

DOAVISA

DOAVISA IS A WALL NEWSPAPER ABOUT THE BODY, FEELINGS, SEXUALITY AND SETTING BOUNDARIES – EXCITING TOPICS THAT MANY PEOPLE MAY FIND A LITTLE EMBARRASSING TO TALK ABOUT. THIS EDITION OF DOAVISA IS ABOUT **MENTAL HEALTH**. WE HOPE YOU ENJOY READING IT!

MENTAL HEALTH

Everyone has mental health! And we all have different kinds of feelings and thoughts within us, both negative and positive. Having a hard time and struggling with things at times is part of life and of being human. When negative thoughts and feelings last for a long time and become difficult to live with, it's a good idea to talk to someone about them – for example, your family, friends, a teacher or your doctor. You don't always need comfort or advice. Often, it's nice just to tell someone about it. Generally that's better than sitting there alone with your negative thoughts and feelings.

Minority stress

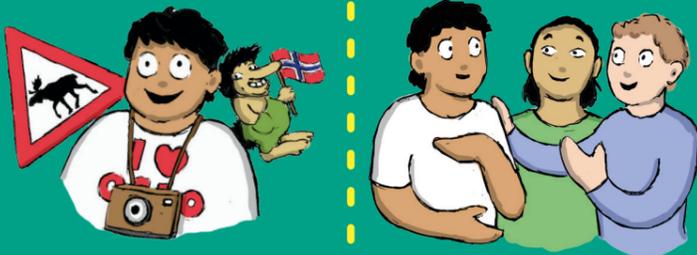
Everyone experiences stress. Minority stress is linked to discrimination and the fact that other people misunderstand our identity and culture. It can mean that we start to be afraid of other people's reactions, feel ashamed and develop painful feelings.



Most people who need to create a new life for themselves in a new country have many different feelings and thoughts. How well you feel changes over time, and many people go through the same development. Researchers have divided this development into four different phases:

1. THE TOURIST PHASE

At the beginning, many people are in what we call the tourist phase. During this phase, things are new and exciting. There are many exciting things to see, experience, taste and try out!



2. THE SHOCK PHASE

After a while, things can get a bit more difficult. You may start to miss things and want to go back, and at the same time you need to learn a new language and new rules. Not being familiar with the society can give you a feeling of not being in control. This phase can be very trying and a difficult one to be in.



3. THE REACTION AND PROCESSING PHASE

Fortunately, the shock phase often passes little by little. Perhaps you learn a bit more of the language, find out where you can buy the food items that you need, and perhaps you get new friends. Many small and large things can make you think that things are a little better. It's a good sign when you can start to joke a little and laugh at yourself.

4. THE REORIENTATION PHASE

You gradually start to think and feel 'I'm feeling good'. You begin to get used to the idea that you'll be living here in the future. Perhaps you start to notice some positive things around you that you haven't seen before. It can still be difficult and laborious to learn the language and build yourself a new life, but you find that things are a little better and that you're able to look forward. In this phase, you find out what new things you need to learn, what things you can keep from the culture and life that you were familiar with before you came to Norway, and what you need to adjust to.

DID YOU KNOW THAT:

- The brain is affected by light?
- Nine out of ten people in Norway are in a worse mood and are more tired in winter than in summer?

Many people think the winter is cold, dark and long. The brain is affected by how much daylight we receive. Very many people are in a better mood in summer than in winter. Some people have major problems in winter that pass once spring returns. This is called 'seasonal affective disorder' (SAD) or 'winter depression'.

Signs of seasonal affective disorder:

- You sleep more
- You never feel rested
- You're hungrier and eat more, especially sweet foods
- You sit at home and don't want to do anything
- You're sad and fed up

Remember – you're not alone. Many people experience this!

WHAT TO DO IF YOU'RE FEELING SAD AND TIRED:

1. Go out – why not go for a walk every day? Many people sit inside and don't like to go out when it's dark and cold. But it's a good idea to go for a walk each day and take in a little of what bit of daylight we do have.
2. Do some exercise. When you exercise, the body produces endorphins, which cause you to relax and feel happy. You don't need to be in a gym – the most important thing is to get moving, and use a bit of energy so that your heart rate increases and you breathe a little faster.
3. Talk to other people about it. Feel free to take it up with your doctor, or someone else whom you trust. Many people are experiencing the same as you, and there is definitely someone who can give you advice about what the smart thing to do is!

Sidetmedord.no is an online service for anyone who prefers to write about things that are difficult in their life. Open 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year.

Mental Helse (Mental Health) has a free, 24-hour helpline on 116 123 for anyone who needs someone to talk to.

Kirken SOS has both a helpline (22400040) and chat service; www.soschat.no