



Homesickness: Adjusting To Being Away From Home



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Workshop Facilitator

From Cal Poly Counseling Services



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What We Will Cover

1. How common homesickness is.
2. The myriad of losses that can influence homesickness.
3. Steps to help with feelings of homesickness.
4. Communication method to meet others.
5. Information for campus resources that can help.



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How Common Is Homesickness?

In one study, **94% of students** reported homesickness at some point during their first 10 weeks of college.

The feeling can return after having a visit to home, say during a break.

Homesickness **can last from 3 weeks to more than a year.**



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<https://www.bestcolleges.com/blog/homesickness-in-college/>

Loss Categories

Material Loss: The loss of a physical object or of familiar surroundings to which one has an important attachment.

(Example: Sell home)

Relationship Loss: The ending of opportunities to relate oneself to, talk with, share experiences with, make love to, touch, settle issues with, fight with, and otherwise be in the emotional and physical presence of a particular other human being. (Example: A break up or divorce)

Intrapsychic Loss: The experience of losing an important image of oneself, losing the possibilities of “what might have been,” abandonment of plans for a particular future, the dying of a dream. Although often related to external experiences, it is itself an entirely inward experience. (Example: Not completing a long-sought-for task.)

Functional Loss: When we lose some of the muscular or neurological functions of the body. Can evoke powerful grief. (Example: Aging)

Role Loss: The loss of a specific social role or of one’s accustomed place in a social network. (Example: Retirement, or a promotion)

Systemic Loss: To understand this loss, we must first recall that human beings usually belong to some interactional system in which patterns of behavior develop over time. (Example: Someone transitions out of living at home, so the family system must adapt to the loss.)

Which of these can accompany leaving home?

Steps To Help With Feeling Homesick

- **Reach out to others for support:** Talk with your roommates, your Resident Advisor, another student in your field of study, or go to Counseling Services or Peer Health Educators (PULSE).
- **Keep busy:** Explore campus and see what it has to offer, join an intramural sports team at the Rec Center, check out community events and activities, including organizations that accept volunteers and have activities geared toward students.
- **Give Yourself Time To Adjust:** There is no quick fix. Be patient.



Steps To Help With Feeling Homesick

- **Know That Your Feelings Are Normal:** A 2016 survey from UCLA showed that 70% of first-year college students occasionally or frequently experienced homesickness. Feelings of depression can be profound or moderate. Counseling Services can help for *all* levels of depression.
- **Stay In Touch With Family and Friends:** Text, talk, or video chat. Some students may engage with family and friends up to 10x a week. Remember to find a balance between adjusting to your new environment and visiting home. Maybe even invite family and friends to visit you at campus!
- **Connect With Your Peers:** You may seek out students with similar interests through campus clubs, student groups, or a fraternity or sorority. See about getting involved in Cal Poly's PATH program as a guide to your interests and building leadership skills: studentaffairs.calpoly.edu/promiseproject





Communication Method To Meet Others

Active Listening



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Method To Meet Others:

Show You're Listening

Put away distractions.

Watching TV, using your phone, or doing other things while listening sends the message that the speaker's words are not important. Putting away distractions allows you to focus on the conversation and help the speaker feel heard.

Use verbal and nonverbal communication.

Body language and short verbal cues that match the speaker's affect (e.g. responding excitedly if the speaker is excited). Show interest and empathy.

Verbal: “mm-hmm” / “uh-huh”, “that’s interesting”, “that makes sense”, “I understand”

Nonverbal: nodding in agreement, reacting to emotional content (e.g. smiling), eye contact



