

Homesickness and adjustment in university students

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Sure, many young adults are ecstatic at that first taste of freedom that comes with "going away to college." But for some, the intense transition can also trigger intense homesickness. In new research published in the *Journal of American College Health*, authors Christopher A. Thurber, PhD and Edward A. Walton, MD explore this topic in "Homesickness and Adjustment in University Students."

[Homesickness](#) by definition is the distress or impairment caused by an actual or anticipated separation from home. Sufferers typically report a combination of depressive and anxious symptoms, withdrawn behavior, and difficulty focusing on anything other than missing home. Most people experience some form of this when they are away from their home for an extended period of time, but in some cases of intense homesickness, it can be painful and debilitating.

Though many new college students have had experiences away from home before, like summer camps, and travel without parents, attending postsecondary school is usually the [first experience](#) in which young adults are facing the "challenges of independently managing their lives; establishing new friends; adjusting to new schedules; and succeeding in various academic, athletic, and artistic pursuits," explains Thurber and Walton. "These and other challenges often instill self-doubt and force an uncomfortable recalibration of young adults' academic and social self-concepts. The changes to new students' routines, diets, social milieu, geographical setting, and perceived demands can induce intense homesickness."

This article discusses the many [risk factors](#) of homesickness for university students, such as accumulated stress and [social anxiety](#); adjustments and changes to lifestyle, values, language, culture and environment; and an insecure attachment to parents; as well as the

many opportunities for [prevention strategies](#), many of which most universities can integrate into their pre-arrival programs. "Homesickness and Adjustment in University Students" also discusses a variety of treatment options for suffering students.

More information: www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/07448481.2012.673520

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