



UNIVERSITY of  
BRADFORD

Counselling Service

# Homesickness

*Information  
and self-help*

# Homesickness

Many new students experience homesickness. You are not immune because you have been away before and felt all right.

You will definitely not be the only person feeling homesick when you arrive at University. Suddenly you are having to cope with being away from your familiar group of friends and family and adapting to a large and unfamiliar environment.

It is normal to feel a mixture of excitement and anxiety about coming to a new place, making new friends and taking on new courses and all this possibly in a language that isn't your own!

Some people overcome their nervous feelings quite quickly, whilst others may take longer and start feeling really homesick, missing all that they have left behind at home.

Or you may have felt fine at first and then noticed you have become homesick later in the year or after the first Christmas break or even at the start of your second academic year.

## What are the signs of homesickness?

- Feeling sad, lonely, insecure or as if we don't belong
- Crying
- Feeling unusually anxious or upset about things
- Often thinking about people at home
- Wanting to leave University or College and return home
- Minor physical ailments

## Who gets homesick?

Feeling homesick can be affected by:

- The distance from home
- A sense of anti-climax at arriving, having worked hard for so long
- Whether it was your decision to come
- Unhappiness due to expectations not being met
- Feeling out of control with the work load
- Whether family members at home are well and happy
- Differences in lifestyle/culture shock

# Coping with homesickness

In coming away to University you have to:

- Leave familiar things, places and people
- Adapt to new things, places and people

## Transitions can be hard

In a familiar place people generally feel secure and safe and can take on challenges and changes successfully.

Without this support and familiarity it is much harder to adapt and existing coping mechanisms may be challenged. This can lead to a drop in confidence and self esteem.

## What can help?

- Acknowledge how you feel and believe that it will pass, because it almost always does.
- Keep in touch with people at home and fix a time to go back but also give yourself enough time to get involved at University.
- Encourage friends and family to come and see you in your new setting.
- Talk to someone - if you haven't made any friends yet, seek out a tutor, chaplain, supervisor or counsellor. They will all understand and want to help.
- Remember other people will be feeling like you, although they may look as if they are doing fine. Talk to them!
- Be realistic about what you expect from student life and from yourself.
- Give yourself time to adjust: it won't happen overnight.

## Practical things to do:

- Join clubs and societies to meet people and spend time in the Union or PG lounge (if you are a post graduate).
- Make sure you get enough sleep, food and exercise. It is very important to look after yourself.
- Talk to the careers service or your tutor if you have doubts about your choice of course.

## On-line resources/self-help:

[www.bradford.ac.uk/counselling](http://www.bradford.ac.uk/counselling) for an extensive range of information and self-help material or to book an appointment.

## Or check out:

<http://www.ubuonline.co.uk/advice-and-welfare/>



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## *Contacting the Counselling Service*



counselling  
@bradford.ac.uk



+44 (0)1274 235750



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