

CROSS CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT

Stages of Adjustment

THE HONEYMOON STAGE

Common thoughts during the Honeymoon Stage include:

“Isn’t this exciting? I can’t wait to tell _____ about this. Aren’t they interesting? Everything here is so _____!”

Characteristics of the Honeymoon Stage:

- You are busy taking care of business (registration, housing, bank account, etc.)
- You are observing the new culture and familiarizing yourself with the new environment
- You are meeting useful and friendly university staff and faculty
- You are making your first social contacts with members of the host culture
- You are seeing and doing new things and enjoying a new world

THE HOSTILITY STAGE

Common thoughts during the Hostility Stage include:

“We would never do that in my country! Why can’t they just _____?”

“I only have __ months before I go home. These people are so _____!”

Characteristics of the Hostility Stage:

- You begin to desire more personal relationships with members of the host culture
- You find you have little time or opportunity to make friends
- You are feeling isolated, out of place, tired, sick, depressed, angry, or frustrated
- You have a growing awareness that your home culture’s behaviors may not be accepted in the host culture, and you may have to give up, suspend, or modify your own behavior
- Your high expectations remain unmet
- You blame the host culture for your problems
- You spend lots of time with members of your home culture complaining about the host culture
- You experience problems with the subtleties of the target language

THE HUMOR STAGE

Common thoughts during the Humor Stage include:

“Why shouldn’t they say/do that? We say/do that too, but differently.”

Characteristics of the Humor Stage:

- You choose to become an “explorer” in the new culture
- You accept the challenge of self-reflection
- You assume responsibility for your own cultural adjustment

THE AT HOME STAGE

Common thoughts during the At Home Stage include:

“You don’t understand them like I do. I’m beginning to like this.”

Characteristics of the At Home Stage:

- Your language skills improve noticeably
- You begin to understand the actions of members of the host culture
- You have finally made friends and feel part of the community
- You develop a greater tolerance for what is strange and new
- You become a mediator between the two cultures
- You feel proud that you can make yourself understood in the target language and that you can understand native speakers

