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FORMAN CHRISTIAN COLLEGE

(A CHARTERED UNIVERSITY)

Lahore- Pakistan



Campus Counseling Center

Difficulties in Socializing

College life is a period of growth and change for students. The constant exposure to new experiences produces a variety of feelings and many students face difficulties in socializing with people who are part of their new environment. At this particular stage it can be tough for many students to even follow guidelines on making friends and meeting new people, as their social skills are underdeveloped.

Apart from these obvious challenges, there might be a number of other personal obstacles that students may come up against while attempting to adjust to the new environment and develop new social connections. Some of them include:

- **Academic Problems:** Students may feel overwhelmed by all the increased academic demands. They may suddenly find studies to be tougher than they anticipated or come to the realization that they do not have enough study and time management skills. This pushes many students to spend excessive time on studies which leaves less time for socialization.
- **Social Anxiety:** The social landscape in the college can be very anxiety provoking for students at times, especially during their first year. Some students are naturally more social, but most have to make an effort in order to develop social connections. Some students prefer to dodge the source of their anxiety by isolating themselves and removing themselves from social situations which they believe might become a cause of embarrassment. They desist from participating in social settings because of a fear of rejection and think of themselves as being incapable of fitting in.
- **Emotional Disturbances:** Students who are faced with emotional disturbances in their lives, find it hard to be motivated and feel interested in social activities. At times they prefer avoiding friends and try to guard themselves from any distress provoking social situations by going into a state of self-imposed isolation.
- **Adjusting to a Bigger Community:** Many students from smaller towns find it difficult to adjust if their college is in a big sprawling city or even a larger town. The anxiety that many such students face puts the brakes on their social progress as they prefer to limit themselves to their room rather than venturing out and meeting new people. Cultural differences also come in the way of socialization for many students who move to a new setting from a completely different cultural background.
- **Homesickness**

College life generates both excitement and apprehension in students which many of them are able to deal with. This transition takes more time for some students, those living in hostels in particular, who are faced with homesickness that keeps them preoccupied with home focused

thoughts. Students who feel homesick might typically notice an increase in anxiety, depression, and obsessive thoughts and may also experience minor physical ailments.

How to Overcome Difficulties in Socialization

Navigating the pressures of the college environment and coping with its many social demands can be a tough task for many students. However, there are many ways in which students can improve their social skills and prepare themselves for a successful transition to later phases of their life. Some strategies for overcoming socialization problems include:

- Changing your unrealistic expectations to more realistic ones. Rather than telling yourself that you need to have a close group friends by the end of the first week of university, you need to understand that it takes time to make close friends.
- Try to alter you self-critical thoughts and turn them into realistic ones. For instance, rather than being hard on yourself and saying that I was not funny enough when talking to my friends, tell yourself that you cannot be funny all the time.
- Develop more affiliations by engaging in extracurricular activities and by joining student organizations in the university. Use shared interests to make new friends and contacts.
- In order to overcome homesickness, do keep in contact with people you have left behind while you adjust to the new environment and begin to get involved there.
- Try to establish a balance between studies and leisure. Do not let studies dominate your daily routine and give yourself time to meet new people.
- Improving your time management and study skills may also help you balance your routine.
- Enhancing social skills also involves working on your nonverbal communication. Focus on your body language. Try to assume a relaxed but alert posture. Maintain good eye contact while conversing and don't hesitate to smile.
- Remember that are many other students who are experiencing similar problems. Know that you have to give yourself time to adjust.
- Make use of use of the professional help at your disposal in the university. You can always talk to your advisor or seek counseling service.

For further information contact:

Campus Counseling Center, First floor, Mercy Health Center.

[Tel: +92-42-99231581-8](tel:+92-42-99231581-8) Ext: 354 Cell: 0331-444-1518

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