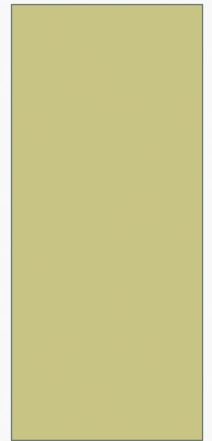




RE-ORIENTATION

PRESENTED BY THE OFFICE OF STUDY ABROAD



WELCOME HOME

You made it! Congratulations on completing your study abroad program.

Your first few weeks abroad were new, exciting, and constantly changing; expect the same now, being home.



WHY DON'T I FEEL LIKE I'M HOME?

You might not feel at home for a few reasons.

Before you left you...

- wanted to go abroad
- expected to see and do new things
- knew about culture shock
- knew you would come back

Now that you're 'home' you...

- might not have wanted to come back
- expect things to be the same as when you left
- were not aware of reverse culture shock
- may not ever go back to your host country

WHAT IS CULTURE SHOCK

Culture shock (C.S.) is the personal disorientation a person may feel when experiencing an unfamiliar way of life due to immigration, a visit to a new country, a move between social environments, or a simple travel to another type of life. *

There are 4 stages of culture shock

1. Euphoria and enthusiasm (Honeymoon phase)
2. Disillusionment and negativism (Negotiation phase)
3. Gradual adaptation (Adjustment phase)
4. Bicultural competence (Mastery phase)

REVERSE CULTURE SHOCK

Reverse culture shock (R.C.S.) is initially the same as culture shock except this is happening in your home country.

How much it will affect you depends on your experience.

- How immersed did you become?
- How long were you abroad?
- How much did you adapt to the new culture?

SYMPTOMS OF C.S. AND R.C.S.

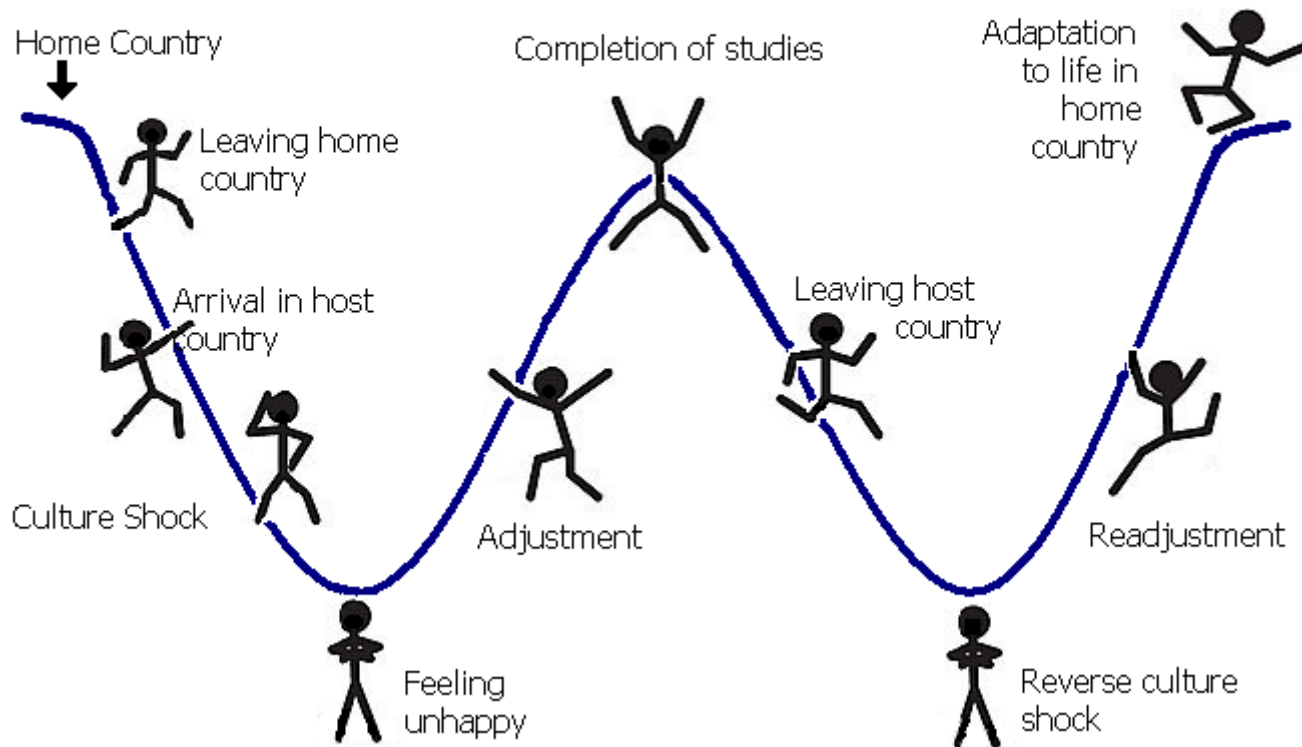
Physical

- Headaches
- Aches and pains
- Insomnia or excessive sleep
- Nausea
- Fatigue, malaise
- Overeating or loss of appetite
- Different energy levels
- Gastrointestinal distress
- Abuse of drugs and/or alcohol

