



## Dealing with Homesickness...

Homesickness on campus is drawing new attention from researchers who say it is a distinct emotional condition akin to grieving. In severe cases, it can worsen depression or anxiety and increase the risk that students will drop out. Students can learn strategies to help regulate the emotions caused by homesickness.

About 20% of students entering college report they are bothered by missing home. About 5% have homesickness so severe it interferes with their daily lives. Homesickness is more than a childish failure to separate from Mom and Dad, researchers report. For many it involves a more complex set of feelings tied to being home including longing for predictability, routine, familiarity and the comfort of fitting in, being safe and feeling loved.

Homesickness should be seen as a “mini-grief” similar to the yearning that sets in after the death of a loved one or a break up with a romantic partner.

### **Tips for help in regulating the emotions due to homesickness:**

- When you are feeling down, it is best to focus on the new surroundings. For example, ask yourself, “What is fun here? How can I beat loneliness, sadness or boredom in my new environment?”
- Be intentional & control your own thoughts. Reserve thoughts of home for times when you feel good.
- What are you missing from home? Is there a way you can have some of what you are missing here on campus? For example, can you get or make a specific food you miss or if you are lonely for your pet, can you volunteer at an animal shelter?
- Plan specific times to call, skype or visit home rather than doing so on impulse. Contact with loved ones can ease homesickness but should not interfere with opportunities to make friends on campus.
- Get involved. If you stay in your room you have too much time to dwell on what you are missing back home. Try a club or the outdoor program or head to the athletic facility to exercise.

**If you find your symptoms are so severe that you feel unable to try any of the above suggestions, call the Student Health Center (503-352-2269) or the Student Counseling Center (502-352-2191) for an appointment.**