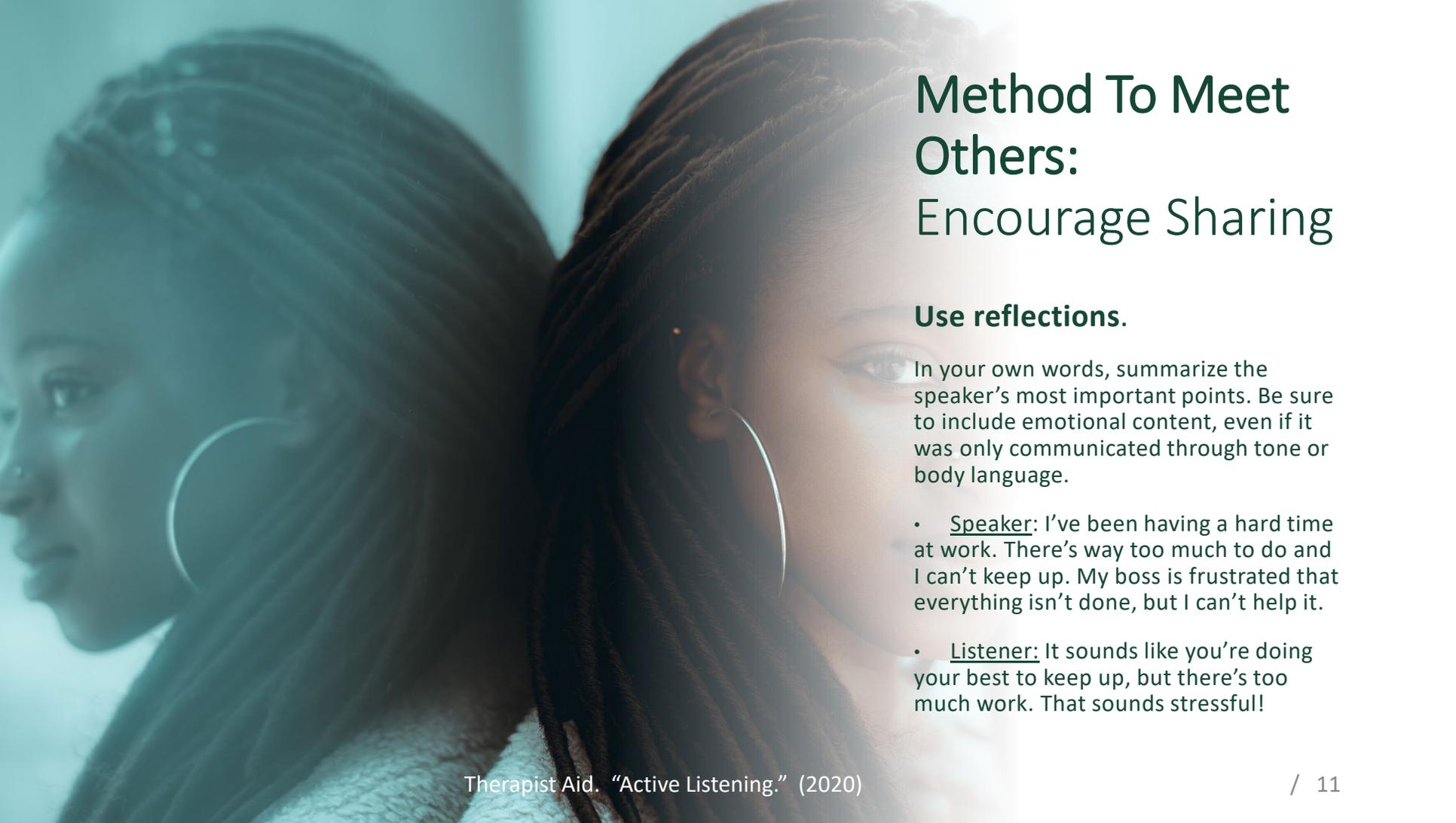


Method To Meet Others: Encourage Sharing

Ask open-ended questions.

These are questions that encourage elaboration, rather than “yes” or “no” responses. Open-ended questions tell the speaker you are listening, and you want to learn more.

- “What is it like to ____?”
- “How did you feel when ____?”
- “Can you tell me more about ____?”
- “How do you ____?”
- “What do you like about ____?”
- “What are your thoughts about ____?”



Method To Meet Others: Encourage Sharing

Use reflections.

In your own words, summarize the speaker's most important points. Be sure to include emotional content, even if it was only communicated through tone or body language.

- Speaker: I've been having a hard time at work. There's way too much to do and I can't keep up. My boss is frustrated that everything isn't done, but I can't help it.
- Listener: It sounds like you're doing your best to keep up, but there's too much work. That sounds stressful!

Method To Meet Others: Strive To Understand

Be present.

Listening means paying attention to body language, tone, and verbal content. Focus your attention on listening, instead of other mental distractions, such as what you want to say next. When possible, save sensitive conversations for a quiet time with few distractions.

Listen with an open mind.

Your job is to understand the speaker's point of view, even if you don't agree. Avoid forming opinions and making judgments until you fully understand their perspective.



Campus Resources That Can Help

- Counseling Services counseling@calpoly.edu
(805) 756-2511
- Peer Health Educators (PULSE) pulse@calpoly.edu
(805) 756-6181
- Associated Students, Inc. <https://www.asi.calpoly.edu>

In Summary

- Homesickness is common among college students, especially first-year college students.
- There are feelings of loss that accompany homesickness.
- There are steps you can take to manage homesickness, such as keeping in contact with family and friends, and meeting up with peers.
- There are effective communication methods to meet new people.
- Campus resources are available to help with homesickness.

For More Information:



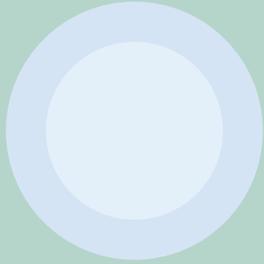
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