

The Culture Shock Absorber

<p>STEP ONE: <i>Situation</i></p> <p>Describe an event that has happened here since your arrival that led to an unpleasant emotional reaction to the host culture.</p>													
<p>STEP TWO: <i>Expectations</i></p> <p>Identify the behavior you would expect of members of your own culture given the situation described in STEP ONE.</p>													
<p>STEP THREE: <i>Emotion(s)</i></p> <p>Specify the emotion(s) you experienced in the situation described in STEP ONE.</p> <p>Were those emotions <i>strong, moderate, or weak</i>?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Strong <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate <input type="checkbox"/> Weak</p>												
<p>STEP FOUR: <i>Automatic Thoughts</i></p> <p>Write the thoughts that came to you automatically as you experienced the event described in STEP ONE.</p> <p>Was your confidence in the truth value of these thoughts <i>strong, moderate, or weak</i>?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Strong <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate <input type="checkbox"/> Weak</p>												
<p>STEP FIVE: <i>Classification</i></p> <p>Identify the type of automatic thoughts you are thinking. Does more than one apply?</p>	<table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> All of Nothing</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Emotional Reasoning</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Overgeneralization</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Should Statements</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Mental Filter</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Labeling</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Disqualifying the Positive</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Personalization</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Jumping to Conclusions</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Other?</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Magnification/Minimization</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	<input type="checkbox"/> All of Nothing	<input type="checkbox"/> Emotional Reasoning	<input type="checkbox"/> Overgeneralization	<input type="checkbox"/> Should Statements	<input type="checkbox"/> Mental Filter	<input type="checkbox"/> Labeling	<input type="checkbox"/> Disqualifying the Positive	<input type="checkbox"/> Personalization	<input type="checkbox"/> Jumping to Conclusions	<input type="checkbox"/> Other?	<input type="checkbox"/> Magnification/Minimization	
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<p>STEP SIX: <i>Hypotheses</i></p> <p>Formulate a reasonable hypothesis which might explain the behavior identified in STEP ONE.</p> <p>Is your confidence in the feasibility of this <i>strong, moderate, or weak</i>? Check one.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Strong <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate <input type="checkbox"/> Weak</p>												
<p>STEP SEVEN: <i>Re-evaluation of Automatic Thoughts</i></p> <p>Return to STEP FOUR to review your initial automatic thoughts. How confident are you now? Was there any change?</p>	<p><i>Use this space to note any changes.</i></p>												
<p>STEP EIGHT: <i>Re-evaluation of Emotion(s)</i></p> <p>Return to STEP THREE to review the emotions you initially experienced with regard to this event. How strong are those emotions now? How have they changed?</p>	<p><i>Use this space to note any changes.</i></p>												

Classification Categories for Automatic Thoughts

- **OVERGENERALIZATION/JUMPING TO CONCLUSIONS.** Often using the words "always" and "never," you observe a single negative event and describe it to yourself as if it represented a pattern of endless repetition.

You are treated rudely by a restaurant waiter. Your automatic thoughts: "These waiters are always rude to foreigners. They are always so cold and impartial."

- **ALL OR NOTHING.** You interpret events in terms of black and white; either they are good or they are bad. There is no room for shades of gray. The local culture must meet your expectations 100% or not at all.

A taxi driver does not stop for you. You assume s/he is refusing you because of your apparent "foreignness."

- **MENTAL FILTER.** You strain your observations through a kind of mental filter that leaves only negative details to be evaluated while positive ones slip through the holes. (You dwell on the negative)

You join a student activity while abroad and one local student exhibits behaviors that are considered arrogant, sexist and discriminatory. He is a problem and even the other club members avoid him. Nevertheless, you decide that you will not participate in this activity again. He has ruined the experience for you. In describing the activity, you attribute to the whole the personality features of the single person. You do not recount any positive aspects of the experience.

- **DISQUALIFYING THE POSITIVE.** You distort positive experiences so that they become negative ones.

A local person is especially friendly to you. You think: "She's just being nice because she wants something."

- **MAGNIFICATION.** You exaggerate the severity of problems in the local culture.

You observe that local university students are seemingly not career oriented and conclude that this will ultimately cripple the future economy.

- **MINIMIZATION.** You discount the strengths of the local culture.

You learn that a majority of young people graduate from high school and many continue on to college, but you assert that the quality of education is poor.

- **"SHOULD" STATEMENTS.** You have certain expectations of the culture and its members. When they are not met, you get angry and judgmental saying, "they SHOULD do this or that."

You observe that women and men have different roles and expectations in the local society. You are amazed and think: "A nation as rich and technologically advanced as this SHOULD provide equal opportunities for women to pursue a challenging career."

- **LABELING.** You engage in name calling, applying a negative label to the country and its people.

You observe imported ideas and products and claim that the local people are copycats.

- **PERSONALIZATION.** You assume that the local people are automatically suspicious of foreigners, and that their behavior belies their suspicion.

You are scolded for taking a photograph in a public place. You assume that your foreignness prompted, or at least sanctioned, the outburst.