

# Life Outside of the Classroom

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My first week in Canada surprised me. Even though classes were exciting, once the last lecture would end, the day felt empty for me. Back home, there was always noise; family, friends dropping by, or even someone asking if I had eaten. Here, after a long commute, I would unlock my room, heat up a quick meal, and realize I hadn't spoken to anyone in hours.

At first, I tried to fix that with big plans. I told myself I would explore Toronto every day and make new friends instantly. It didn't work. What helped was something smaller: routine. I started treating my week like a project. I chose two "anchor" habits that never moved: a grocery run on the same day and a study block on the day that I had the least number of classes. With those anchors, life stopped feeling like chaos.

I also built tiny "Canada skills" into the week: learning transit, finding affordable groceries, and walking one new route each weekend so the city felt less intimidating. Exploring didn't have to be expensive. Sometimes it was just a long walk and noticing how people here live.

The next step was finding people without forcing it. I went to a [Seneca Student Life](#) event because it felt low-pressure, like I could stay for 20 minutes and leave if it was awkward. It was awkward, honestly, but it was also the first time I laughed out loud in Canada. Later, I joined a club through the [Seneca Student Federation](#) which helped me find groups by interest.

What I didn't know is that Seneca also has student support groups, including an [International Student Support Group](#), where the vibe is more "come as you are" than "perform extroversion." I went on a tired day, sat quietly, and still left feeling lighter. Around that time, I connected with a [Seneca Peer Mentor](#). It felt like having someone a few steps ahead of me say, "Yes, this part is hard, and it gets better."

Money was another reality check. I didn't want to guess my way through part-time work and job searching, so I used Seneca's [Career Support Hub](#) and [Seneca Works](#) to orient myself. I promised myself I'd stay active, but winter tested that promise. When it's dark at 5 p.m., motivation disappears fast. So I started using [Seneca's Athletics & Recreation](#) options as my "default," because it removed the guess work..

I have to be honest with you; some days still felt heavy. When that happened, I stopped pretending I could power through it alone. [Seneca's Counselling Services](#) helped me name what I was feeling and guide me through coping strategies that worked.

If I could give one piece of advice, it would be this: life outside the classroom is not "extra." It is the foundation that holds up your grades, your confidence, and your health. Build your routine first, then build your community and when you need support, ask early, before you're overwhelmed. [Seneca's International Student Support](#) pages can be a good starting point when you're not sure who to ask.

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