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Homesickness hampers freshmen's first semester

By Cynthia Hutchinson Staff Reporter

Some freshmen experience homesickness in the beginning of the year, while others feel it toward the end of the first semester. But almost everyone must cope with homesickness.

"Any student is subject to it," said Vernon Williams, director of the Counseling Center at Seaton Hall.

"The big thing is the change from a at UNL. fairly stable environment that you know about and you know how to cope with to one where there are a lot of new things," Williams said.

Everyone is a likely candidate for of notoriety," she said. culture shock, he said. The question seems to be who will suffer the most.

Deb Mullen, in her second year as a UNL residence hall director, said she suffered from homesickness because she was from a small town.

"Students come to me and say, 'I misses special events at home. can't believe how big this place is.' I say, 'it's probably bigger than where problems for homesick students. Home you're from,' " said Mullen, who has a looks good after being at school for a master's degree in counseling.

Jennie Schnoor, a former UNL stu- to school, Mullen said. dent assistant and currently a graduate student at Syracuse University, said home are in for a "shock." people from large towns have an advan-

school sometimes suffer the most.

"They come here expecting that sort

Ron Cantor, a UNL residence hall of homesickness. director, has several years of experience in dealing with homesickness. new independence and new opportunities at college. They may not be comfortable with new friends, he said.

'You go into a freshman's room and it's like stepping into their high school prom.'

- Deb Mullen, residence hall director

Men and women suffer culture shock, but as Mullen said, "You don't see men crying."

Cantor said men sometimes will look for attention by doing things they otherwise wouldn't do.

symptoms. Other symptoms include that's probably why students rarely go calling home every day and constantly to the counseling center or the Univereating alone.

Mullen said homesickness also can be detected when "you go into a freshman's room and it's like stepping into their high school prom."

Williams said a typical sign is "feeling lousy like the flu." Students actually can make themselves physically sick, he said. "The sickness (of homesickness) does describe some of what's involved."

Schnoor said homesickness is relatively easy to spot. "A lot of times peo- approach people who appear homesick ple withdraw or talk about home and how much better it is," she said.

Like all student assistants, Schnoor ferent groups on campus. received homesickness training before the beginning of the semester.

"Most of the SA's are upperclassmen and forget what it's like to be homesick," she said.

people occurs later in the semester college. During the first semester, she

"When things go hectic or when a would come to me," she said. She told them that many people feel the same way and encouraged them to "hang in summer and are uncomfortable. This there."

But Mullen said things also can get

rough during finals or if a student

Labor Day, the first "vacation," causes week that some students do not return

Mullen said students who return

"They discover the ranks closed tage because they usually know people behind them - somebody else has taken their place on the football field Mullen said popular students who or on the cheerleading squad," she were involved in everything in high said. "They can't go home in the sense they want to."

Schnoor said one can't prevent people from leaving the university because

But you can talk to them about it and make sure they know what they're He said freshmen aren't used to their doing," she said. "With most cases you hope it goes away."

A student has to make an effort and students have to help each other. But Williams said the parent has the most

Mullen said that what is worse than students calling home every day is parents calling their sons or daughters

every day. "Some don't let go," she said. Parents can say 'get involved' or 'come home'," she said, but parents are often

just as lonely. She recommended the student and parent work together. Either they can talk about it or parents can encourage their sons or daughters to get involved or talk to someone at the university, Mullen said.

Students are ashamed to admit Crying is one of the more obvious they're homesick, Williams said, and sity Health Center.

Mullen said about 15 students came to her last year. She recommended that homesick students should try to talk to somebody they know.

Upperclassmen can do a lot to "buffer" homesickness, she said, because they've been through the stages and know how to get involved in activities, which is important in overcoming homesickness.

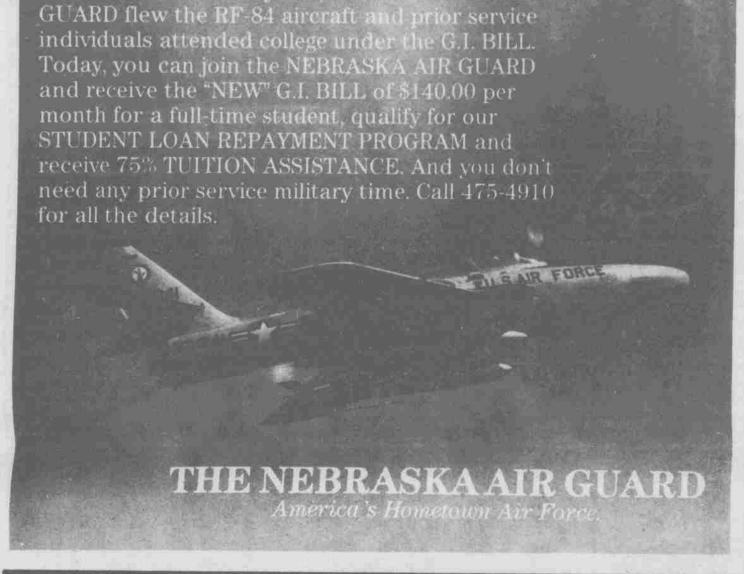
and ask them to get involved in particular activities and tell them about dif-

Student assistants are told to

Both Mullen and Schnoor said most students eventually learn to cope with homesickness.

Mullen said students realize, usually after they get involved in something, The fact that homesickness for some that they can build a life of their own at surprised Schnoor when she was an SA. said, some students cry because they miss home, but in May they'll be crying vacation looks a long way off they because they'll miss their friends over the summer.

"A lot of times they go home over the (college) has become a way of life," Mullen said.





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