

Navigating College Life Abroad: Wellness Insights for Your Student Journey

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By Priyansha Jajodia, Student Life Ambassador

Packing your whole life into two 23 kg suitcases, stepping on this engine that almost magically flies in the sky, taking you miles away from your home could bring up a lot of emotions. It could feel surreal, at least it did for me. It's a time filled with excitement, dreams, and butterflies in your stomach. Largely, however, this time is filled with a lot of hope.

Just like any grand expedition, this one comes with its own set of bittersweet experiences.

As we step into a whole new life in a place far away from home, away from our loved ones, starting to build a life of our own, doing everything in our power to succeed academically and in our careers. We walk along a path of big dreams with a twinkle in our eyes, and somehow, the walk becomes a jog, and the jog becomes a marathon without us even realizing it.

Beyond the classrooms and textbooks, there lies a crucial aspect of our lives that deserves attention: our wellness.

Use the suggestions below as your compass, guiding you through five essential wellness tips -especially for international students. Explore how you can not only survive but thrive in your new home away from home.

1. Know your college resources:

Investing some time in researching before or even after arriving in the country can be critical. Your first few days in Toronto can be challenging in a completely new setup and researching can greatly enhance your overall experience and set you up for what's to come. Here's a more detailed breakdown of the various resources to consider before and after arriving in Canada.

International Student Supports: Seneca Polytechnic provides several supports and services specifically for international students. From workshops, events, and information on health insurance, banking, visas and permits and more, this resource is an invaluable tool for all international students. Explore the resources [here](#).

Peer Mentor Program: Your Peer Mentor could be your first friend and first point of contact as you start your new life here. They can help you navigate through most of the questions or confusions that you might be facing and provide valuable insights and guidance as you settle into your new environment. Register for a mentor [here](#).

Airport Pick Up: Seneca Polytechnic offers free airport pickup services for international students. This service can make your arrival in Canada much smoother and less stressful. Sign up for your airport pick up [here](#).

MySeneca Website: Explore the Student Life and My Seneca section of the college's website. This is a treasure trove of information about clubs, organizations, and extracurricular activities you can join to enhance your college experience. Visit the MySeneca site [here](#).

Seneca Student Federation (SSF): Visit the SSF website and explore the services section. SSF often provides support services, discounts, and student advocacy. Understanding what they offer can help you make the best of your student experience. Connect with the SSF [here](#)

Bookmark the Student Life Calendar! Whether you want information about orientation, clubs, workshops, events, or activities specifically designed for international students, the Student Life Calendar has all the information you need. All events hosted by Student Life and Seneca Polytechnic is listed. These activities provide valuable insights into your academic life, campus facilities, and support services and lots of fun programming as well. Hosted in a variety of formats, there is something for everyone! Click [here](#) to see the Student Life Calendar.

Career Resources: Begin researching career resources early in your academic journey. The [Seneca Works](#) career portal can help you with job search strategies, resume building, and interview preparation. Understanding these resources early on can put you on the right track towards your career goals. Seneca Works also posts on-campus jobs.

Mental Health and Counseling: Mental health and well-being are essential for a successful academic journey. Read more about the counseling services offered on campus [here](#). Knowing where to turn for support in times of stress or adjustment can be invaluable.

Being well-informed and proactive in utilizing the available [resources](#) will help you navigate the challenges of studying abroad and make the most of your college experience at Seneca.

2. Practice time management:

International students often face the challenge of balancing multiple responsibilities. Efficient time management is essential to ensure that you can excel academically, succeed in your work, and still have time for socializing and networking. I've learned this the hard way. Time management is not a skill you develop overnight. It's a habit that can be cultivated

through continuous practice. Starting early and consistently applying time management techniques will yield better results over time. Here are some tips that could come in handy when you think of learning time management.

- Use tools such as calendars, planners, and to-do-lists to organize tasks efficiently.
- Employ the priority matrix to categorize tasks based on urgency and importance. Read more about Priority Matrix [here](#).
- Familiarize yourself with SMART goals.
- For resources and more information read our blog on [organization and time management](#) and [SMART goal setting](#) for more information.
- Lastly, don't forget to incorporate self-care breaks into your schedule. [Seneca Polytechnic's athletics and recreation center](#) hosts fitness and wellness activities for all its students which can be an excellent place to start your wellness journey.

3. Stay connected:

It's essential to stay connected and find spaces where you feel you belong. Being an international student can be challenging in terms of making new friends, finding places that offer a sense of comfort and welcome, and experiencing moments of loneliness and homesickness during the adjustment phase. If you ever find yourself feeling homesick, remember that it's a perfectly normal part of the journey. Don't hesitate to lean on your existing support system back home and ensure you stay connected. To help you navigate through homesickness and other emotional challenges, you can check out a helpful blog on our Peer Wellness website [here](#). While it's essential to stay connected with your roots, it's equally important to forge new connections within the campus community. Seneca offers various hubs for students to connect with like-minded individuals, share experiences, and build a support system. Some of these spaces that you can join on campus are:

[The Peer2Peer Student Lounge](#)

[Black Student @ Seneca Lounge \(BS@S\)](#)

[Seneca Student Federation events and clubs](#)

4. Build resilience.

Building resilience is crucial for international students, as it'll equip you with the tools to overcome the unique challenges you may face when studying abroad. This resilience helps you navigate the complexities of adapting to a new culture, overcoming homesickness,

excelling academically, and forging meaningful connections. It'll also prepare you for future challenges and empower you to make the most of your educational experience. To know more about being resilient in tough times, you can check out one of our blogs [here](#) which offers valuable insights and strategies to thrive in the face of adversity.

5. Give yourselves some grace.

Amidst the daily commitments of school, work, and external pressures, we often forget to prioritize ourselves. As international students in our early academic years, we face the challenges of starting a new life, coping with cultural differences, homesickness, and academic pressures. It's important to take a few moments to step back, sit down, acknowledge, and pat yourselves on the back. Say thank you to yourself for being so powerful all this while, not ready to give up, doing everything, going above and beyond to make a name for yourself. So what if you had to miss out on taking a certification last week or if your room hasn't seen a vacuum cleaner in three days. It's alright! In this whirlwind of challenges and opportunities, remember that self-compassion is very important. So, give yourselves a big tight hug, say thank you to yourself for bringing you this far and doing your best.



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