

Life in the *Inaka*

I: initiate the conversation

N: notice the positives

A: acknowledge your mental health

K: know the other JETS

A: adapt to your surroundings

I: Initiate the conversation

- ✓ Ask your supervisor, teachers, neighbors, etc.
about local events, activities and popular spots.
- ✓ Put yourself out there.
- ✓ Try to accept as many invitations as possible.

N. Notice the positives

- ✓ Most *Inaka* residents have lower rent, more
mobility (buy a car!) and fresher food than the

city residents.

- ✓ You can build genuine relations with local residents.
- ✓ It is a lot quieter than the big city.

A. Acknowledge your mental health.

- ✓ Your mental health is the most important thing here.
- ✓ The isolation can make one very depressed and can take a physical toll.
- ✓ Don't compare yourself to other JETs!!!!
- ✓ You must do what is best for your health. For example, if you need to spend a night in Kumamoto City, please do it.

K. Know the other JETS

- ✓ You may want to make friends with only locals, but cultural difference can be tiring.
- ✓ Other JETS understand what you are going through therefore, they are easier to talk with.

- ✓ The other JETs may need to talk to you so it would be selfish to disregard them.
- ✓ Go to Kumajet events! It's a good way to get out of the house and meet people.

A. Adapt to your surroundings

- ✓ Study Japanese!
- ✓ Keep a diary
- ✓ Become a regular at a restaurant.
- ✓ Go to the 公民館 (kouminkan, community center).
There are advertisements for many local events.
- ✓ Don't stay isolated in your apartment. This is a once in a lifetime experience. Make the best of it.
- ✓ Get a hobby. Many places have a kendo, karate, taiko, calligraphy, koto, tea ceremony, flower arrangement, hiking, etc. clubs.
- ✓ Your sempais, fellow teachers and supervisor are great people to ask about this. Especially, if they are local.

Important Resources:

- **Contact your Area Leaders if you need help. They may know good hospitals, banks and other important information.**
- **If you feel isolated and upset, you can use the JET program mental health support system.**

▼Mental Health Support Resources (Taken from CLAIR's monthly email)

With the aim of enhancing mental health support for JET participants, CLAIR offers the JET Programme Mental Health Counselling Assistance Programme. This programme provides a partial subsidy (50%, up to 30,000 yen per year) for counselling costs incurred through consultation with mental health professionals in Japan not covered by health insurance.

The coverage period for this year is from 1 April, 2019 to 31 March 2020. The application form must be sent to CLAIR by 10 April 2020 (Fri).

CLAIR also offers a free online service to provide JET participants with mental health assistance from professional counsellors using Web Mail and Skype.

If you would like to use this service, please access the following website. After entering the password, you will be instructed to register. You can receive up to seven Skype Counselling sessions from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020. CLAIR recommends trying the Web Mail Counselling system first. There is no limit to the number of threads you can start in the Web Mail Counselling system.

Web Mail Counselling

Login Password: spufa2019

English: <https://www.kokoro-soudan.net/en/>

Japanese: <https://www.kokoro-soudan.net/>

Skype Counselling

Login password: spufa2019

English: <https://www.fismec.co.jp/hiroba/en/secure>

Japanese: <https://www.fismec.co.jp/hiroba/secure>

My information:

Email: jd8417a@alumni.american.edu

My name is James Davenport (I'm on Facebook 😊)

I know the struggle so if you need anyone to talk to, I can listen.