

PRE-CAMP TOOLKIT: 'Missing Home' Helper

A homesickness help-sheet for campers and caregivers to complete together before camp.

Overview: Missing home or feeling 'homesick' is normal when we're away from home, especially when we enter new or unfamiliar territory, like camping + wilderness settings. Talking about what missing home is, how it might feel, and what helps *before* camp starts means we can better navigate these feelings if they do come up at camp. Not everyone misses home when they're at camp - in fact, a lot of people love camp and have a blast the whole time we're there! This is just a guide to help you prepare so you already know what's helpful for you *if* this feeling comes up.



What are some things I am already excited for when I think of camp?



What things at camp might be different than where I stay now:



How might these differences make me feel?



What might help me when I feel this way?



Here are some more ideas:

1. **Try to relax:** Take deep breaths, imagine a calm place, use your 5 senses to observe things around you, go for a walk with your counselors, etc.
2. **Recognize your feelings:** This is a normal feeling + it's okay to feel this way.
3. **Talk with a counselor:** They care about you and they can help once they know how you're feeling.
4. **Remember it's temporary:** We only have a few days together to meet new people + try new activities that we might not get to anywhere else!
5. **Use pen + paper:** Journal, draw, or write a letter to family or friends telling them about the fun activities you're trying.
6. **Bring a comfort item:** We try to pack less for camp, but you could bring 1 stuffed animal, a journal, a special blanket, a photo, a fidget, etc.
7. **One step at a time:** Take it one day (or even one activity) at a time. Instead of thinking about the week as a whole, separate the days into small, manageable parts. Think about how fun each activity could be + give them a try!



Try to read through the list once, then go back + circle which ideas you like and would try at camp if needed.

Remember, camp is filled with kind people, new activities, great food, and counselors that are there for support. You may not have any moments of missing home, but now you have some great tools to use in case you do feel any of those moments.