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**HOMESICKNESS RESOURCES**

**What is homesickness?**

Homesickness is a feeling of malaise or distress that occurs when one is preoccupied with a home that has been left. It is often felt as grieving a loss and typically experienced simultaneously with culture shock. A homesick person might idealize her own home or culture and feel uncomfortable or resist her new surroundings.

**Who experiences homesickness?**  
Almost everyone experiences homesickness at some point after a massive life change, no matter how old they are or where they are from. Some people experience a serious and prolonged bout of homesickness. Others only experience a short burst of homesickness at the beginning of a transition. Still others experience occasional days or weeks of homesickness, especially around holidays or meaningful family events that they are unable to attend.

**What are the Symptoms or effects of homesickness?**

Homesickness comes in many different forms and can be accompanied by destructive or negative behaviors and changes in mood. These behaviors can include:

* Skipping class
* Being uncharacteristically quiet
* Being less focused/motivated
* Unhappiness
* Fatigue
* Withdrawing from new environment
* Depression/anxiety symptoms
* Alcohol/drug abuse
* Uncontrolled shopping sprees
* Other high risk activities

**How can you combat homesickness?**

Managing homesickness is not about cutting off your previous life and participating in your current environment exclusively. Many people who experience homesickness find it beneficial to involve friends and family “back home” in their new lives at UChicago. Some things people find helpful to combat homesickness include to:

* Recognize that your feelings are real and valid. Adjusting to a new place is very hard.
* Keep in touch with friends and family “back home” through calls, emails, text messages, and traditional mail, etc. Focus on the positive.
* Send loved ones pictures of your new home/room/campus
* Don’t assume you are the only one feeling homesick! Talk to others about your feelings.
* Get involved! Find groups of people (cultural organizations, interest groups, etc) related to your home, or start your own.
* Remind yourself why you wanted to come to Chicago in the first place
* Keep a journal
* Be realistic about your expectations of campus and the student experience
* Compile a book of home/family recipes, and share them with your new friends
* Be open-minded; throw away pre-conceived notions about your new environment
* Exercise/go for walks in your new neighborhood; explore!
* Establish a routine in your new life
* Don’t feel guilty about enjoying your new environment or feel like you are “forgetting” your friends and family ‘back home’
* Stay active and healthy: eat well and try get enough sleep
* Make a list of positive things about being away from home (e.g. having more freedom, being in a big city etc.)
* Study with others
* Seek out help when you need it

Sources:

* Swallow, Deborah. “The Classic 5 Stage Culture Shock Model.” Deborahswallow.com . Web. Originally published May 15, 2010.
* University of Chicago Office of Health Promotion and Wellness

**Where can you find help?**

**Let’s Talk**"Let's Talk" provides easy access to informal confidential consultations with counselors from the Student Counseling Service. The service is completely confidential. There is no fee. No appointment necessary. Visit [http://counseling.uchicago.edu/page/let’s-talk](http://counseling.uchicago.edu/page/let's-talk) for times and locations.

**Student Counseling Center**[**http://counseling.uchicago.edu/**](http://counseling.uchicago.edu/) **| 773.702.9800**The Student Counseling Service provides mental health care services to registered University of Chicago students under the Student Life Fee. Services include individual and couples counseling, support groups, psychiatric consultations and referrals.

**Health Promotion and Wellness**[**http://wellness.uchicago.edu/**](http://wellness.uchicago.edu/) **| 773-702-8935**

Health Promotion and Wellness empowers students to navigate healthy lifestyle choices that foster academic achievement, holistic health, personal discovery, and lifelong excellence. They host a variety of informative events, workshops, ongoing programs and groups to encourage health on campus.

**Rockefeller/Spiritual Life**[**http://rockefeller.uchicago.edu/about/**](http://rockefeller.uchicago.edu/about/) **|773.702.2100**Rockefeller Memorial Chapel, with its Interreligious Center, serves as the hub of spiritual life at the University of Chicago, offering diverse religious events and ceremonies on a daily basis, as well as regular interreligious and secular gatherings.

**Student Health Services**[**http://healthcare.uchicago.edu/**](http://healthcare.uchicago.edu/) **| (773) 702-4156**

Student Health Service (SHS) is a comprehensive healthcare center designed to meet the needs of UChicago students through a variety of services, including check-ups, immunizations, physical therapy, prescription services, and an on-call nurse.