

# Counselling? I Didn't Think I Needed It – Until I Did

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Honestly, counselling was never something I thought I would need.

In my mind, counselling was for people facing serious situations: crisis, trauma, or something clearly overwhelming. When I first came to Canada as an international student, I assumed everything I was feeling was just part of the process: homesickness, stress, loneliness, pressure to do well, and figuring life out in a new country. Everyone goes through this, right? So, I told myself I just needed to be stronger and push through.

Looking back, I realize how much I downplayed my own feelings. Whenever things felt heavy, I would tell myself others had bigger problems. I felt lucky to have the chance to study abroad, so I didn't feel I had the right to struggle. And culturally, talking about mental health wasn't something I grew up with. Asking for help felt uncomfortable, almost like admitting failure.

I also worried nobody would understand my situation. Moving across the world isn't just changing schools: it's rebuilding your life from scratch. New system, new culture, new friends, new expectations. I wasn't sure someone outside that experience could really understand. And what if my problems sounded too small?

So, I kept going, telling myself things would get better after the semester or once I settled in more. But stress doesn't disappear just because you ignore it. It piles up quietly. I started feeling constantly tired, easily overwhelmed, and sometimes strangely alone even when surrounded by people. I didn't have one big breaking point, just a growing sense that I was carrying too much by myself.

What shifted things for me was a simple conversation. A friend mentioned they had gone to counselling and found it helpful. They spoke about it casually, without embarrassment, and that surprised me. It made me think - maybe counselling isn't only for crisis. Maybe it's just a space to sort things out before everything feels too heavy.

When I finally tried counselling, it felt awkward at first, it was also a relief. There was no judgment, no expectation that my problems had to be huge. Someone simply listened and helped me untangle what I'd been holding inside for months. I realized counselling isn't about being broken; it's about understanding yourself better and learning healthier ways to cope.

Looking back, I wish I hadn't waited so long. Support doesn't have to come only when things fall apart. Sometimes you just need someone to talk to while you're adjusting, feeling lost, or navigating change. The journey feels lighter when you don't walk it alone.

If you're at Seneca and hesitating the way I did, thinking your problems aren't serious enough, you're not alone. Many international students feel this way. Asking for help doesn't mean you're weak, it means you value your well-being. Seneca Counselling Services is available to all students, offering a safe space to talk through academic pressure, cultural adjustment, or whatever you're carrying. Sometimes the bravest step is simply admitting we don't have to do it all alone, and that's okay.

If you'd like to connect with a counsellor at Seneca, you can book an appointment here:

✉ <https://students.senecapolytechnic.ca/spaces/294/counselling-services/wiki/view/15699/cs-book-your-appointment>

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