Homesickness
A Guide for Students
What is Homesickness?

Homesickness is a complex emotional state reported, to a greater or lesser extent by up to 75% of both home and international students. It occurs when students think primarily of home e.g. family, friends, places and routines and grieve their loss. Whilst homesickness often occurs in the first three weeks of University life, it may also occur after the first Christmas break when the novelty of University has lessened.

What is going on?

Leaving home to come to University is a major life event, and any such transition is likely to be a source of stress and uncertainty. In the first few weeks away there are high demands (academic, social and psychological) and you may have little sense of being in control. You may also feel small and anonymous in a large and unfamiliar environment. Tasks that may have been easy to accomplish at home may suddenly seem overwhelming without the usual supports of family and friends.

Signs of homesickness

- Tearfulness
- Feeling overwhelmed, insecure, anxious, panicky
- Feeling emotionally volatile
- Feeling isolated and lonely
- Disturbed patterns of sleeping and eating
- Poor physical health
- Poor concentration and inability to focus
- Absent-mindedness
- Withdrawing from others

What can you do to help yourself?

- Acknowledge how you feel and recognise that with time the feelings of homesickness will lessen and disappear (as in most cases).
- Talk to someone about your feelings, maybe an older sibling or friend who has also moved away from home.
- Decide on the level of contact with family and friends that helps you best to settle into your new environment.
• Give yourself time to adjust to life in Leicester, explore your environment. Walk around the area and especially the University to familiarise yourself with the location.
• Bring a bit of home with you e.g. photos, cushions, plants, a favourite keepsake etc to make your accommodation feel more comfortable.
• Plan when to visit family and make the necessary arrangements (unplanned home visits may interfere with study or delay the time it takes to settle into University life).
• Join clubs/societies in order to make new friends and feel more a part of campus life.
• Make links with the Student Union to find out what is going on.
• Talk to other students, the likelihood is that they will also be sharing some of your experiences. Make the first move.
• Don’t lose sight of your long term goals, remind yourself of why you wanted to come to University.
• Keep a balance between study and leisure activities.
• Try and establish a routine as soon as possible. The fuller your days are the less time you have to feel homesick or lonely.
• Sleep well and eat healthily. Avoid too much alcohol as this can act as a depressant.
• Seek help if you feel your homesickness is bringing up other long term emotional or personal issues.

Where can you turn for support?
• Friends
• Personal Tutor or others in your department
  Counselling and Wellbeing – this is a free, confidential service and offers both one-off appointments and on-going support.
  T: 0116 223 1780  E: counselling@le.ac.uk
• GPs at Victoria Park Health Centre (0116 2151105/ www.victoriaparkhealthcentre.co.uk)
• Hall warden, sub-warden or self-catering sub-warden (s/he is also a student, so may know what you are experiencing).
• Student Learning Centre (David Wilson Library) – this service offers individual consultations on study worries and can assist you in adjusting to the different learning environment of the University.
• Student Support Services (SSS) have a web page for other student services that can provide information and assistance for a wide range of issues, visit www.le.ac.uk/edsc

**If you have thoughts of suicide or self-harm please seek professional help immediately.**
Where to find Counselling and Wellbeing

Our entrance is at the rear of the building located directly on the junction of University Road and Welford Road. We have a ramp and there is a large sign on the wall. The building is accessible to wheelchair users.

Contact Details

Counselling and Wellbeing
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161 Welford Road
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www.le.ac.uk/counselling

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