



## Feeling Homesick?

Vassar College Counseling Service

**What is homesickness?** A longing for home and home-related relationships when absent from them.

### **Symptoms of Homesickness:**

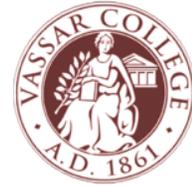
- Feelings of anxiety about being separated from a loved one
- Anxiety about one's performance in a new setting
- Feelings of being lonely or isolated
- Feeling different from others we think are having a good time
- Feeling depressed/sad
- Wanting connections with people, but not feeling motivated to make friends
- Not feeling motivated to complete schoolwork
- Believing all things in the new environment are bad or not what you intended
- Constant thinking about home

### **About Homesickness**

- Many people experience some level of homesickness at least once in their life
- Homesickness is universal
- Homesickness can impact any of us when we move to new surroundings and experience new situations, people, and demands to which we are not accustomed.
- Homesickness can hit at any time
- Coming to college can be particularly overwhelming because you frequently leave behind a support system, familiarity, and level of comfort
- It can be especially difficult when it is impossible to return to our place of origin easily or quickly

### **Contributing Factors**

- Distance between home and school
- Not feeling prepared academically to meet the challenges of college
- The decision to attend college or come to a particular school was made by someone other than the student
- A sense of anticlimax at finally arriving at college after working towards it for so long
- Contrast in lifestyle such as differing cultural values or traditions, sexual orientation or geographical differences
- Financial issues that require the student to work immediately



## Overcoming Homesickness

- If you are engaging in negative thoughts about yourself, your new environment, and your life in general, more than likely your symptoms of homesickness will increase, not subside.

***So...instead of saying:*** “I don’t fit in here. I want to transfer.”

***Try saying:*** “I am learning how to adjust here. More practice will make this easier. It’s already easier to do some things here than when I first arrived. Missing home is normal. I want to give myself more time to adjust.”

\*Remember that this takes a lot of practice! Be gentle with yourself and notice when you’re saying something negative.

- Accept that you are feeling a sense of loss and discomfort, rather than trying to hide it.
- Remind yourself that you are capable of surviving these feelings if you allow yourself to calm down and get oriented.
- Drinking more, partying more, or having sex will not make these feelings go away.
- Talk to someone. If you haven’t made friends yet, try talking to your roommate, neighbor, counselor, or someone in the lunchroom.
- Be active and participate in student activities.
- Limit the amount of time you think about home and try to redirect your attention to focusing on what you can do NOW.
- Focus on things that relax you: go for a walk, deep breathing, listening to music
- Try to make new friends by talking with those on your floor or in class. They’re probably looking to meet people too!
- Create a balance between work and play and be realistic with your academic expectations. You are not expected to work all the time—you would soon burnout. On the other hand, if you don’t put any time into studying you can easily get behind and compound that stress!
- Try to maintain healthy eating and sleeping habits.
- Seek new opportunities.
- Use your supports, like the Vassar College Counseling Service.