Fitting in While in a Foreign Land

Moving away from home to a new country is perhaps the most daunting, albeit rewarding thing you will ever do. It is quite easy to feel alone during the initial transition. To make things a bit easier for you, we have gathered pearls of wisdom from international students at MUN. They have all gone through what you are going through right now. We hope this article helps you realize you are not alone!

Learn about the place you are moving to

The best way to overcome culture shock is to expect it. Before you even get on that plane, try to learn about the culture of the place you are moving to. How is it similar or different to your own culture? Try to get a hold of first person accounts, and learn about experiences of students before you. A good place to begin is to get in touch with MUN’s internationalisation office and student experience office for more resources!

Most importantly, it is important to realize you will make this transition at your own pace. Adjusting takes time and it’s okay to be homesick. Focus on the bigger picture and take it one step at a time. (Contributions: Nada, Anamika, Jannath, Anonymous)

Make NL your new home

You’ve gotten off the plane… now what? At this point it is natural to want to find people of your own community and stick to them. While that is perfectly okay in the beginning, this might actually make it harder to adjust in the long run. Instead, shift your mindset to making a new home for yourself in NL. In order to do this, try to get out of your comfort zone and find new experiences to try. A good way to do this is and to
make new friends is to volunteer! The student volunteer bureau and Student Experience Office is a great place to go to learn about ways to get involved. Find clubs and societies related to your interest. Attend the fun welcome week events! That being said, don’t overfill your schedule or do things you are uncomfortable with, for the fear of missing out. While it is important to explore other cultures, don’t feel pressured to change yourself to “fit in”. At MUN, our diversity is what unites us. Stay true to yourself and proceed at your own pace. (Contribution: Yash, Nada, Jannath, Dani, Anonymous)

**Homesickness and getting help**

When moving to a new culture, we are often constantly reminded about how different we are compared to our surroundings. As a result, it is natural to want to go back to what is familiar; to go back home. This can sometimes trigger depressive feelings and exacerbate our anxiety that we have to endure in silence. When you feel like this, please remember to reach out and **GET HELP**! There are so many resources available at MUN that are free to students. The counseling center always has appointments available, MUN minds has an extensive peer support network and there is always a kind ear whenever you look. If you live on campus, you can always reach out to your resident assistant.

Do things from home that make you happy. According to our collaborators, a popular way to do this is to cook food from your own culture. But this can mean anything to you, do whatever you miss from home. Soon you will find yourself with new traditions; something that is part of your old home and new home in NL! (Contributors: Nawshin, Nada, Jannath, Anamika)
Lastly, Welcome to Memorial University. We are extremely excited to have you as part of our community.