

Dynamics of Cross-Cultural Ministry

Needs of the International Student

◆ **Physical Needs**

Opportunities to have a taste of home (finding an ethnic grocery store or having an opportunity to cook)

Exercise and activity

A sense of personal security

Help in finding doctor; dentist; insurance

◆ **Mental Needs**

Expansion of English vocabulary and understanding of American culture

Recognition that studies are top priority

Opportunity for self-expression

Engagement in “substantial conversation” —politics, religion, world views

◆ **Social Needs**

New friendships

Experience in a new culture

Several Christian friends

Note: Friendship Partners should be careful with internationals of the opposite sex, and with touch!

◆ **Emotional Needs**

Help in coping with American ways and attitudes

Experiencing a family atmosphere especially when lonely

Learning to trust you as an American friend—do what you say you’ll do

Finding a secure place to share emotional struggles

◆ **Spiritual Needs**

A respectful listener to his/her religious views—avoid arguments!

Opportunities to observe religious worship meetings

Help in understanding that “American” does not mean “Christian”

◆ **Practical Needs**

Orientation to the area

Transportation—bus, driver’s license and used cars

Parking meters, mail boxes, and the post office

Public restrooms

Safe drinking water

Personal finance—opening bank account and utility services
800 and 900 numbers
Most economical stores—Wal-Mart vs. Neiman Marcus
Managing choices and getting the best buy
Supermarkets and coupons—go with him or her to store
Best times for sales
Garage sales and thrift stores
Tipping
Rental expectations
Appropriate clothes for various occasions

Cross-Cultural Sensitivity

Culture

Culture is the way of life that is shared by the members of a society.

Ethnocentrism

Ethnocentrism is the tendency to view one's own group and ways of doing things as normal and the standard by which to judge others.

American Values	Non-Western Values
nuclear family	extended family
individualism	group most important
written language	legends and stories
social mobility	no career changes or "getting ahead"
technology	relationships
progress and change	family and stability
time efficiency	change is resisted
romantic love	arranged marriages
democracy	socialism, communism, dictatorship
free market	business is cooperative—strategic alliances
youth	age and wisdom
directness	indirectness—use of go-betweens
worth in terms of achievements	people more important than production
competition	equality
secularization and pluralism	religion and culture may be one
entertainment is bought	conversation is entertainment
reasoning in terms of probability	reasoning in terms of known
distrust of authority	submission to authority
privacy	socialization
personal problem solving	corporate problem solving
goal orientation and control over future	fate has predetermined the future

Culture Shock

Culture shock is the negative feelings experienced while adjusting to life in a culture different from one's own. The "shock" can also refer to the accumulation of these feelings until one feels overwhelmed.

Two surprises:

- ◆ Initially, new culture seems the same.
- ◆ Later, new culture seems so different.

Signs of Culture Shock:

- ◆ strain
- ◆ sickness
- ◆ sense of loss; feelings of deprivation
- ◆ overeating or not eating
- ◆ sleeplessness or sleeping all the time
- ◆ rejection
- ◆ withdrawal
- ◆ feelings of discrimination
- ◆ confusion
- ◆ frustration
- ◆ anger
- ◆ surprise, anxiety, disgust, indignation
- ◆ powerlessness

