

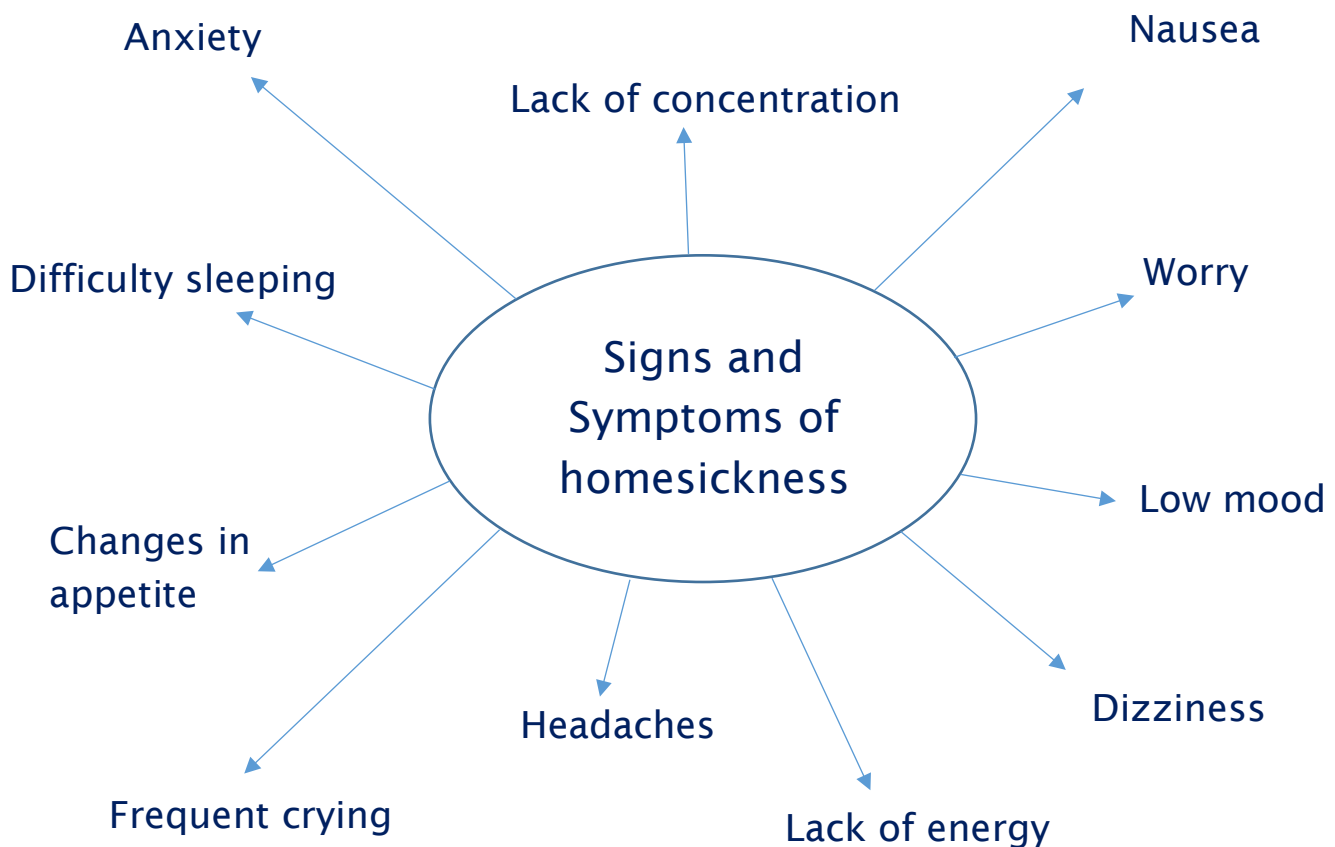
What is Homesickness?

“Experiencing a longing for one’s home during a period of absence from it”
- *Oxford Dictionary*

“It can be as simple as the stress caused from a break in regular routine”
- *BBC*

“...the distress or impairment caused by an actual or anticipated separation from home”
- *Wikipedia*

“Missing people and things you usually have around you. You might feel like a duck out of water.”
- *NHS*



Myths and Facts about Homesickness

Myth: Homesickness lasts around four weeks.

Homesickness can last a few days, weeks, or even months. It depends on the individual and circumstances. Although in most cases the feelings pass or improve within a few weeks, it can sometimes last longer. Just remember – support is available and you are not alone in feeling this way.

True: Talking about homesickness will help.

Talking about feeling homesick will not make it worse. Talking provides an outlet for feelings to be expressed and creates an opportunity to share experiences and learn coping strategies. Talk to someone you trust about how you are feeling, such as a close friend, family member, or an advisor at the Student Support Drop-in sessions.

Myth: As soon as you feel homesick, you should visit home.

Many students feel that they want to go home in their first few weeks at University and it is certainly important to keep in touch with friends and family. However, for some people, going home may worsen homesickness. Consider inviting your friends and family to visit you here in Southampton instead.

True: Most students will feel homesick.

It is important to realise that you are not the only one feeling homesick. Homesickness is a normal part of leaving home or experiencing change. Studies suggest that the majority of students report experiencing homesickness in their first year at University. Getting through these difficult feelings will help you develop skills to cope with similar situations in the future.

