

Self help matters.

Helping you to find your solutions

Coping with Homesickness

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Many students leaving home for the first time feel homesick. Even those who didn't expect to be hit by homesickness can suddenly find themselves missing the familiarity of home and friends and don't know how to deal with the resulting emotions. This is normal and usually passes.

You are not the only one feeling homesick and it doesn't mean that there is something wrong with you. Having been a central person surrounded by familiar people and activities, you may feel a relatively anonymous member of a large community where you perhaps know no one. Understandably you can feel shaken, disorientated and lonely. If you have come from abroad, you may have "culture shock" to deal with as well.

You may experience feelings of anxiety and low mood, but these are important emotions which alert us to a series of unfamiliar situations. Anxiety exists to make us alert. Low mood might reflect a need to take a rest and focus on chilling out or taking a break. It can all be exhausting in a new environment.

Top Tips

Emotions. Acknowledge your feelings and accept them. We possess a capacity to feel and express emotions because they are ways to listen to ourselves and communicate with the world around us.

Routine. Get into a structure and routine by keeping busy and doing things that you usually enjoy, giving you things to talk about when you speak to your family.

Family contact. Monitor whether infrequent or limited contact makes you feel better or worse. Think carefully about spending weekends at home; some students find that it helps to ease the transition; others find that the constant readjustment makes them feel worse.

Aberdeen University Student Association (AUSA). Join societies especially those offering activities that you know you enjoy as you are likely to meet students with whom you have a lot in common. This may feel difficult but is worthwhile because the more you feel part of university life, the less you will be affected by homesickness.

Halls life. There are masses of activities and events run within University Halls of Residences to get you meeting like-minded students. Do give them a go.

Friends. Don't worry if you haven't found a 'best-friend' immediately. The best ones take time to find.

Home from home. Settle in with the things that connect you with home; photos, pictures, books, ornaments, murals, duvet cover, music collection. You choose.

Volunteer. Sometimes it can help to get involved with groups by offering your time for the community. Volunteer to help with something. Apart from meeting like-minded people you will have something valuable to add to your CV.

Information. Student Advice & Support Office, the Infohub and particularly AUSA have loads of useful information and they exist to help you make the most of your time at University.

Job. Getting a part-time job will connect you with work-colleagues and give you access to a community beyond University. AUSA and the University employs students and interns from time-to-time.

Talk. Sometimes it helps to share feelings of homesickness. Chat to your friends and flatmates about whether they are having bouts of it and how they cope. You are not alone.

Overwhelmed? If you feel overwhelmed by your feelings, there are loads of support resources such as the online Big White Wall, or the Nightline telephone service (both confidential). They're there to hear from you.

Temporary. Homesickness doesn't tend to last. It almost always passes. It is part of the normal struggle everyone goes through as we adjust our attachments to people and places we care for and where we felt safe. If it lasts longer than you feel comfortable with, make an appointment to see one of the Counsellors at the Student Counselling Service.

Resources

MOODZONE

Boost your mood, cope with stress, anxiety or depression or simply improve your overall emotional wellbeing.



Opening Hours: Online

www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/pages/low-mood-stress-anxiety.aspx

LIVING LIFE TO THE FULL

Want to know how to feel happier, more confident & worry less right now? Would you like to learn new ways of dealing with what life throws at you?



Opening Hours: Online

www.livinglifetothefull.com

THE MIX

Provides free, confidential support for young people under 25 via online, social and mobile.



Opening Hours: Online

www.themix.org.uk

MINDFULNESS FOR STUDENTS

Helping you to stay calm, focused & better manage the pressures of student life.



Opening Hours: Online

<http://mindfulnessforstudents.co.uk/>

ABERDEEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION



www.ausa.org.uk

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN SERVICES & SUPPORT

A range of support resources for everyone at University



www.abdn.ac.uk/infohub/support

BIG WHITE WALL

Online community of people who are anxious, feeling low or not coping who support and help by sharing what's troubling them. This is a free, online, moderated service and confidential.



Opening Hours: Online

www.bigwhitewall.com

If you are experiencing a crisis - please contact any of the following

- **Emergency Services** - telephone 999 (Free) 24 hours
- **Samaritans** - telephone 116 123 (Free) 24 hours
- **Breathing Space** - telephone 0800 83 8587 (Free) Mon-Thu 6pm-2am, Fri-Sun 6pm-6am
- **Nightline** - telephone 01224 272829 (local rate) term-time only, between 20.00-08.00
- **NHS 24** - telephone 111 (Free) 24 hours

For other support resources, please see - www.abdn.ac.uk/counselling