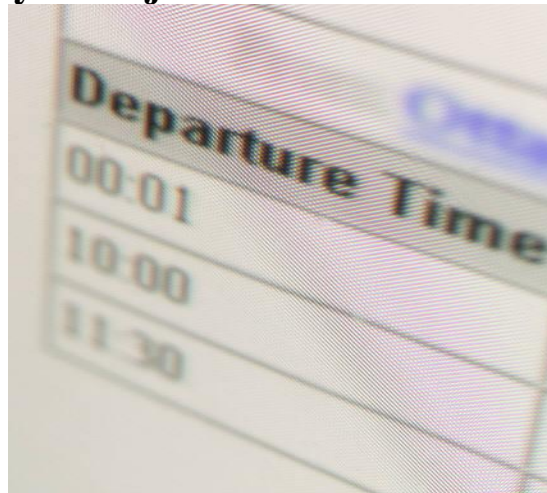


Getting Ready to Adjust to a New Life in a New Culture



As you are preparing for your departure to the United States, you will be experiencing many different emotions. Your transition from your native culture to the United States, and to Pocatello, Idaho, in particular, may be more or less challenging. How easily you adjust will depend on how much you have traveled and been away from your family and how close or distant your native culture is to U.S. culture.

You are about to embark on the adventure of a lifetime and so you might want to think about the following stages of cultural adaptation that researchers have observed. Not everyone goes through all stages and they are not linear, but everyone experiences some aspects of these stages.

Remember that you will be a richer and a more well rounded person for immersing yourself in a new language and culture! Becoming increasingly bicultural and bilingual is the greatest benefit you can take away from your adventure in the U.S.!

The Preliminary Phase

This stage takes place when you are still in your home culture. You think about the host culture you are going into. Read about it. Feel some *excitement* and also maybe some *anxiety* about leaving home.

The Honeymoon Phase or Initial Euphoria Phase

This stage is marked by the first excitement of arrival when everything is new and interesting and you feel curious about the host culture. It seems like an exotic place!



Irritability Phase or Phase of Shock

Things that are different in the host culture irritate you. The excitement has worn off and you may tend to seek out people only from your home culture. You may feel angry and very critical or really sad. Almost everything in your home culture is seen in a positive light, even things you used to dislike about it! You may really wonder why you ever decided to come to the U.S.! You may withdraw from others.



Gradual Adjustment Phase or Negotiation Phase

You begin to understand your host culture better and compare it less with your home culture. You begin to understand differences. You begin to see advantages and disadvantages in your home and host culture.

Adaptation and Bicultural Phase

The host culture feels less foreign! You feel less foreign in it! You equally enjoy parts of home and host culture. You feel equally comfortable in home and host culture. You can act as an ambassador for either culture.

