

The background of the slide features a stylized mountain range. The mountains are represented by various shades of green, with some peaks appearing darker and others lighter, creating a sense of depth. The foreground is a solid, bright orange color. The overall design is simple and modern.

Feels Like Home

Coping with Homesickness

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Homesickness in College

- 2008 American College Health Association's National Survey reported that 4.2% of college students contributed homesickness affected academic performance
- 95% of first year students report feelings of homesickness when placed in a new environment
- 20% of students experienced moderate/severe levels of homesickness
- 7% of students have severe depressive and anxious symptoms

Homesickness

From the moment we are born we make emotional bonds with people, things and places. Gradually these bonds build up to form a hopefully stable environment. When we leave home, we experience a sense of real loss, a bit like grief if a friend or someone else close to us dies. Like grief this loss is natural and usually resolves itself over time. However, it is possible for this loss either to “get stuck” or to be particularly intense.

(<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/tutors/counselling/informationpages/homesickness/>)

Objectives

- To be able to recognize at least three signs/symptoms of homesickness
- Identify one resource for coping with homesickness
- Identify one “secret space” that you can recreate

Symptoms

Effects

- Loss of concentration
- Decrease motivation
- Anxiety
- Loneliness
- Wishing for connection
- Irritability
- Negative outlook
- Sadness, depression, social withdraw
- Nausea, headaches
- Difficulty sleeping and eating

Thought Patterns

- I miss my friends
- I want to go home
- I want to be with my family
- I hate living with people I don't know
- I don't know where anything is here
- I don't belong here
- I don't fit in

Moving Through Homesickness

- Get to know the campus
- Make your room feel like home as much as you can
- Talk to your friends about how you feel
- Give yourself credit and time
- Look after your well-being/health
- Keep a diary



Resources

- acknowledge that you feel homesick
- make friends in your dorm
- groups
- pictures
- check in with friends back home
- get out, reach out, get involved (i.e. clubs, sports, events, etc.)
- do your laundry
- call home
- set dates to go home
- don't rush home on vacation time
- relax, sleep, eat well, exercise
- balance your workload
- bring familiar items from home



Secret Room

Sit in a comfortable position and close your eyes while you take a deep breath in and out to relax your body



Jesie Steffes
to Melissa Soward

Sat, Sep 13 4:20 PM

Imagine house

ACTIVITY:

The Imagined House Exercise

The house often is a symbol of the self, one's own personality. In this exercise group members are led through a mental imagery scene in which they explore a house in their imagination. Afterwards, the group discusses how the various characteristics of the house may say something about their own personality - similar to dream interpretation. The group pays attention to such details as how the house appears on the inside as opposed to the outside, what can and cannot be found inside the house, how one gets into the house, what's inside the "secret" room, colors, textures, how space is experienced, etc. All of these details may have symbolic significance. Group members may be amazed at what the imagined house says about them.

This exercise works particularly well along with the circulating papers technique. After the group completes the imagery exercise, they write down (or they could draw) and then circulate to other students a description of what they saw in their imagination. The feedback provided by other group members can be eye-opening.

Here is the narration that is used to guide group members through the imagery scene. You pause between sentences to allow students time to form the image in their imagination:

You are walking down a road.... As you are walking, you see a house. Look at it. Notice its details....

Walk towards it. What do you notice about it?.... You start to walk around the house, looking at it as

you walk.... Now you are halfway around. Notice the details of the house as you continue to walk

around it.... Now you come back to where you were when you started.... As you walked around the

house, you noticed a way to get in. Now go into the house.... What do you see?.... Explore the house,

what's inside?.... As you were exploring, you noticed a secret door leading to a secret room. Go inside

that room. What do you see?.... Now leave the secret room and go back into the main part of the

house.... Now leave the house. As you are walking away from it, you look back at it one more time....

You are back on the road once again, walking.

This exercise also works well for exploring the identity/personality of a small group. After the group is led through the imagery scene, the group members discuss what they each visualized. Based on that discussion, the group together then visually "constructs" one house that seems to capture the personality of the group and all of its members. Comparing the houses created by different groups can result in some fascinating insights into the unique personality of each group.

Jesie A Steffes, MA, NCC
National Certified Counselor

What smells do you encounter while in the room? Do you hear anything?...
Now move toward the first object that's familiar to you...
Take a moment to explore

What did you see?

- What did you see when you explored your secret room?
- Did you imagine anything in your secret room that brings you comfort and a feeling of home?
- Did you picture something in your secret room that you have brought to college with you? If so, what was it?
- How can you recreate your secret room here to bring you comfort while you are not at home?