



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:

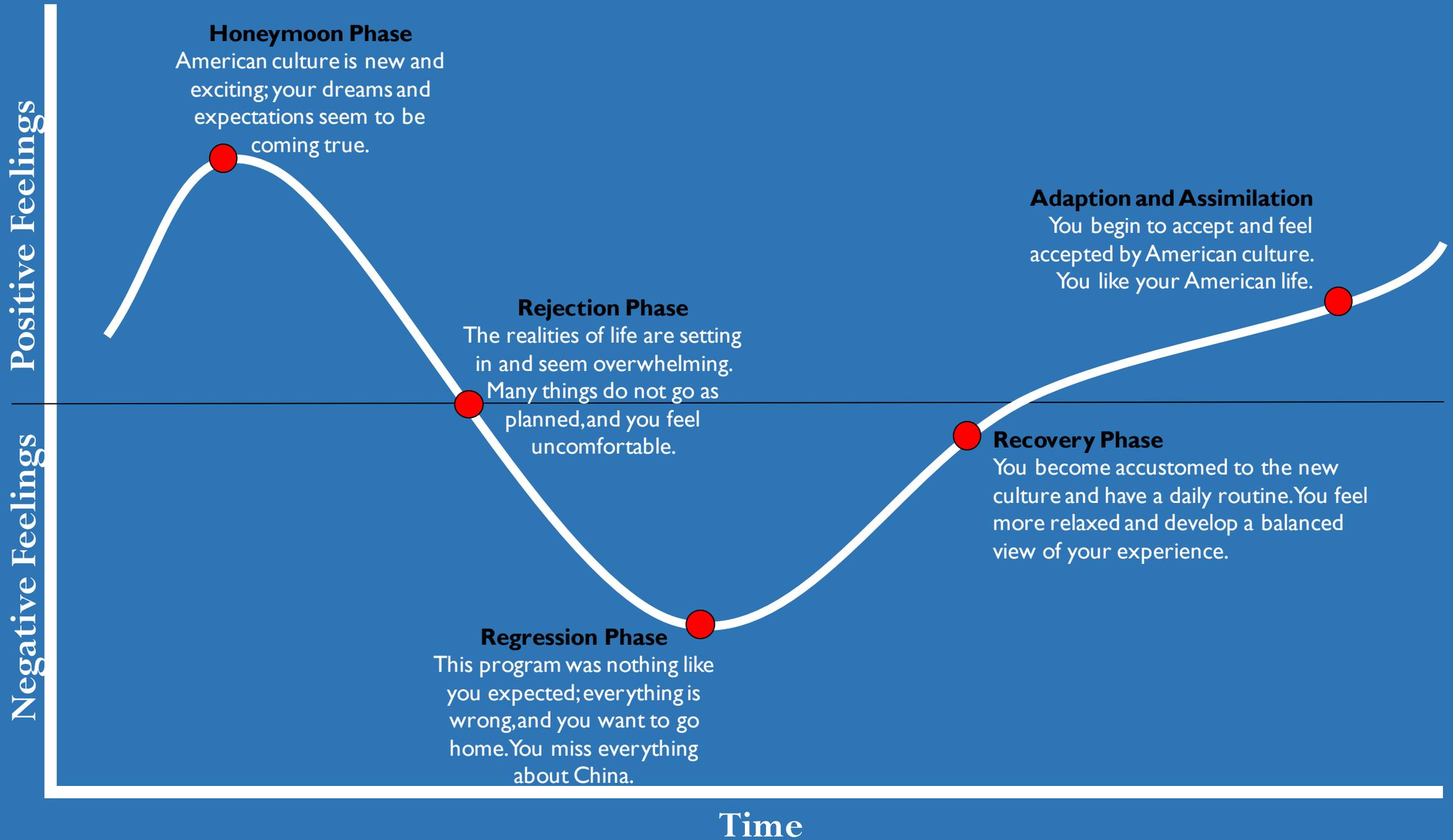
Senior Citizens Children
Rules Work Age
Cooperation vs. Competition
Authority Animals

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



Honeymoon Phase

American culture is new and exciting; your dreams and expectations seem to be coming true.

Rejection Phase

The realities of life are setting in and seem overwhelming. Many things do not go as planned, and you feel uncomfortable.

Regression Phase

This program was nothing like you expected; everything is wrong, and you want to go home. You miss everything about China.

Adaption and Assimilation

You begin to accept and feel accepted by American culture. You like your American life.

Recovery Phase

You become accustomed to the new culture and have a daily routine. You feel more relaxed and develop a balanced view of your experience.

Time

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.”



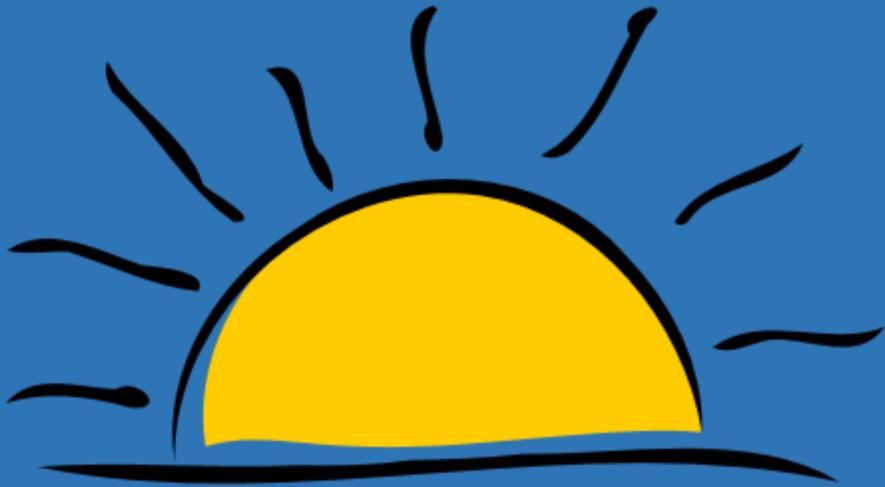
- “I hate it here!”
- Grades and interest in a social life may dip
- Feelings of isolation, sadness, rage, and homesickness

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

Full
Rejection

Cosmopolitan

Full
Integration



Assimilation