

Homesickness

The start of college can be a difficult time of changing and adjusting for many college students. Not only are they experiencing a more challenging workload, they are also encountering independence that many have never seen before. The first few weeks on campus can be a lonely experience, as the reality of separation from home and family sinks in. With sufficient time and effort, however, students begin to find friends and other sources of support in their new home.

College is not an extension of high school in that students are seriously challenged to make the journey from dependence to independence and develop more mature relationships with a diverse group of people. These tasks are not easy and do not automatically happen because someone has reached a certain age. Increased personal freedom and responsibility can be both wonderful and terrifying. Many students have enjoyed a degree of independence before college, whereas others may have had no opportunity in this area.

Some students have difficulty adjusting to the academic demands of college. Compared to high school, college courses typically involve more reading and college exams and papers cover more material. Discipline, good time management, study habits, and test-taking skills are necessary for success. For some students, adding a heavy workload to a confusing and lonely social environment is more than they can bear.

Although being homesick is a hard thing to deal with, there are some things you can try to feel better about your new situation:

- Decorate with posters from your “old room.” Bring knickknacks from home that remind you of special times.
- Stay in contact with friends and family from back home.
- Join a club or student organization. This will allow you to meet new people, get use to college life, and help take your mind off feeling homesick.
- Develop a new hobby and look for someone on campus who also enjoys that hobby.
- Go to events on campus. Anytime you attend campus events, there is a chance to make a new friend.
- Do not look for comfort in bad habits or addictions. Partying more or hiding behind alcohol, drugs, or sex will usually make you feel worse instead of making the feelings go away.

It is important to remember that adjusting to college life takes time. People by nature take time to adapt to a new situation and environment. If you are finding that college life seems like an overwhelming or frightening experience and you are having trouble dealing with it, there are professionals available at the Counseling and Career Center that want to help. Contact them by calling [665.6262](tel:665.6262) or stop by the lower level of Main Hall to make an appointment.

UM COUNSELING & CAREER CENTER

Providing free and confidential **PERSONAL** and **CAREER** counseling services to UM Students.

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