



# **CULTURE SHOCK 101**

Surviving the Ups and Downs  
of your Exchange Program

Culture Shock - an experience a person has when one moves to a cultural environment which is different from one's own; the personal disorientation a person may feel when experiencing an unfamiliar way of life

- Comes in waves
- No set pace
- Different expressions

## SURFACE CULTURE

Food  
Music Games  
Holidays Fashion  
Dances Language  
Festival Literature

## DEEP CULTURE

### **Communications Styles and Rules:**

Facial Expressions Body Language  
Eye Contact Personal Space Gestures  
Handling and Displaying of Emotion

### **Notions of:**

Courtesy and Manners  
Friendship Leadership  
Beauty

### **Concepts of:**

Time Family Self  
Past and Future  
Fairness and Justice

### **Attitudes toward:**

Senior Citizens Children  
Rules Work Age  
Cooperation vs. Competition  
Authority Animals

### **Approaches to:**

Religion Courtship  
Raising Children Marriage  
Decision-Making  
Problem Solving

# Signs of Culture Shock

- Sadness or loneliness
- Over-concern with family and friends back home
- Headaches, pains, and allergies
- Insomnia or sleeping too much
- Idealizing your own language and culture
- Trying too hard to adapt by becoming obsessed with the new culture
- Feelings of anger, frustration, and vulnerability
- The smallest problems seem overwhelming
- Feeling shy or insecure
- Homesickness
- Social withdrawal
- Feeling lost or confused
- Questioning the decision to move to this place or host family



# Stage 1: Honeymoon

“The Tourist”



- Very positive, curious, and anticipating new exciting experiences
- “Quaint” or “Charming”
- Feelings of liberation and exploration

Month 1

# Stage 2: Rejection

“The Reality Check”



- What is different or new is actually inferior
- Confusion or frustration
- Familiar comforts are no longer within reach

Month 2-4

# Stage 3: Regression

“I want to go home.”



- “I hate it here!”
- Grades and interest in a social life may dip
- Feelings of isolation, sadness, rage, and homesickness

**Month 3-6**



# Stage 4: Recovery

“The New Normal”

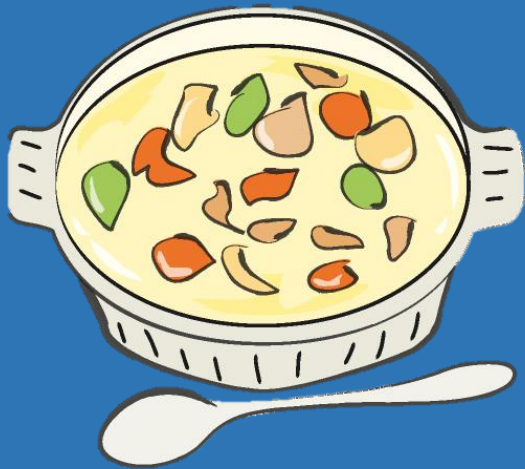
- Problem solving
- Feeling competent, content and hopeful
- Accepting differences



Month 7-9

# Stage 5: Assimilation

“Home sweet home”



- Sense of belonging
- Feeling comfortable, more confident, and balanced
- Sad to leave, promises of return

Month 9-12

# Coping with Culture Shock

- Venture outside of the house
- Get exercise
- Make friends from outside your culture/language
- Learn about American culture and your new city
- Seek assistance
- Be patient
- Be present

# Outcomes of Culture Shock

