

# Passage for Staff/Students/Families

## Experiencing a New Environment

Time	At home	First month	Second month	Third month	Fourth - fifth months	Sixth month
<b>General attitudes and feelings</b>	Anticipation	Exhilaration	Bewilderment Impatience Disenchantment	Discouragement Irritability	Gradual recovery	Normal
<b>Significant events</b>	<b>Preparation</b> Planning Packing Partying	<b>Welcome events</b> New housing University orientation Enrolment Campus tours Induction programs Sights, shops	<b>Classes begin</b> Unfamiliar sounds, smells, food, language, assignments	<b>Search for reassurance</b> Need for security Need for recreation Mid-semester assignment	<b>Settling in to university routine</b> Acceptable class performance Exams	<b>Normal class performance</b> Prepare for second semester
<b>Emotional responses</b>	<b>Positive</b> Excitement, enthusiasm Some fear of the unknown Concern about leaving family and friends	<b>Preparing</b> Sense of mission or purpose Enthusiasm Adventure	<b>Uncertainty</b> Qualms Uncertainty Restlessness Critical Frustration	<b>Discouragement</b> Bewilderment Concern about health Home sickness	<b>Interest in new culture or resignation</b>	<b>Equilibrium</b>
<b>Behavioural responses</b>	<b>Withdrawal</b> Loss of interest in current home activities Mentally questions values of others and self Much stress on family members	<b>Curiosity</b> Avoids negative hostility Enthusiasm for classes and colleagues	<b>Scepticism</b> Search for familiar activities Increase in smoking Some withdrawal Invokes stereotypes	<b>Avoidance</b> Avoids contact with local people Withdrawal Unexplainable crying	<b>Constructive</b> Accommodation	<b>Equilibrium</b>
<b>Physical responses</b>	<b>Normal health</b> Possible weariness	<b>Unsettled health</b> Intestinal disturbances Minor insomnia	<b>Unsettled health</b> Colds, headaches Some more serious illness Increased visits to doctors	<b>Unsettled health</b> Minor illnesses Insomnia Sore throat Weight loss Skin problems	<b>Normal health</b>	<b>Normal health</b>



## Responding to culture shock

In the diverse environment at Flinders, it is important to be aware of ways that the stress from culture shock can be reduced. If you become aware of someone who may be experiencing culture shock, the following strategies can help you assist a new staff member or student to be comfortable within this culturally unique environment.

Positive actions	How these actions can help	How to respond to people experiencing culture shock
<b>Social activity</b>	Encourages people to observe and learn how different customs are practised in a non-threatening atmosphere.	Encourage as much involvement as possible, so as to experience firsthand what others are doing.  Invite someone to visit public places, such as shopping or sporting events.
<b>Having Australian friends</b>	By having friends to talk to, people are able to ask questions about perplexing problems and without feeling vulnerable or foolish	Often a friendly face and a cheery 'How are you doing?' is enough.  Start a 'buddy' system in your area, or locate existing programs.
<b>Access to support</b>	Helps to inform and reduce isolation – a common symptom of culture shock.	Inform <b>students</b> about the free counselling service available through Health and Counselling ph 8201 2118, the support of International Student Services Unit ph 8201 2717, and the 'Get Connected' program <a href="http://www.flinders.edu.au/getconnected">http://www.flinders.edu.au/getconnected</a> Inform <b>staff</b> about the Employee Assistance Program - see <a href="http://www.flinders.edu.au/ohsw/EAP.html">http://www.flinders.edu.au/ohsw/EAP.html</a>
<b>Exercise</b>	Reduces stress and depression. Sports clubs and societies provide a valuable social link to meeting new people and understanding local culture.	Make information available about student clubs and societies and the range of sporting clubs that may interest them. <a href="http://www.flinders.edu.au/sports/">http://www.flinders.edu.au/sports/</a> Invite new people to walk with you or join you at lunchtime.
<b>Community involvement</b>	Community activities, religious services or volunteer opportunities can help someone become a member of the community.	Talk about the interests and community involvement of people within the local culture. Keep copies of local newspapers in student waiting areas.
<b>Meeting others in the same situation</b>	Other staff or students may be experiencing the same problems. By talking to them, various ways to cope with problems can be shared.	Extend an invitation to go to a social event on campus, or a community event such as a football game.
<b>Keep in contact with family</b>	Generates excitement, lessens isolation and helps to maintain an individual's culture.	Encourage the use of email to contact friends and family, making sure students know how to use their email.
<b>Patience</b>	Patience and encouragement demonstrate understanding, respect and acceptance.	Reassurance that their feelings are not permanent will help, as will acknowledging that it takes time to adjust and accommodate.