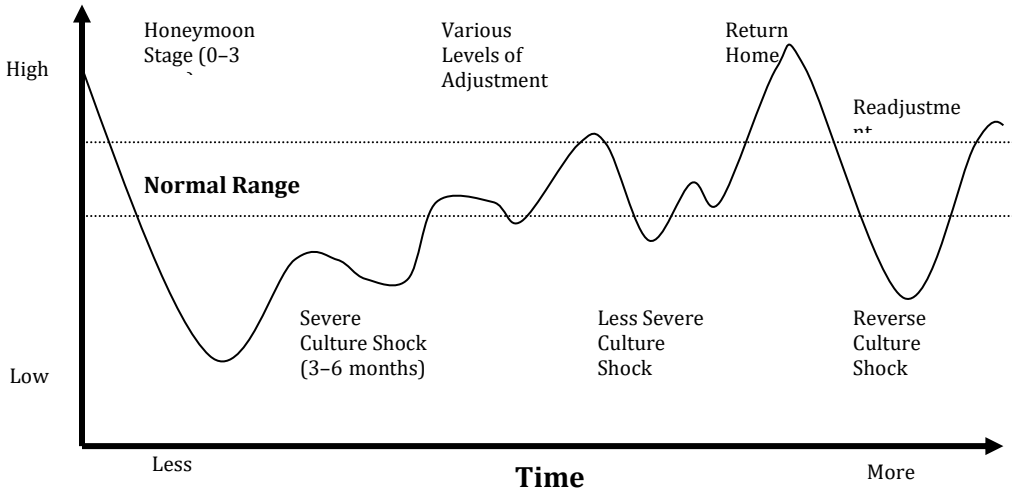
Two solutions:

- ◆ Time
- ◆ Do something—break the routine

This is a critical time for the Friendship Partner relationship! Your student needs your understanding and patient help.

Stages of Cultural Adjustment:

- ◆ Honeymoon
- ◆ Doubt and Reservation
- ◆ Disillusionment and Despair
- ◆ Withdrawal
- ◆ Adjustment and Acceptance



Cycles of Culture Shock

NOTE: Most students will experience reverse culture shock upon their return home.

Get *New Horizons: Adjusting to Life Back Home* or one of our country-specific *Returning to...* booklets from ISI to help your student prepare for his/her re-entry to their home culture.

Areas of Non-verbal Communication:

70% of our communication is non-verbal!

- ◆ Body language
- ◆ Eye movement and position
- ◆ Feelings about touch
- ◆ Use of personal space
- ◆ Formality and informality
- ◆ Time perception

Our Goal

Value the person! Be sensitive to who he or she is, all the changes he or she is facing, and appropriately share Christ's love in a way that the student senses love as our goal.

The Art of Listening

Being a successful cross-cultural communicator with an international student often involves a strong investment in developing good listening skills. While the main objective is to encourage internationals to open up and speak, just shooting questions back and forth can become dull. Mutual satisfaction depends on practicing good communication skills, which entail some of the following characteristics:

- ◆ Select topics that are of mutual interest and require more than short answers. Make sure your surroundings are quiet enough to hear one another.
- ◆ All cultures differ in the spatial distance between two people engaged in conversation. Be alert to non-verbal cues that indicate the other person is feeling uncomfortable, and resist the urge to speak louder if your friend finds it difficult to understand what you are saying.
- ◆ Proper feedback maintains conversation. Use clarification questions that promote dialogue. Don't ask, "Do you understand?" Instead, ask questions like, "Do you mean to say...?" Use open questions instead of yes-and-no ones.
- ◆ Ask follow up questions that indicate your interest in his/her feelings, such as "How did you feel after that happened?" or "How would you respond to this if you were in your culture?"
- ◆ Help bring the conversation into focus by using summarizing statements, such as, "These seem to be the key concerns you have expressed..." or "Your primary point seems to be..." Often, such statements stimulate additional dialogue.
- ◆ Silence makes Americans uncomfortable in conversations. Resist the urge to blurt out something to fill the void. Silent periods may seem awkward to you, but they may indicate showing respect, providing some mental rest, or a transition between topics.
- ◆ Select questions that will get some mileage out of the conversation, as well as indicate greater depth of interest you have in knowing him/her

better. Avoid questions that are too specific about family, or overly trite questions, such as, “Where is your country?” or “When are you going back?”

- ◆ Don't judge the quality of the relationship by how well you communicate on the same wavelength. It may take some time to adjust to one another's communication habits. Be patient and ask God to help draw you closer as friends.
- ◆ Remember that cross-cultural communication is a skill to develop. Keep a humble and learning spirit.