Psychological

- Sadness, loneliness
- Homesickness
- Idealizing the home culture
- Stereotyping host culture nationals
- Loss of sense of humor
- Sense of isolation
- Withdrawal from society
- Overwhelming and irrational fears related to the host country
- Irritability
- Family conflict
- Loss of identity
- Feelings of inadequacy or insecurity
- Negative self-image
- Developing obsessions (health, cleanliness)
- Lack of concentration
- Depression

The "W" Curve of Adjustment in a different Culture



EVERYTHING CHANGED

- After coming home you might think that everyone around you has changed and everything is different now. Just remember that you're the one who left and changed, perhaps not everyone else.
- Your time abroad most likely was a time for you to discover yourself and adjust yourself to whom you want to be, but you might not notice until you're home.

HOW DID I CHANGE?

The American Field Study Service conducted a survey on students who went abroad for a year and students who did not. All students took the survey before the year started and then four months after the group of students who went abroad came back, the same survey was given.

- The students who went abroad were the experimental group.
- The students who did not leave were the control group.

Appreciation of host country and culture

- Control group : + 0.4 points
- Exchange student group : +15.5 points

Foreign Language Appreciation and Ability

- Control Group : -1.7 points
- Exchange student group : +13.5 points

Understanding other cultures

- Control Group : +2.7 points
- Exchange student group : +8.1 points

International Awareness

- Control Group : -0.5 points
- Exchange student group : +7.5 points

Adaptability

- Control Group : +1.5 points
- Exchange student group : +6.5 points



Awareness of opportunity

- Control group : + 1.75points
- Exchange student group : +6.5 points

Critical thinking abilities

- Control Group : -0.5 points
- Exchange student group : +4.5 points

Non-materialism

- Control Group : -2.1 points
- Exchange student group : +3.5 points

Independence and Responsibility for self

- Control Group : -0.5 points
- Exchange student group : +3.1 points

Awareness and appreciation of home country and culture

- Control Group : -0.75 points
- Exchange student group : +3.0 points



THE “BEST” TIME OF MY LIFE

Many students like to refer to their time abroad as “the best time of my life”. When this is said, you automatically tell yourself that nothing will ever be better and that leads to a rougher time with reverse culture shock, knowing that it won't get better.

Instead try saying: the most exciting, the most challenging, the most memorable...



RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHERS

Many people want to live abroad during their life and are not able to. You, however, had the opportunity! It can be difficult having relationships with the same people before and after your time abroad. Remember that:

- People cannot always relate to your experiences and therefore may not appreciate you sharing them with them.
- Untraveled family members or friends might not want to adapt lifestyle changes (Ex. Taking off your shoes before entering a home)
- Not everyone has the same opportunities as you and they may become jealous if you talk about your experiences all the time.

It's advised to keep in contact with friends from your time abroad and talk to them. They will want to talk about their experiences just as much as you do and usually love hearing about yours. They're going through exactly what you are. Reach out to them!

TIPS

- When getting angry, annoyed, impatient at things here think, “Would this have bothered me before I went abroad?” If yes, then evaluate the situation accordingly and go from there. If no, think about what has changed.
- Don't stop doing new customs you enjoy just because it's not done here. Bring your own bag to the grocery store, prepare your favorite foreign meals, take off your shoes when entering your home.
- Write a journal now, or if you wrote one while abroad reread it...but not too much!
- Keep busy! A bored mind always tends to daydream about your time abroad!

TIPS, CONTINUED

- Don't make any major decisions immediately! Don't sell your car because you didn't need one in Thailand.
- Have the same open-minded attitude here that you did abroad.
- Don't be afraid to get professional help if you're having a difficult time coming home!
- Try not to cover your walls with photos from you abroad or only things from your host country. If you have too many things it will just make you sad. Choose your 10 favorite things.
- Watch foreign films in your host language!



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POWER POINT CREATED BY ELLIE DUFF

