I Think I Might Be Homesick…

While homesickness can be a challenge, getting through it can be easier than you think if you follow a few tips:

1. Get out of your room: Chances are, you're most homesick when you're back in your room, Skyping with your friends, family, and boyfriend/girlfriend, or talking on the phone with the ones you miss the most. While it's OK to talk to the folks back home, it can sometimes turn into an unhealthy habit—and one that makes your homesickness worse. If you find yourself lonely and homesick in your room, make yourself go to a campus coffee shop and do your reading there. Head to a computer lab to write your paper, even if you have your own laptop. Study outside. Challenge yourself to get out of your room and be around other people.

2. Give yourself a day here and there to be sad—and then move on: If you're really struggling one day, just let yourself be sad and miss home. After all, there are probably legitimate things about being home that anyone in your situation would miss. The key with this plan, however, is to let yourself be sad for just one day. And after that one day passes, you have to move on. Get out of your room, go to a campus event, plan a study session with some friends, join a club, go to Simon Rec Center and make sure to focus on all the great things your school has to offer.

3. Turn SLU into your home away from home: SLU will never replace the home you left. But it can happily turn into a beloved home away from home. Think about the things that you loved most about your pre-college life, and work to re-create those at your school. Did you have great friends? Make a point of meeting 5-10 new people each week. Did you love your community involvement? Volunteer with a campus volunteer center, run for student government, or work for the student newspaper. Did you enjoy the social scene? Find several clubs that focus on your interests and sign up to be involved with their events.

4. Realize that it's never too late to connect: OK, so you missed the Fall Welcome activities and you don't really know too many people several weeks into the semester. No problem! The nice thing about college is that it isn't as clique-filled as high school. People drop in and out of clubs, student organizations, and social circles all the time. Go to the Student Involvement Center and ask to see a list of clubs. Drop by the radio station (KSLU) and see if it needs new or substitute DJs. See if you can still join the Student Activities Board. Ask that group of smarties in your chemistry class if you can join them at their study session on Thursday. It's never too late!

5. Know you're not alone: You may feel like you're the only person struggling with homesickness, but it simply isn't true. Take the initiative to reach out to other people. Plan a "home away from home” night in your room where everyone brings a blanket and some snacks over and watches a DVD. Better yet, consider grabbing some friends and volunteering at a local homeless or women's shelter. You'll be reminded of just how precious family is—and how fortunate you are to be at school, too.

*If homesickness is making it difficult for you to function in college or if you are suffering from a mental health concern, take advantage of the University Counseling Services (314-977-TALK). Homesickness is a very common problem for students and college counselors know how to help.*

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