



Mental health Guidebook

**NO PAIN IN YOUR BRAIN and
Global Awareness
Movement**




**NO PAIN
IN YOUR BRAIN**

Global Awareness Movement
GAM

**Dear reader, brave young soul,
This Mini Guidebook is created for you
to provide you support in adapting into
a longer stay in a foreign country. We
are aware that you have experienced
many difficult situations including
leaving your homeland. Although we
hope that the war will end soon, we
want to help you to overcome any
challenges during your stay in Poland.
We want you to find peace and shelter
in our country. However, we know that
getting used to a new culture is a
challenging process. It's natural to feel
a mixture of emotions, and that's
perfectly okay. The next part of this
guidebook will help you understand
those feelings and give you some tools
to cope with them. We hope that you
will find this text useful and enjoyable
to read - NO PAIN IN YOUR BRAIN
initiative team in cooperation with
GLOBAL AWARENESS MOVEMENT**

Chapter 1: Understanding Cultural Shock

Coming to Poland and going to a new school may seem unfair, stressful or overwhelming. Nevertheless, those negative feelings will gradually decrease. You might go through a cultural shock. It is a normal reaction when we move to a new place with a different culture, language, and way of life. It's like a roller coaster of emotions, and everyone experiences it differently. Change can be challenging, but it can also lead to wonderful new experiences and opportunities.

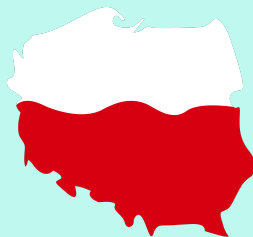


You are strong, resilient, and capable of adapting to your new life in Poland. Don't be afraid to ask for help along the way; it's a sign of strength, not weakness. Embrace your journey, and know that you are valued and welcome in our country. You've got this!

Phases of Cultural Shock

The Honeymoon Phase

At first, everything may seem interesting and new. You might be eager to try new food or learn about some Polish traditions.



The Frustration Phase

Soon, you might start to feel frustrated and homesick. This is normal. You miss your old life, friends, and family.



Phases of Cultural Shock

The Adjustment Phase:

Over time, you'll learn more about Polish culture, customs and rules. You will understand what daily life in Poland looks like and you will adapt to it. You'll start to feel more comfortable and confident.



The Acceptance Phase:

Finally, you'll fully accept the presence of things that felt confusing to you. You will no longer have difficulties. You will be fully able to strive and feel good in Poland.

Chapter 2: Coping with Cultural Shock

Here are some actions that you might take when you experience a cultural shock:

Talk About Your Feelings: It's essential to share your thoughts and emotions with someone you trust. Your parents, teachers, or counselors are here to listen and help.



Try to Learn the Language: Learning Polish will make it easier to communicate and connect with others. Don't worry; it takes time, and it's okay to make mistakes.



Explore Polish Culture: Discover the beauty of Poland. Visit a place like a: museum, amusement park, science center, theater, philharmonic orchestra or cinema. Try traditional foods, attend local festivals, and make new friends.



Create a Routine: Establishing a daily routine can provide stability and a sense of normalcy in your new life.



Take Care of Your Physical and Mental Health: In the following chapter you will find the instructions on how to do it.

Chapter 3: Taking care of your physical and mental wellbeing

Adequate Rest

Aim for 7-9 hours of quality sleep each night. Establish a regular sleep schedule and create a comfortable sleep environment. Right before going to sleep, avoid spending time in brightly lit rooms and limit your exposure to blue light (e.g. from your phone and other devices). You can also set the right room temperature for sleeping - 18-21 °C is an optimal choice. Ventilating your bedroom before going to sleep is also a good idea.



Physical Activity

Physical activity has a positive impact on mental well-being. Here are a few key benefits that come with engaging in sports and regular physical activity:

- **Stress reduction (reduction of the stress hormone cortisol, increased production of the happiness hormone endorphins)**
- **Improvement in sleep quality, which has a crucial influence on maintaining mental well-being**
- **Increase in self-esteem and confidence**

When engaging in physical activity, it's worth choosing one that is most comfortable and enjoyable for us. Any physical activity we choose will have a positive impact if we engage in it regularly.



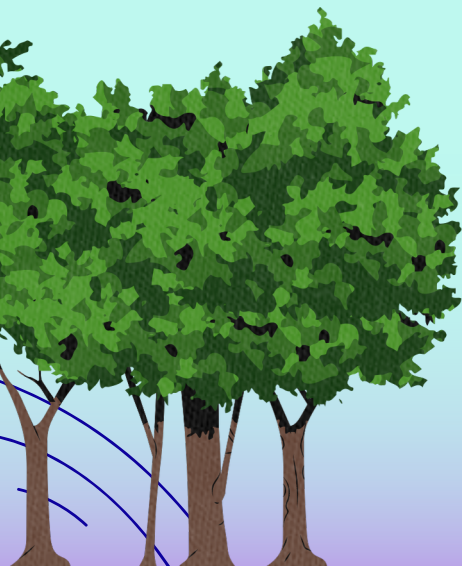
Connecting with Nature, Spending Time Outdoors

Spending time outdoors brings many benefits to our body. It is one of the most effective aspects of maintaining mental health.

