How to Adjust to Living in a New City

Facilitated by: Garrett Beatty and Danni Lei

August 10, 2021
Territorial Acknowledgement

We acknowledge the traditional territories of the people of the Treaty 7 region in Southern Alberta, which includes the Blackfoot Confederacy comprising the Siksika, Piikani, and Kainai First Nations, the Tsuut’ina First Nation, and the Stoney Nakoda including the Chiniki, Bearspaw, and Wesley First Nations. The City of Calgary is also home to Métis Nation of Alberta, Region III.

The University of Calgary is situated on land adjacent to where the Bow River meets the Elbow River, and the traditional Blackfoot name of this place is “Moh’kins’tsis”, which we now call the City of Calgary.

Image: The Cultural Model for the University of Calgary’s Indigenous Strategy, ii’ taa’poh’to’p
Meet the Facilitators

Garrett Beatty, MA  
Intercultural Programs Advisor  
U of C International Student Services

Danni Lei, R. Psych.  
Counsellor  
U of C Student Wellness Services
Session Guidelines

Be engaged
- Turn on your video and microphone
- Use the participant or chat panel, or reactions
- No video? Upload a photo to your Zoom profile

Be respectful
- Introduce yourself (pronouns and how to pronounce your name)
- Use inclusive and kind language
- Remember to share this space

Have fun!
- Connect with others
- Make new friends
- Try something new
Overview

- Challenges related to moving to a new city
- Culture Shock
  - Symptoms
  - Strategies and tips
- Resources
- Questions
Challenges Related to Moving to a New City
Common Challenges: Navigating the Unfamiliar

- Living in a new, unfamiliar city
  - Exploring Calgary webinar, Aug. 18
  - Calgary Weather webinar, Aug. 25
- Finding housing in an unfamiliar area
  - [https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/iss/resources/housing](https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/iss/resources/housing)
  - Finding Off-Campus Accommodation webinar recording
- Unfamiliar with cost of living/managing finances
  - Finances and Planning for the Year Ahead webinar, Aug. 11
  - Interested in Working in Canada? Live Q&A discussion, Aug. 18
- Navigating unfamiliar services
  - Healthcare & Medical Insurance in Alberta webinar, Aug. 12
  - Resources for Students with Families webinar, Sept. 16
Common Challenges: New Environments and Building Connections

• Adjusting to a new learning environment
  • Transition to the Canadian Classroom webinar, Aug. 18
  • Transitioning to First Year as an International Student webinar, Aug. 19

• Limited or no social connections
  • Online Unwind: Trivia Night with the Women’s Resource Centre, Aug. 18

• New student checklist: https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/iss/resources/new-international-student-checklist
Common Challenges: Your Thoughts, Feelings, and Perceptions

• Moving to a new city is a HUGE undertaking
  • It’s new, unfamiliar, uncertain

• Responses to this adjustment process:
  • Prior to arriving: fear, worry, and excitement
  • Pressure and expectations: Assumptions of what it will be like here
  • May feel overwhelmed initially and then many different emotions even after you have been here for awhile...
  • There is a word for this process!
Culture Shock
What is Culture Shock?

“a natural state of psychological and physical disorientation that can occur upon encountering a new environment and culture. Loss of social support networks, independence, and the ability to communicate combined with the differences and challenges of entering a new culture are all factors that contribute to feelings of culture shock”

www.communicaid.com/cross-cultural-training/blog/what-is-culture-shock/
## Stages of Culture Shock

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Honeymoon</strong></td>
<td>• Excitement and fascination&lt;br&gt;• Wanting to explore</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Negotiation</strong></td>
<td>• Increased frustration&lt;br&gt;• Longing for home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adjustment</strong></td>
<td>• Increased familiarity and routine&lt;br&gt;• Coping with challenges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adaptation</strong></td>
<td>• Increased comfort and integration&lt;br&gt;• Sense of belonging</td>
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Impact of Culture Shock

Physical

Spiritual

Emotional

Academic

Social
Symptoms of Culture Shock

- **Physical**
  - Tiredness, difficulty sleeping, lack of or high appetite

- **Emotional and psychological**
  - Sadness, grief/loss, longing for home, worries, frustration

- **Social**
  - Increased isolation, loneliness

- **Academic**
  - Difficulty focusing/concentrating, procrastination

- **Spiritual**
  - Sense of disconnection; lack of purpose
Discussion: Experiences of Discomfort and Culture Shock

• What have been your previous experiences with spending time in different cultures?

• What do you think are some challenges you have experienced or might experience while adjusting to living in a new culture?
How to Look After Yourself While Adjusting to Living in a New City
Physical

• Nourishing the body
  • Nutritious meals and water
    • Look up easy cheap recipes online!
  • SU Food Bank
  • Other food resources

• Moving the body
  • Endorphins and pleasure
  • U of Intramural sports
  • U of C Ignite Program
  • Other: Stretching, dancing, walking, any activity will do!
Sleep Hygiene Habits

• Routine and consistency
  • Know optimal # of hours of sleep for YOU
  • Fixed wake-up time

• Limit caffeine

• Limit screen time
  • Monitor social media usage

• Relaxing activities prior to bed
  • E.g. read a book, stretch, listen to calming music
Example of Relaxation Strategies

Focused Breathing
- Take in slow deep breath (feel into stomach)
- Hold for 1-2 seconds, then release breath slowly
- Listen to audio clips

Muscle relaxation
- Tense and relax different muscles
- Can combine with breathing
- Listen to audio clips
Emotional and Psychological

- Identifying and learning about emotions
- Power of thoughts

Growth perspective:
- Asking self: What are my goals and hopes? What am I learning each day?
Social and Spiritual

• Maintain social networks from home
  • Have reminders in physical space (e.g. photos)
  • Schedule in time to connect

• Find and create new social networks
  • Participate in class discussions/discords
  • Join a U of C student club
  • Participate in different U of C events
    • International Student Services events
    • Faith & Spirituality events
  • Peer support
  • Volunteer
Building Connection

• Explore different physical locations
  • On campus
    • Different study spaces
  • Calgary and local areas (e.g. Canmore, Banff, Lake Louise)
    • How to transit

• Practice English
  • U of C SSC Language-building support
  • USpeak Global: language sharing program
Academic

• Scheduling and knowing deadlines
  • Breaking down into small tasks
    • Make lists, agendas, have reminders
  • Start as early as possible
  • Prioritize and take actual breaks

• Seeking support
  • Ask questions and clarify
  • Attend workshops or one-on-one support at Student Success Centre
Discussion: Using Your Own Experiences to Cope

• What ideas or strategies might you be willing to try and practice?

• What other unique or creative ideas or strategies do you have?
Resources

• International Student Services
  • Sign up for the ISS newsletter
  • Follow us on Instagram and Facebook
  • International Student Mentorship Program
  • Remote social events

• Student Wellness Services
  • Mental Health Services
    • Counselling, student support advising, workshops
    • Peer support
  • Health Services
    • Medical clinic, psychiatry, massage and chiropractic services
Questions and Comments?