

A beautiful fall day on campus.

## Dealing with Homesickness By Danny Ceribelli

### MY STORY

If family and friends have always played a huge role in your life, you should probably stick around. I am one of four kids with one younger brother, two older sisters, and a big baby of a younger brother aka my dog Rio. I am super-close with all of my siblings. My parents and I are also very close. We can talk about anything with each other. This is amazing in a lot of ways but it makes it a whole lot worse to leave my house and family. When I first got to school, I was not super sad about leaving my family because all of my friends had already been at college and I was excited to come. My homesickness set in soon after that, probably the second week. It was a feeling that I had never felt before because I had never really left home on my own for more than a couple days. And although my roommate and I are good friends, I did not feel like talking to him about my issues because I did not know how he felt. As the weeks went by, homesickness definitely got better but I'd be lying if I said that I still did not feel this way. Homesickness is completely normal though!!

### TIPS TO PREVENT HOMESICKNESS

- REMEMBER THAT YOU ARE NOT ALONE
- EXPLORE CAMPUS & THE RESOURCES AVAILABLE
- GET INVOLVED

[WWW.CHOOSINGTHERAPY.COM](http://WWW.CHOOSINGTHERAPY.COM)

### TEXTING/CALLING FAMILY & FRIENDS

Something that helped me cope with homesickness was texting and calling my family and friends. I call my mom and dad at least once a day just to talk to them. For me, it does not have to be a super long conversation but just something to give me a sense of normalcy. Another thing that I thought was helpful was texting my parents what I was doing that day, just because they always knew what I was doing in high school and it was nice knowing that they knew. I also text my siblings at least twice a week and try to call them once in a while. Emma Shields, a junior studying abroad in Italy, said the main way that she copes with being homesick is by keeping in touch with her family and friends, talking with other people when feeling homesick, and not keeping it inside. Another helpful tip that she said was scheduling a weekly Facetime call with her family; this was nice for her because she can't just come home for the weekend, so it's awesome to have everyone on the same call and talking all at once. This is something that I had never thought of but now I might start doing this with my family. Something else that helps me is talking to my high school friends at different colleges. For one, it is great to talk to them, and it is awesome to find out how they are doing at school because chances are at least one of your friends does not love school. It's comforting to talk to them and just know that you are not alone. I would recommend doing this whether or not you have a person you can talk to like this at school with you—catching up with a high school friend is always a great thing to do.



Alumni Chapel on a spring day

## DECORATING YOUR ROOM

This next step is super simple: decorate your room. Decorating your room can make it feel less like a dorm room and more like your room. Also, putting up flags, posters, and pictures can remind you of home. Personally, I have many pictures of my family and friends which I love to look at because it makes me reminisce on all the good times we had when I was back home.

## FILLING YOUR SCHEDULE

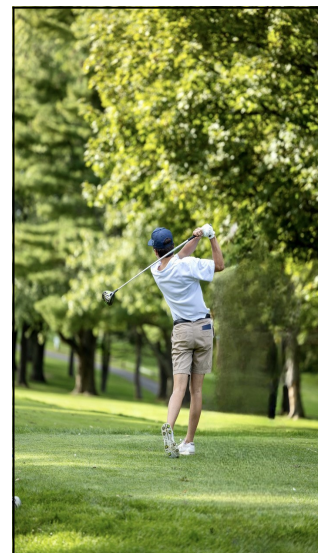
The next thing I cannot stress enough is to fill up your schedule! Although this may sound stressful, it's not at Loyola. They make it super easy to join new clubs, groups, and societies. They have a big fair at the beginning of the year, the Activities Fair, and all the [clubs](#) have their own table. The set-up is in the quad, the big grass area, where a few representatives from each group/society sit at the tables and welcome you to their clubs. I would definitely try and check out every table. Just go up and introduce yourself, and sign up to be on the email chain. This is not a big commitment so sign up for as much as possible—this is how I filled up my schedule. I am now part of club golf. Signing up for these clubs and groups is also a great way to make friends.

Another great way to fill your schedule is going to the Fitness and Aquatic Center ([FAC](#)). Exercising is an awesome way to clear your mind and just think of something else. You do not need to go there for that long, either. I have met some of my closest friends going to the FAC and playing club golf.

Another way that I like to fill up my schedule is by going with different people to get meals. This is a very easy way to take time out of your day and to keep your mind off of negative thoughts. Although, at the same time, alone time is good, too—you need to get your homework done and just relax. By filling up your schedule and getting in a routine you will start to concentrate on things other than your homesickness, and you will really start to feel the sense of family and community here on campus. Although there are moments where you get very homesick—it's a given—these moments are less likely to happen when you're busy.

## PLANNING TRIPS HOME OR HAVING YOUR FAMILY VISIT

A huge help for my homesickness was visiting back home. But this can be helpful and can also hurt because being home can make you miss it more. Something that I like to do is to plan out my trips in



Golfing for my high school team



Your Messina group can give you a campus family

advance so that I have something to look forward to but also so I do not go home too often and I still stay here making new friends, new memories, and creating a new home here. My roommate Sam Lorenz said that when he is feeling homesick he likes to plan out a trip to go home as well. An awesome way for you to see your parents, if you do not have the ability to go home, is to plan out a day trip for them to visit. There are plenty of things to do around Loyola that are family-friendly. One of my favorite spots to go is Belvedere Square, a great place to take your parents for a fun adventure and some great food!

### COPING WITH YOUR FEELINGS

Although it is terrific to find things to do on campus and fill up your schedule, acknowledge your feelings because you can't ignore them. You do not want to think about how homesick you are the entire day and night, but you can take 30-45 minutes out of your day to think about your mental health and release whatever you are thinking. Some great ways to deal with your feelings are to write them down in a journal, talk to a family member or close friend, or visit the Counseling Center. Although visiting the Counseling Center may be scary at first, let me tell you it's not, but just a reminder that you are not the only one struggling.

### TIPS FROM THE [COUNSELING CENTER WEBSITE](#)

1. Remember that missing home is normal and not a sign of weakness.
2. Talk about your feelings with a family member or friend who had a similar experience. Seek out other people who may be having the same experience right now. It takes courage to accept the fact that something is bothering you and to confront it.
3. Create a "home away from home" by including familiar items from home such as photos, plants, and even stuffed animals in your new dorm room or apartment. This may provide a sense of continuity and ease the shock of a new environment.
4. Familiarize yourself with your Loyola surroundings. If you know where buildings, classes, services, etc. are located, you will feel more in control.
5. Establish a routine as quickly as possible. The fuller your days are, the less time you have to feel sad or lonely.

### WAYS TO ACCESS THE COUNSELING CENTER

Schedule an [online appointment](#)

Call 410-617-2273

Visit in person in the Humanities Building across from Starbucks



The Counseling Center