Contact with nature can:

- Positively affect your well-being**
- Help organize thoughts in your mind**
- Distract you from overwhelming thoughts and problems**
- Oxygenate the brain**
- Facilitate finding inner peace**

After spending time outdoors, we may experience relief, feel more rested and refreshed, have an easier time focusing, and engage in more effective contemplation.



Proper Nutrition

Take care of your diet - have you been eating enough vitamins, carbohydrates, proteins, and fats lately? Have you sat down at the table and enjoyed a satisfying, full meal? It's worth making sure that the food you consume is of good quality and ensuring proper hydration. Perhaps a warm cup of tea, your favorite snack, or a fruity smoothie might be the key to feeling even a little better.



Dedicated Time for Self-Care, Taking Care of Our Body

How we treat our bodies also affects our minds. Often, we neglect small signs of our body's fatigue - chapped lips, dry skin, brittle hair, or nails. We forget about supplementing vitamins or extra body hygiene. Many of us probably have shelves full of creams, various nourishing products, or serums that we don't use due to lack of time - yet using them will have a positive impact not only on the state of our body but also on our well-being. It's good to find a moment for a longer bath and think about what our body needs.



Developing your Hobbies

Each of us undoubtedly has something that brings us joy. It doesn't have to be hard and impressive. Its main goal is to bring us true happiness. It's essential that this thing is genuinely ours and not imposed by someone else. If you're having trouble thinking of something like that, consider what brought you joy when you were younger. Maybe you used to attend extracurricular activities, or you tried to develop your skills in a particular area. Perhaps you enjoyed logical thinking during chess games or drawing. Anything can be transformed into a passion. You can also take up some new activities. It's the perfect time to give it a try! Everyone has hidden or already discovered potential. It's worth directing your attention toward it and immersing yourself in the pleasure that comes from engaging in that activity.



Exploring Various Local Attractions - Opportunity to Meet People, Discover Interesting Aspects of a Place, and Learn about the Culture

Museums, amusement parks, science centers, theaters, philharmonics, cinemas, organized workshops, book clubs, extracurricular activities. Nowadays, we can find many attractions in most places. Since we have a really wide range of options, why not take advantage of them as part of integrating into a new place, a new culture, and new people? Certainly, a person's personality plays a significant role here. Some will naturally be inclined to venture into a somewhat new world, new people. Others will be afraid to take that first step. There are solutions for both of these "types". If we don't want to take such bold steps right away, we can, for example, go to a place with limited human interaction, such as a cinema or a museum. If we want to integrate with peers, we can attend workshops on a topic that interests us. Whether at the museum or during the workshops, we will be able to learn a bit more about the place we are in. It's also a wonderful opportunity to meet new people and form new relationships.

Psychological Help

If we feel that we are not fully coping with our emotions/thoughts, it is worth seeking the available help. We must remember that we are never alone in our struggles; there are people who are here to help us. We may wonder if our struggles are really that important: "Is it really not too trivial of a problem?" We may be afraid to take the first step, but is all of this more important than our mental health? If we feel the need for help, let's not ignore that thought. We should not be ashamed of it. What we feel, what we think, is very important. We should always remember our mental well-being. Let's not be left alone with our struggles; psychological help is there to support us in difficult times.



Journaling

Journaling is writing in a diary/notebook, mainly to organize thoughts and get to know oneself better. You can keep a diary according to your own needs, but there are plenty of "journal prompts,[a]" specific issues/questions to answer to better understand your feelings and thought patterns, identify negative beliefs, or establish goals and priorities. In the diary, you can write down anything you feel at the moment - from thoughts that accompany you at the moment, to descriptions of daily situations, and positive affirmations towards yourself. It is recommended to write by hand on paper, which stimulates creativity, improves memory, reduces stress, supports the learning process, and enhances concentration.



Meditation, Relaxation Techniques

In the hustle and bustle of everyday life, it is important to stop, take a deep breath, and reconnect with ourselves and the present moment. That's why the power of meditation in dealing with stress and various anxiety disorders is increasingly emphasized. Working with breath, mindfulness, and various relaxation techniques practiced regularly can help improve mood, increase concentration, and promote valuable rest. To learn their secrets, we highly recommend books by Jon Kabat-Zinn. Additionally, on YouTube, you will find many videos and recordings with guided meditations to help you relax.





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