



NAVIGATING THE TRANSITION TO A NEW COUNTRY AND CULTURE

Moving to a new country and culture is a big transition and at the same time it can be a great experience and opportunity. It offers you a chance for a fresh start. You have the opportunity to meet new interesting people and to explore a new culture and different ways of living, thinking, and being. Moving to a new country also comes with interesting, exciting, frustrating, and puzzling situations. You might run into situations you experience for the first time. It's normal to have questions and concerns as you navigate this new adventure. Since you are new to the country and just creating your local network, please always remember to utilize the extensive network of contacts provided by the Fulbright Finland program when feeling lonely, anxious, frustrated, or even happy.

Don't hesitate to use your support network!

- Your [Fulbright Buddy](#)
- Your university international student tutor
- Your local colleagues and fellow students
- Your [fellow Fulbrighters](#) around Finland
- Fulbright Finland Foundation Alumni Community including the [Fulbright Finland Outreach Ambassadors](#)
- Your host institution contacts: Academic and administrative hosts, teachers, study counselors, student organizations, Erasmus Student Network, as well as staff at the International Office, Mobility Services, and International Staff Services
- Your Fulbright Finland Foundation [program coordinator and the Foundation staff](#)

Well-being tips from alumni

- Learn about the new culture and country
- Get out and about and explore!
- Enjoy nature in any kind of weather
- Don't miss the networking opportunities! Seize opportunities, participate, join & get to know new people!
- Be proactive in making connections
- Maintain social connections and spend time with others. Get in touch!
- Share your thoughts with friends and contacts
- Engage in physical activity, an enjoyable hobby, or a volunteer opportunity. Look for an activity that fits you!
- Enjoy sauna!
- Experience ice hole swimming
- Try light therapy
- Appreciate sleeping – in winter you might need more sleep. At least many Finns do!
- Make sure you are getting enough vitamin D
- Be compassionate with yourself – this might be a very new experience for you.
- Celebrate the experience! It provides you an opportunity to learn, grow and develop yourself personally and professionally.

Finding yourself in a situation where you feel like you need to talk to someone?

Adjusting to a new country, culture, and way of life can be challenging. The long, dark winter months may also affect your wellbeing. Experiencing culture shock is normal and expected, and it can occur at different stages of your stay.

If you find yourself struggling, do not keep your feelings to yourself. Reach out to someone in your support network (see above) and share how you are feeling. If you would prefer to speak with a professional, the contacts listed below can help you find appropriate support.

Always remember that Fulbright Finland is also available to help you identify suitable support services if needed. Do not hesitate to reach out to our staff for guidance.

➤ **ASPE Compass: Mental Health and Crisis Support Service**

ASPE Compass is a telephone and virtual support service available to U.S. Fulbrighters 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The service provides mental health support in both urgent and non-urgent situations, including crisis intervention and referrals for conditions that may require immediate, in-person medical evaluation. The healthcare professionals responding to calls are trained to assist with serious situations, including mental health crises and incidents of sexual assault. They can also provide general mental health support, guidance, and referrals to appropriate resources.

Contact information

- Phone: +1 855-302-9087
- More information: [ASPE Compass](#)

➤ **Finnish Student Health Care Services FSHS/YTHS**

Usually available for those studying in a Master's or Bachelor's program in Finland. Research students (other than doctoral students) can sometimes also be given access to student health services. Find out from your host institution if you are eligible.

- [Services and making an appointment](#)
- [FSHS Mielichat](#)
- [Light Therapy](#)

➤ **[Mieli](#) – Mental Health Finland**

MIELI Mental Health Finland provides crisis assistance and support in order to prevent mental health problems and suicides. The crisis helpline allows you to discuss your thoughts, feelings, and life situation with a crisis worker or a trained volunteer. The phone conversation can help you to look into the future and see beyond your current situation in life. The crisis helpline also provides instructions and advice in seeking further help.

- [Contact information](#)
- [Support and help for foreigners](#)

Useful resources for well-being

➤ Universities' wellbeing websites with useful links and local information:

- Aalto University: [Student Health Care](#)
- Åbo Akademi University: [Student health care & well-being](#)
- Hanken School of Economics: [Health and well-being](#)
- LUT University: [Student support and wellbeing](#)
- Tampere University: [Student Health Care](#)
 - Opiskelijan Tampere: [Health & wellbeing](#)

- Uniarts Helsinki: [Healthcare and wellbeing services for foreign students](#)
- University of Eastern Finland: [Student Health care](#) & [Health Care for international staff](#)
- University of Helsinki: [FSHS](#), [Healthcare for Exchange Students](#), [Mental Health](#)
- University of Jyväskylä: [Health care](#)
- University of Turku: [Student services and well-being](#)
- University of Vaasa: [Health services](#)
- [Go to sauna – why is going to sauna beneficial](#)
- [How to beat the winter tiredness](#)

When medical attention is needed (physical or mental)

Locate your nearest emergency room as soon as arriving in Finland. Read resources on health care in Finland in the Foundation Guide at [Health and Medical Care](#).

Master's degree students

If you are a master's degree student in Finland you are entitled to [Student Health Services in Finland \(FSHS\)](#). Read more about the service and about paying the healthcare service fee in the [Foundation Guide](#).

Doctoral students and research students

Doctoral students are not entitled to Student Health Services (FSHS). Research students (other than doctoral students) can sometimes be given access to [Student Health Services in Finland](#). Find out from your host institution if you are eligible. If you have not been given access to FSHS services, you can use private health clinics. Here are some examples:

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| • Mehiläinen: www.mehilainen.fi/en | Tel. +358 10 414 0200 |
| • Terveystalo: www.terveystalo.com/en/ | Tel. +358 900 30 000 |
| • Aava Medical Centre: www.aava.fi/en | Tel. +358 10 380 3838 |
| • Pihlajalinna: www.pihlajalinna.fi/en | Tel. +358 10 312 010 |
| • Emergencyhub | |

Emergencyhub is an eHealth service developed and designed by healthcare professionals. They provide help for sudden medical problems, advice on self-care, and instructions for using emergency services. The purpose of the website is to support you in deciding what the best course of action is in your situation and also to inform you on what happens in emergency care in Finland.

**Please keep your program coordinator informed
if you find yourself in an emergency situation or an accident occurs to you!**