

# Homesickness a natural, treatable effect of leaving home

BY MARGARET BEHM

You've spent 18 years living at home, and you think you're sick of it. Then you finally go to college, and suddenly you're homesick.

Marty Ramirez, a counselor at the University Health Center, said being homesick is nothing to panic about.

"Homesickness is normal," he said. "When you have people coming to UNL, it's a big adjustment, especially for freshman."

Ina Lühring, coordinator for residence hall administration, said students see a shift in their lifestyles when they go to college.

"There's nobody here to look over their shoulder and say, 'You need to be doing this,'" she said. "It's a whole new way of life, so it's an adjustment."

Ramirez said students also may come from small towns where they felt comfortable.

"For many students, they were the big fish in the little pond," he said.

"But they come to UNL, and they find people brighter, more athletic or more pretty than them. So university life is a big adjustment."

Ramirez said it's important for students to deal with their feelings right away because they can get in the way of class-

es. "Don't be afraid to let others know you're feeling bad," he said. "The demands of the academic world are high. So if you're coping with stress issues too, watch out."

Services are available for students from Counseling and Psychological Services at the University Health Center. The first three sessions are free for students.

Lühring said students who live in residence halls can always turn to their residence assistants for help with academic or personal problems.

"RAs are there to help students work through the transi-

tion from high school to college and to make this their new home," she said.

Students who are homesick are overwhelmed and want to return home to where they feel secure, Ramirez said. They will be better off by not going home the first few weekends of school, he said.

"On the Friday evening of the week of the 21st, you'll see a mass exit of people heading home," he said. "Don't go home that first weekend."

You'll find yourself going home every weekend."

Students also should limit phone calls home to once or twice a week, Ramirez said. If

they start feeling really sad, they should write home, he said.

Homesick students should remember to take care of themselves, Ramirez said. They need to establish regular routines of eating, sleeping and going to class.

It's important students also plan time for social activities, Ramirez said. They have to replace the familiarities they're used to with new skills, interests and people.

"It often amazes me when I hear about all kinds of students who stay in their rooms," he said. "You've got to get out and meet people."



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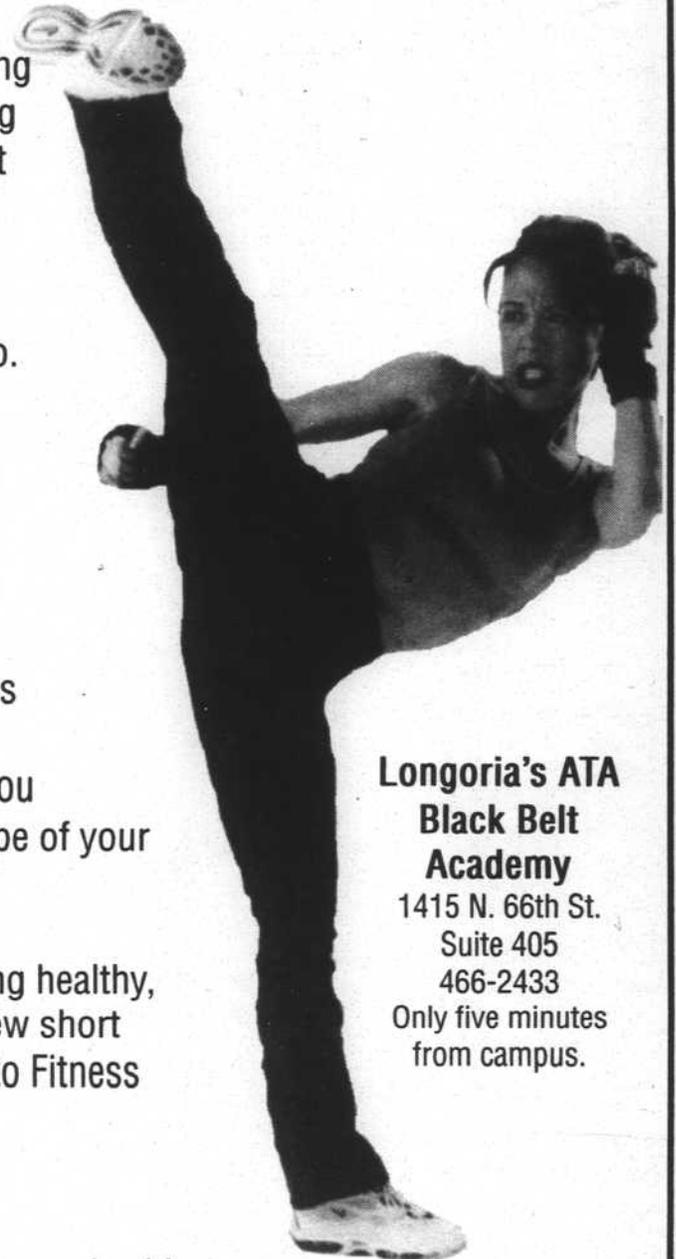
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