

Coping with College Series

Adjusting to Illinois State

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Living away from home for the first time can be exciting, fun and full of surprises. But for most students it isn't all just fun and games. Whenever you move to a new school or community there is a "settling in" period before it feels like home. Whether this is your first year at Illinois State or whether you are a transfer student, here are some ideas to help you make the University feel more like home.

Spend some time getting to know your roommates, hall-mates, or people in the groups you belong to, whether it is the people in your study group, or co-workers at your part time job. Stay open-minded about trying activities sponsored by your residence hall. This will help you meet people and begin to feel like you belong. It would be very normal to wish that you already had a circle of friends without having to do any work, but you may have to get involved in some activities to make that happen. Sometimes shyness makes getting involved difficult. But shyness can be overcome by taking small steps. Just try one social event for starters and see how it goes! That can give you confidence to meet more people or try more activities.

Explore events at Illinois State. There are football games, and music recitals, art exhibits, cultural dinners in the residence halls, celebrations on the Quad, and more, all waiting to be discovered. Buy yourself an Illinois State sweatshirt and take a walk on the Constitution Trail. Visit the Office of Student Life to explore whether there are any campus organizations you'd like to belong to. Check out the Campus Religious Center, Campus Recreation Center, or the Career Center to see what's being offered. Another idea is to attend the workshop "Dealing with Change: Adjusting to Life at Illinois State" on Tuesday September 14, at 7 p.m., 375 Student Services Building. As you can see there are so many things to do at Illinois State. Take some time to see what the University and the community have to offer. When is the festival at the Apple Barn anyway?

Be patient with yourself as you are making the adjustment to Illinois State. Don't expect to feel happy or comfortable every moment. There will be some times when you feel lonely, or awkward as you try new things. I call that "working outside of your comfort zone". But working outside of your comfort zone will expand your comfort zone. Soon you'll look back and realize how many new people and experiences you've encountered. Give yourself that chance and remember it can take time to create a new home. Welcome to Illinois State from all the Staff at Student Counseling Services.