Myth: Homesickness is only something that young people get.

Homesickness is something that anyone can experience. It's normal for people of any age to experience some anxiety or sadness when they are away from home. The symptoms and feelings can be the same, regardless of age.

True: Homesickness can mean missing places, people, routines, and pets.

Sometimes homesickness is about missing part of the life you left behind – not just people and places. You can be missing anything that you regard as normal, such as routines, food, pets, hobbies and interests.



Coping with Homesickness - Top Tips

Be patient

Everyone takes time to get used to a new environment, new people and new routines. Be kind to yourself and try not to judge yourself harshly if things aren't happening straight away. This is an opportunity to develop your emotional awareness by having space to identify what you are feeling and why. You aren't just learning what's on your course, but learning to live away from home too!



Take care of yourself

Keeping basic healthy habits will make a huge difference: stay active, eat healthily and regularly, and ensure you're getting enough sleep. Exercise releases chemicals into the body that promote feelings of wellbeing, whilst eating well and staying hydrated can significantly boost your mental health. Remember to treat yourself at times too!

Stick with it

Don't rush into any decisions about leaving, as things could still improve. Instead talk things over with a tutor, the Students' Union Advice Centre, or contact Enabling Services for further support. It is important to be realistic and allow time to adjust to your new life at university.



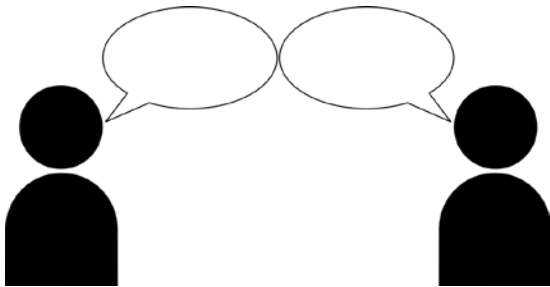
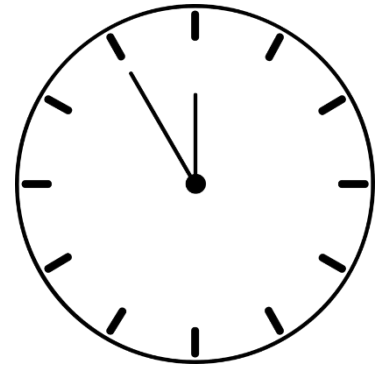
Bring home comforts

Bring personal items, such as photos, cushions or posters to your new room. These can be comforting – especially if they are familiar items from your own room at home. You could also experiment with new items that you like that you didn't have in your room at home, and really make the place your own!



Take some time for yourself

Setting aside some time to relax can help you reflect on your new experiences and better understand how you are feeling. Designate some “me time” to do things that make you happy, such as reading, writing, exercising, watching a movie, painting etc. You could also consider making some time to learn a new skill such as cooking or a foreign language. This is a great way to nurture a positive view of yourself – by focusing on your positive aspects.



Reach out and get involved

Go along to events and activities that interest you – this way you’ll find others who share your interests and it will be easier to get chatting. Whilst it isn’t always easy to meet new people, lots of students will be in the same position and will be happy to make friends. Keep in touch with people from home too, but give yourself time to settle in before visiting as it may make your homesickness worse.

Congratulate yourself!

Facing change and the unknown is difficult for anyone, and it is natural to feel anxious and emotional at first. It takes a lot of courage to try new things, especially when you are away from your usual support network. You should take pride in your initiative, resourcefulness, and determination!



Who to talk to about Homesickness

Enabling Services

- Email: enable@soton.ac.uk
- Phone: +44(0)23 8059 7726
- Live Chat: available on our website every weekday from 2pm – 4pm.
- Drop-in: weekdays (term-time) from 1pm – 3pm in Building 37. Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays (vacation time) from 1pm – 3pm in Building 37.

Student Life

The Student Life Team are dedicated to supporting student wellbeing and enhancing the student experience. Available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, Student Life are based within Halls of Residence and support all University of Southampton students. Contact Student Life by calling +44(0)23 8059 8180 or emailing them at studentlife@soton.ac.uk.

The Faith and Reflection Centre

Based at 41 University Road, the Faith and Reflection Centre is your home on campus; an oasis in the midst of your busy schedules. You don't have to have a religion to come and use our space. Chaplains offer a listening ear, one step removed from the University, to people of all faiths and none.

Students' Union

- Advice Centre: the Students' Union Advice Centre aims to provide all students at the University with free, independent, confidential advice and representation in a friendly, relaxed environment. The Advice Centre can be found on Level 3 of Building 40 (Highfield Campus). They are open Monday – Friday 9am – 5pm.
- Nightline: a free confidential listening and information service available to all students. Nightline is run entirely by student volunteers who are available to listen to students throughout the night. Call them on +44(0)23 8059 5236 or visit <http://southampton.nightline.ac.uk> to use the online chat tool.

Samaritans

Samaritans offer a safe place for you to talk any time you like, in your own way – about whatever's getting to you. They're there round the clock, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Call them for free on 116 123 or email jo@samaritans.org.

