

## YOUR FIRST VISIT BACK HOME

What about that first big trip back to the family home? This may be mid semester break, or maybe even the long summer holidays. This time may feel a bit strange—you have changed, the house has changed, and everyone is a little different to when you left.

### THINGS TO BE AWARE OF:

Its not only you who will have changed. Everyone is affected by this big transition. Parents, siblings and friends have all been changing while you have been away.

You have enjoyed a lot of independence while away. Parents and others you live with want you to be independent, they might just struggle with the speed of it all.

If you have made big changes to your appearance, give your family and friends a heads up so it is not too big a shock

House rules and spaces may have changed. Try not to take things for granted but talk about what is expected on all sides now.

Keep up contact with your new uni friends, You might not see them for several weeks but you will want to pick up with them again next academic year.

## WHERE DO I GO FROM HERE?

If you would like to make an appointment to see a career advisor or a counsellor to learn more about this topic, please contact the relevant service on your campus.

Distance students can contact any one of the campuses.

## CONTACT DETAILS

### ALBANY

Health and Counselling Centre  
Hours Monday to Thursday: 8.30am - 5.00pm  
Phone (09) 443 9783  
Email [studenthealth@massey.ac.nz](mailto:studenthealth@massey.ac.nz)

### MANAWATŪ

Student Counselling Service  
Turitea Campus, Palmerston North  
Hours Monday to Friday: 8.30am - 5.00pm  
Phone (06) 350 5533  
Email [s.counselling@massey.ac.nz](mailto:s.counselling@massey.ac.nz)

### WELLINGTON

Health and Counselling Service  
Hours Monday to Friday 8.30 am - 4.30 pm  
Phone (04) 8012542

<http://health-counselling.massey.ac.nz>

<http://crow.massey.ac.nz>

0800 MASSEY | [MASSEY.AC.NZ](http://MASSEY.AC.NZ)

## LEAVING HOME STUDENT COUNSELLING



**STUDENT COUNSELLING SERVICES**  
SKILLS – INSIGHT - SUPPORT



## LEAVING HOME

Going to a new city to study provides many opportunities to learn new things, to see new places and meet different people from a variety of backgrounds and cultures. It is an exciting time with new freedoms and responsibilities. For many students it is also the first time they have left home and this can lead to concerns about coping and feelings of homesickness.

### MOTIVATION ISSUES

One of the differences between schools and university is that there is no one pushing you to work hard and achieve to your full potential, as there is at some schools. You may be used to having parents that encourage, push, support, reward, and help motivate you. They may frequently chat and take an interest in your work. It can be quite a shock to not have this anymore.

Add to this the party culture, drugs, alcohol, and sexual experimentation that can occur it is hardly surprising that some students, even with good school records, struggle in their first year at university.

Being clear about your reasons for being at university, what your academic goals are, and why you have them is a good starting point for getting yourself motivated. Put them on a poster on the wall and read them often as an antidote for those mid term blues.

Self motivation, organisation and goal setting are skills which can be learned and developed. Student Services run regular workshops through their Centres for Teaching and Learning, and Health and Counselling services and they have information to help you.

Sometimes there are unresolved issues from the past that may cause you to feel confused or lethargic. These issues can lie dormant for years and when you are faced with a new stressful situation like leaving home, they surface again, or for the first time.



### PERSONAL FREEDOMS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Your new living environment, hostel or flat is likely to be very different from your family home. Your world may be dominated by other students, intent on having as much fun as possible. Experimental behaviour with relationships, sexuality and possibly alcohol and drugs have associated risks. These risks need to be balanced with an objective recognition of your personal limits, and a commitment to keeping yourself safe and on track for your academic goals.

You may be accumulating a student loan or receiving an allowance which is dependent on passing papers each semester for its continuation. This can lead to a build up of stress if you feel you are falling behind in your studies.

Financial management and budgeting are now entirely your responsibility. Careful balancing of income and expenditure on a written budget sheet helps avoid a financial blowout. You may have to increase or start part time work in order to survive. This brings increased pressure to your academic workload.

When things get difficult it may not be possible to get the level of support you were able to when living at home.

Developing a network of friends whom you can talk to openly about your feelings can really help. If you are part of a mentor programme, then get to know and use your mentor. Mentors are there to help you.

## MAKING THE TRANSITION

### HOMESICKNESS

While you may physically leave home, psychologically it may take some time to separate and create your own identity. It is natural to have feelings of sadness, miss your family and want to visit them, especially during times of stress, sickness or crisis. Getting the right balance here is important—when is a trip home the right thing to do, and when will other forms of contact help enough.

Make sure you check to see what work is due when, having to play catch up later will add to stress.

### PROBLEMS AT HOME

What about when you are ok, but there is stuff going on at home? It can be hard to stay on and complete a study programme when there are problems at home and difficult decisions to be made. Be clear about the limits of responsibility to your family, and try to offer support in ways that allow you to balance your responsibility to your family, yourself and your study.

### JUST THE RIGHT AMOUNT OF DISTANCE!

It can help to identify your feelings towards your family. You can decide on what level of relationships and autonomy you want. Recognise it doesn't have to be all or nothing. Value and use the support available to you, there may be people who care about you and have a lot of life experience to offer you. Phones, emails, texting and social networks can help with keeping in touch and letting your family know what is happening.

### ACCESSING SUPPORTS

Sometimes other relatives may be geographically closer than your immediate family, and it may be useful to develop supportive adult relationships with them.

Care for and keep your self safe. Develop new support systems and friends, and work on the type of new relationship you want with them and with your family. By doing so you will be in a strong position to make your experience of leaving home and coming to university an exciting and positive time.

