

## NEW ZEALAND RUGBY PROFESSIONAL PLAYERS KEY INFORMATION

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# 9. HANDLING HOMESICKNESS

Much of what you know and rely on is at home. Homesickness is a natural response to change.

Homesickness can be light and pass quickly or dark and difficult. When separated from familiar surroundings or people for an extended period, people, no matter what age or from which culture, may experience homesickness.

Homesickness can manifest as a sense of dread or helplessness, depression, anxiety, sadness, frustration, anger or hopelessness. Extreme cases can cause physical symptoms like stomach pain, indigestion, headaches, nausea and tears. Players can attempt to bury the feeling by overtraining, eating more and drinking more. It should not be trivialised and can have a major impact on the players mental wellbeing, personal life and ability to perform at his or her best.

### What you can do:

- Realise and accept that new situations take time to get used to, give yourself a few days or weeks to relax and fit in.
- Don't try to bury feelings: by overtraining, drinking, or eating more to make feelings go away. Try to establish a routine and maintain a balance of life.
- Talk about it with a team mate, PDM or member of team management. Access the people around you for support, odds are they have experienced it themselves.
- Keep in touch with people from home and let them know you'd like to hear from them too. Be mindful that too much contact can make things worse, so agree on what suits you before going away.
- Bring mementos from home- photos etc
- Look for new and different things to do to keep busy—if in a new city, be a local, get involved in local culture
- Talk to your PDMs who can assist by helping you identify personal development options that can help fill in your time—eg: study, seminars, reading.
- Do something! Don't wait for the feeling to go away by itself. Asking for help is the hardest part, the rest will be easier.