

Coping with Transitions

People go through a variety of transitions across their lives, and the transition to college often comes with major changes. Almost all the aspects of your daily life may look different: people, housing, expectations, food, and more can feel unfamiliar. It's important to remember that even changes you're excited about can still be difficult to adjust to, and you are not alone if you find it difficult to get used to the newness of your environment or situation.

Common emotional and mental changes during transitions:

- Loneliness
- Sadness or depression
- Stress
- Anxiety
- Anger or frustration
- Helplessness
- Grief
- Difficulty focusing and concentrating
- Lower motivation
- Cynicism or disappointment
- Racing thoughts

Common physical or behavioral changes during transitions:

- Difficulty with sleeping
- Fatigue
- Reduced productivity
- Procrastination or missing assignments and classes
- Changes to appetite
- More time on electronics
- Physical tension
- Being less social
- Isolating
- Increased use of alcohol or drugs
- Getting sick frequently

24/7 Mental Health Crisis Resources

- 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline: Call or Text 988
- 988 Lifeline online chat: www.988lifeline.org/chat
- King County Crisis Connections: 1-866-427-4747
- TalkNow via TimelyCare: Register online and download the app for on-demand access to mental health support through phone or video messaging. Learn more at: www.seattleu.edu/wellness/timelycare

Coping Strategies to Try:

Talk about your experience:

Speak with professionals, family, friends, online communities, and others, which can all help you recognize that you are not alone.

Remember your motivations:

Sometimes when transitions are hard we doubt our decisions. Connecting to why you decided to make this change and what's meaningful about it can make it easier to cope with the temporary difficulties.

Routines:

Routines help reduce stress. Consider establishing routines for:

- sleep
- hygiene
- movement
- nourishing
- social time
- study time
- getting outside

What works:

What has helped you get through transitions in the past? What's worked for you before is likely to work again.

Patience:

Know that change is hard and it usually takes some time to adjust. This feeling is temporary.

Set small goals:

Instead of trying to completely adapt to every change at once, try to lessen some of the expectations you have to give yourself space to adjust.

Choose one area or task at a time. Small steps and small activities all help move you in the direction you want to go.

Self-talk:

How you talk to yourself matters! Are you being overly critical of your progress, or giving yourself patience and kindness, the way you would with a friend? If saying kind things is difficult right now aim for neutral observations.

Limit comparisons:

Sometimes people adjust at very different rates and struggle with different things. Just because it looks like someone is having an easy time with a change does not mean that you are behind or wrong for struggling.

Ask for help: Sometimes the impact of change is more than we can manage on our own and we need extra support. SU staff & faculty are willing and prepared to help you problem solve when times are hard:

- **Counseling and Psychological Services [CAPS]**
(PAVL 120, 206-296-6090)
- **Campus Ministry (STCN 120, 206-296-6075)**
- **Wellness and Health Promotion (STCN 380, 206-296-2593)**
- **Advising Services (BELL 111, 206-296-2260)**

