

Coping with College Series

Home for the Holidays

By Sandy Colbs

If you live close to home, you have probably been back and forth several times to do laundry, get a home-cooked meal or just touch base. If you live farther away, Thanksgiving and Winter Holidays might be your first real trip home for the year.

Going home for the holidays is usually filled with expectations and some anxiety. You may feel that you have changed dramatically in your time at Illinois State, and wonder what your family will think of the “new you”. In some ways, Illinois State may feel more like “home” to you. This is normal.

Don't be surprised if your friends “back home” or your family has also changed while you were away. Everyone talks about college being a time of transition for students, but it is also a time of transition for your family and friends.

Here are some tips for coping with the holiday trip home: Don't expect everything to have stayed the same while you were gone. Be realistic about the holidays. Few of us have “picture perfect” holidays that match the images in the media. For most of us, holidays are both joyful and stressful. If you notice yourself getting the “holiday blues”, ask yourself, “Was I expecting too much of this holiday time?” Put things back into perspective! Make time to rest. You are likely to feel burned out after exams, but still want to see everyone back home. Plan your time to include sleep, good food and relaxation. You'll be glad you did when you get back to school in January.

Remember that even though you feel much more “grown up” and independent than when you left home, your parents may need time to catch up. Talk openly with them about the changes and negotiate with good will about household rules.

Have a wonderful holiday season!!!