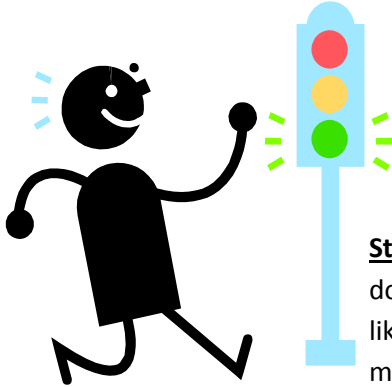


Adjusting to a New Culture (or new country)

All students who come to college or university must make many adjustments. This is especially true for international students. You will experience many changes. There are usually four stages that people experience:

Stage 1: “Honeymoon” Phase: Everything is great. Nothing is wrong. You are having a wonderful time. (This may last days or weeks.)



Stage 2: Shock: There are so many differences in this country that you do not know how to deal with them. You did not think things would be like this. You are not sure what to do. You may want to go home. (This may last days or weeks.)

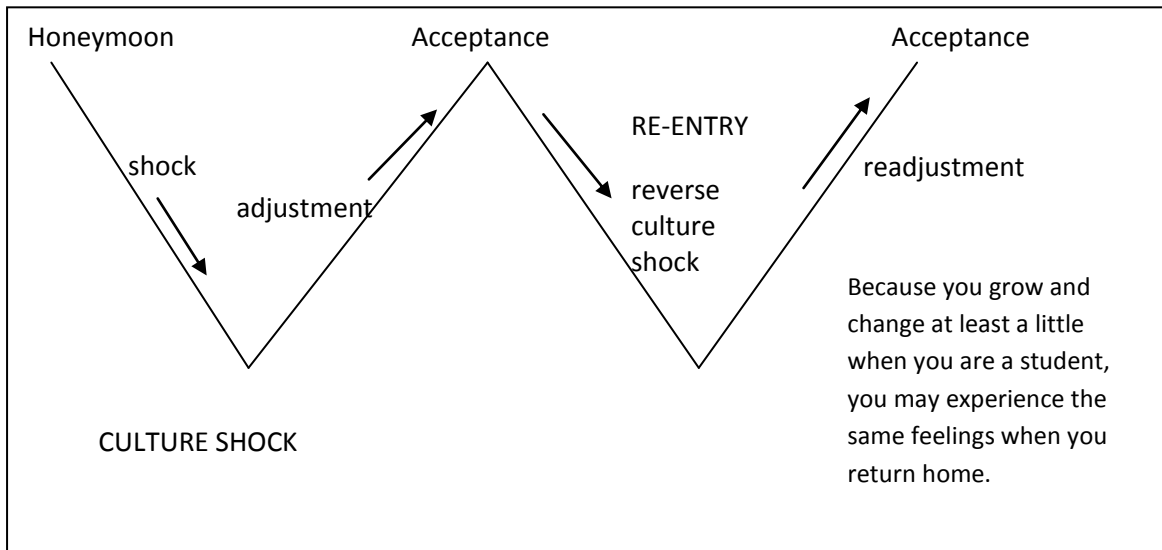
Some symptoms of “culture shock” are:

1. Extreme homesickness (some homesickness is normal)
2. Constant fear of being misunderstood
3. Avoiding people
4. A new and intense feeling of loyalty to your own culture
5. Constant complaining about your new culture
6. Headaches
7. Upset Stomach
8. Feeling sick much of the time
9. Trouble sleeping or sleeping too much
10. Excessive concern over minor pains
11. Over-eating or loss of appetite (eating too much or too little)
12. Feeling very sad much of the time (some sadness is normal)
13. Unexplainable crying
14. Feeling sick much of the time
15. Difficulty concentrating
16. Lack of confidence
17. Inability to work effectively (e.g., you cannot do your school work as well as before)
18. Marital stress or family stress



Stage 3: Adjustment: You start to learn how to deal with the problems you are facing. You try to integrate your new experiences with who you are. You start to feel like you can be yourself and still belong in your new setting. This may last several months or longer.

Stage 4: Acceptance: You are able to live well in your new setting with the differences you are experiencing.



Remember:

1. **Some culture shock is normal.** It does not mean something is wrong with you or that you should not have come here.
2. **Be patient.** It takes time to adjust, but you can do it.
3. **Understand that everyone is different.** You may adjust more quickly or more slowly than another person.
4. **It is acceptable to tell someone if you are having problems.** In some cultures this is shameful. This is not true in the United States. You will find support from friends, your resident assistant and the campus chaplain. You may also talk to your international student advisor or a faculty or staff member whom you trust. People at Eastern University want to help you so you can succeed.

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