



When your student experiences homesickness it tugs at your heartstrings and parents often share that they struggle with how best to help their student through the range of emotions that he or she is experiencing. Whether your student is a returning student or a new student, homesickness can occur any number of times during one's college experience. In other words, it doesn't just happen to first year students or to students not used to being away from home.

Homesickness can be triggered by any number of circumstances including:

- missing family or friends,
- wishing for various creature comforts from home,
- feeling the demands of academic expectations,
- navigating long distance relationships,
- returning from study abroad,
- family crises, etc.

Provided your student is not experiencing a physical or mental health crisis or debilitating distress, you should encourage your student to stay at college until there is a break in the semester when students return home or when family members are invited to visit. Go with your gut – and if you suspect your student is in a critical situation or experiencing significant distress, connect with the college's counseling center (or public safety during after-hours) to learn about next steps and resources available to help your student. **For most students, spending more time at college means more opportunities to:**

- meet and connect with other students;
- get involved in co-curricular and cultural activities;
- navigate the campus and become familiar with the surrounding community;
- develop one's independence;
- establish weekday and weekend routines.

Consider encouraging your student in the following ways:

- Use the college's website to view the events and activities that are occurring and just mention what you see – "I noticed there is a neat concert on Sunday night."
- Listen more than give advice and reflect back to your student positive things that you hear him or her say – "It is great to hear that you really like your ear training class."
- If your student comes home have him or her bring a friend from college – extending the college connection.
- Send periodic snail mail and don't expect a response from your student – an article from the local newspaper, a funny cartoon, favorite foods, a photo of the family pet, etc.
- Mention that you noticed that the counseling center is available to talk with students about homesickness and transitions.
- If convenient, offer once during the semester to take your student out with a couple of friends for a very specific, time-limited activity – dinner out, shopping, an event, etc.

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