

ADAPTATION TO UNIVERSITY LIFE

Beginning to university education may be scary as well as exciting. Because, university may be quite different from the environments a person is used to. One feels safer at familiar places. S/he feels accepted, manages his/her more easily and copes with the difficulties better.

When starting to university, one meets with new people, new environment, new courses. It may be difficult, when one is far from usual sources of support.

Generally, taking two steps is needed when starting university life:

- **Separating from old people, atmosphere and situations,**
- **Getting used to new people, atmosphere and situations.**

Each individual has a different level of enduring change and a different style of dealing with change. Some may quickly adapt to the new circumstances, atmosphere, whereas it may take time for some others to adapt.

Especially, people who are away for the first time and who do not have old friends at the university are more likely to feel as outsiders. This new environment, new friends may be quite different than the old ones.

It is absolutely normal to feel discomfort at the early days.

In your own environment, among your family and friends, everything was familiar and easier to deal with. However, you are now in an unknown crowded environment. It is usual to feel shaken, alone and to miss your family, the familiar things.

Especially in the early days, feelings can be very intense. Pessimism, anxiety, obsessive thoughts, even physical complaints can be experienced. **This is temporary.** After the first months, especially by the end of the first semester, they usually disappear.

It is important remember two things:

- **It is not only you who feels this way.**
- **This does not show that you cannot overcome, you are inadequate**

Some factors affect the adaptation to university life:

- The closer the university is to your home, the easier it is to adapt.
- If it is your idea to go to a university and if you have chosen the school, you will adapt more quickly.
- If you have unrealistic, extraordinary expectations regarding university, you may have more difficulty with adaptation.
- Extremely busy schedule makes adaptation harder.
- If the style of the university life is very different from your life style, it may take longer to adapt.

In the adaptation to university period, you may have some physical and emotional complaints: Crying, throwing up, inability to sleep, poor appetite, irregular menstruation (for girls), recklessness, unexpected emotional reactions, trembling, sweating or feeling cold, difficulty with focusing or remembering, vertigo, nausea, etc.

Thoughts that are similar to the following ones may preoccupy you:

I'm always thinking about going back home

I miss my family, home.

I miss my friend a lot.

I'm lonely

I'm not loved, I'm unhappy, I don't trust myself

I don't belong here

If only I didn't come

I always feel sick.

I hate it here

I have nobody to talk to
I want to cry when I'm alone'

Some suggestions for adapting to university life more easily

- Give yourself time.
- Do not quickly decide to go back or stay.
- Be aware of your feelings and accept them. Believe that they will disappear. They usually do.
- Make your room really "your". Decorate with things that you brought from home, play the music you like.
- Quickly have a routine. Fill up your days.
- Eat regularly. Try to sleep regularly. Physical health affects mental health.
- Be realistic about your goals at school.
- Keep the balance between school and entertainment.
- Improve your studying and time management skills.
- Do some voluntary work.
- Attend to the student clubs that attract your attention.
- If you have trouble with maintaining your daily life and you can't fulfill your academic responsibilities, see the psychologi

For More Information

Psychological Counselling Department

(The services are available only to the students and staff of İstanbul Bilgi University.)

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