you just "don't care" about anything
- Having difficulty with school
- Increased use of drugs or alcohol
- Obsessively missing family/friends
- Phone bills beyond your budget
- Pervasive unhappiness or displeasure
- Feeling like you "need" to go home
- Lack of interest or involvement in new surroundings

If you notice some of the above, or just feel as though you're not adjusting to things, you may want to consider talking to someone. Talking to friends, family, or your RA may be a good starting point. If you think you need something more, the Student Counseling Center offers several resources for this and other problems. If you'd like us to help, stop by today! The Student Counseling Center is located on Hulman Memorial Student Union, 7th Floor or call 812-237-3939. All services are provided free and confidentially to all ISU students.