

Symptoms of Culture Shock

Culture shock typically happens after basic needs have been met (food, shelter and transportation) and adrenaline levels drop.

You may experience feelings of:

- **Stress or Anxiety.** Significant stress can occur when departing your familiar home environment and entering into a foreign environment.
- **Frustration, Anger or Irritability.** Being unfamiliar with the language, unable to communicate, or unable to find your way around may leave you feeling irritated or angry.
- **Disorientation.** Disorientation can occur whenever someone is placed in unfamiliar physical and social surroundings.
- **Sadness or Homesickness.** Being in new, unfamiliar surroundings may leave you wishing to return home or to be comforted by loved ones.
- **Feelings of Incompetence or Lack of Confidence.** Language barriers or fear of doing something incorrectly may affect your day-to-day activities and leave you feeling unconfident.

Here are some coping strategies:

- **Curiosity.** Learn about the habits, customs, foods and characteristics of the people in the new culture.
- **Sense of Humor.** Develop a sense of humor about the differences in culture.
- **Open-Mindedness.** Keep your opinions flexible and receptive to new ideas or behaviors.
- **Realistic Expectations.** Have positive and realistic expectations about living in a different culture emerge.
- **Tolerance.** View the foreign culture as being different, without automatically equating a "different" lifestyle to a "wrong" lifestyle.

Signs that your child may be going through culture shock include:

- Sleeplessness
- Anger
- Mood Swings
- Anxiety
- Headaches
- Stomachaches
- Crying
- Injuries or Mishaps

Here are some coping strategies:

- Share photographs with them that contain special memories from back home.
- Create a count-down calendar to keep track of when you will return home.
- Eat American cuisine.
- Stream their favorite sports teams.

