

TRAVEL BONDING

Has the experience of a challenging situation ever brought you instantly close to a stranger? It doesn't matter what they look like or how bad their breath is, you feel close to them through the experience. A mutual understanding is reached. In that instant, they know what you are going through because they are going through it too.

While travel nursing is not a traumatic situation, it is a challenging one. Let me try to explain the situation. You travel across the country away from family and friends. You don't know anyone. All your senses are alive and at work trying to quickly adapt to your new surroundings so you can competently function at the workplace. Everyone is a stranger, except you feel connected to the travelers in the group. Why? You have a shared experience.

Not only are you sharing a similar experience, but often travelers share similar interests as well. Travelers are obviously people who like to get out and explore. They also have more time on their hands than people caught up in their daily routines and responsibilities. Your normal barriers are also down because you are out of your routine as well and need others for support.

Within no time, travelers often feel like extended family. When I found my apartment in Arizona (my first assignment), I felt alone. It was scary and exhilarating at the same time. As the apartment manager gave me a tour of my new place, he mentioned another traveler who lives in the complex. I couldn't wait to meet her and have someone to talk with. The next day, I knocked on her door. She invited me in. We shared a bottle of wine, travel stories, and future dreams. After that night we shared many adventures and future assignments together. Years later, we are still friends. I recently flew to Rhode Island to attend her wedding.

Many travelers experience this type of bonding. When you arrive to an assignment, you won't feel alone for long. There are too many things to explore together. What if you can't find any more travelers? What if you think the travelers in your department are weirdoes? No problem.....often the staff has one or two people who are also adventure seekers that will bond to you and play tourist in their own town.