



Homesickness

Homesickness is a very common experience for college students. Homesickness exists on a continuum... some college students may have a small amount, others may have a moderate amount, others may have a severe amount. However much you have, know that homesickness is normal and there are strategies you can employ to significantly decrease feelings of homesickness and increase feelings of connection to college.

Helpful strategies:

1. Remind yourself that leaving home and coming to live on campus is a HUGE adjustment for all students... and that you are not alone in managing this new challenge. It is very normal to miss your family members, your pet, your neighborhood, your bedroom, your friends, your partner, and the predictability of home.
2. Talk about your feelings with your roommate, other students in your dorm, you Res Life and Hall Director staff. Give yourself permission to be sad, to cry, to feel the loss... and talk about those feelings. If you are one of those students who is having a more severe case of homesickness, you are quite welcome to come to Psychological and Counseling Services (PACS) to work with a Counselor on reducing your homesickness and increasing your positive transition to college.



3. Get your new dorm room fully comfortable and homey, as it is your new "home-away-from-home." Display pictures of family members, friends, pets. Bring some items from home to your dorm room, such as a favorite blanket and/or wall hanging.

4. Develop a plan with your parents/family that you (and they) can follow to help you with your emotional adjustment to being away from home. Discuss how often you and they should text, have phone calls, and Skype/Facetime. Start with more frequent and then decrease those contacts as you increase your social contacts here on campus. Look at the calendar and syllabi and identify a few weekends during the semester for home visits. If your parents/family live close enough, perhaps they could come to campus for lunch or dinner with you, to meet some of your new friends, and see your new world. Fight the urge to impulsively go home... follow your plan.

5. Remember, you are not the only one in your family going through a difficult emotional adjustment to this major change. Likely, your parents and siblings are missing you, have been experiencing sadness, and cry at times. Remember, their reactions are quite normal, and they will gradually get past the sadness and adjust to you being a college student living on campus.



6. Getting social is a wonderful strategy to help you start to put roots down here at college, have fun, and begin to deepen friendships. **Wildcat Link** has daily, weekly, monthly happenings on campus. There are links for student resources/activities for all of UNH. Campus clubs can be a very comfortable way to get to know other students with shared interests, while doing an activity you enjoy/want to learn.

Website: <https://wildcatlink.unh.edu>

7. Initiate conversations with other students... in your dorm, in the dining hall, in classrooms. Who might be interesting to talk to? Meet with? Who seems friendly? Why not challenge yourself to ask a question, make a comment, or give a compliment to a new person? Maybe make a list of the current people in your life, in classes, in the dorm, who you see often at the dining hall or library or MUB and think *“who might be open to conversation, a new friend?”* Ask your RA or HD about groups in the dorm or activities in the dorm.
8. Utilize your positive self-talk to power you through the uncomfortable feelings that might happen: *“I can do this,” “Why not check that place out?”, “It might be fun.”*
9. Get outside for any reason. Go for a walk at college woods, rent some snowshoes, visit one of the dogs at Hamel Rec Center, head over to the MUB to see what’s going on, watch a movie on campus, grab a coffee at Dunkin Donuts or Aroma Joe’s, take the bus to Portsmouth or Dover for music or an open mic night, check out Freedom Café’s entertainment like poetry slams or folk music night, volunteer, take a trip up to the White Mountains and hike, rent a bike downtown, go mountain biking at Doe Farm, in the spring study outside on the library lawn. It’s easy. It’s fun. It’s a way to get outside of your head and into the world. Maybe you’ll make a new connection.
10. Volunteering can put you in touch with others who share your same interests. Maybe you’ll make a friend or two. At the very least, you’ll be doing something meaningful to you while making a difference!
11. Emphasize good self-care. Get enough sleep. Eat regular meals with good nutrition. Stay away from alcohol and drugs. Feel free to say *“no”* to invitations from other students that do not feel healthy or safe. Trust your wisdom.
12. Exercising can be a good way to connect with others, increase your energy, and help you get rid of sadness and stress. Go to Hamel Rec Center – they offer group fitness classes! Join intramurals. Head over to drop-in yoga or meditation groups at Health & Wellness.



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