

Managing Your Mental Health on Expedition

Taking part in adventurous activities and travel such as Expedition has shown to improve mental health and wellbeing. However, the stresses of physical exertion, long days, and being away from home can also impact emotional well-being and ability to cope even if you have never had issues before. Factors which can disrupt stable mental health during travel:

- Separation from family and friends.
- Time zone changes and jet lag/sleep deprivation.
- Disruption of normal routines and travel delays.
- Unfamiliar surroundings and meeting new people
- Culture Shock and sense of isolation
- Language barriers
- Physical ill health during travel
- Forgetting to take medication regularly
- Separation from family and friends
- Lack of clean toilet and/or washing facilities

We recommend that every Venturer reads through this guide to support your Expedition preparation.



How to Self-Manage

Managing your mental health on an Expedition requires proactive planning, open communication, and the use of effective coping strategies in a challenging and often unfamiliar environment.

Embarking on an Expedition is an exciting and transformative experience, but it's impossible to fully prepare for every challenge or surprise along the way—that's part of the adventure! The unexpected is what makes it memorable and being open-minded and adaptable will be some of your greatest strengths. While this guide offers suggestions to help you mentally prepare, remember that every journey is unique. Take these tips as tools to ease your transition but embrace the unknown with courage. It's all part of the journey, and you're going to grow so much from it!

Pre-travel:

- Recognise that travelling can be stressful.
- Ensure journeys are well thought out and develop contingency plans for coping with delays
 - If fear of flying is a major cause of anxiety, several airlines run courses to combat this.
- Research your destination, country and language so you know what to expect.
- Attend the pre-Expedition training event
- Understand the expectations of a Raleigh Expedition and the support that is available
- Take out adequate travel insurance which specifically covers mental health issues
- Identify personal triggers or challenges of Expedition and set realistic expectations
- If you are on medication do not make changes to medication prior to Expedition
- Ensure you have enough of your regular medication for the total duration of the trip; an additional 1-2 weeks should be carried in case medication is lost or stolen.

During Travel

- Educate yourself on the time zone changes and possible jet lag
- Make sure to take any medication at the correct time during travel
- Stay hydrated and fueled during travel to reduce stress

During Expedition

Maintaining regular check-ins with your fellow venturers and VMs can help monitor and address any emerging issues. Participants should be encouraged to practice self-care, such as getting enough rest, eating well, staying hydrated, and taking moments to relax or meditate.

- Maintain a regular routine where possible
- Do not stop your regular medication during travel, even if your mental health has improved - you can always discuss this with your doctor on return.
- Ensure adequate rest, hydration and calorie intake, especially if a busy schedule is expected
- Understand the dates you will be able to contact home and let friends and family know

If you feel your mental health is deteriorating, seek help/advice early, either from your travelling companions, family/friends, local mental health services or consulate.

