



C H I

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Adjustment**Difficulties**

adjustment difficulties

Many people when they first relocate overseas will experience periods of homesickness whilst they are settling in. This may be more noticeable if it is your first posting abroad, you are finding it difficult to meet new people, you don't have your usual support networks available to contact, or you find it difficult to adjust to the new culture where you live.

If you are experiencing homesickness, stress and depression, it may be helpful to talk to friends (many other expatriates also living in Singapore will have experienced the same adjustment difficulties), your family doctor or a counsellor.

Children are also likely to experience homesickness as they are away from their grandparents, extended family and friends, are starting at new schools, and are adjusting to new routines and the new climate. They need support and reassurance from their parents, friends and teachers as they adjust to their new environment.

There are usually four phases during the adjustment phase that you may experience:



- **Honeymoon:** Everything is great, nothing is wrong; you're having a wonderful time
- **Shock:** There are so many differences in this country that you don't know how to deal with them. You didn't think things would be like this
- **Negotiation:** You learn to deal with the problems set before you and try to integrate them with your own beliefs
- **Acceptance:** You are able to live well in the environment with the differences you are experiencing

Not everyone passes through these phases and not everyone is in the new culture long enough to pass through all four.

When you leave your home culture, you separate yourself from the people and circumstances you know and it is possible that you may feel a loss of some of your identity. The impact of this change can be disorienting and upsetting. It is called "culture shock."

Symptoms of culture shock may include feeling very angry over minor inconveniences, irritability, extreme homesickness, withdrawal from people who are different from you, boredom, headaches, overeating or loss of appetite, a need for excessive sleep, upset stomach, depression, unexplained crying, marital or relationship stress, loss of ability to work or study effectively and sudden intense feeling of loyalty to your own culture.

When experiencing culture shock or adjustment difficulties, you may not have every symptom on the list. It is possible that only a few may apply to you.

solution for culture shock & adjustment difficulties

Even though you may not be able to avoid adjustment difficulties or "culture shock", there are ways to ease the stress whilst you are settling in.

Some techniques include regular exercise, meditation, yoga, adequate sleep, a healthy diet, minimising alcohol consumption, keeping busy and becoming involved in the expatriate community. These techniques can help you manage stress whilst you adjust to your new environment and feel more settled in your new posting.

Getting out and about will help you see how Singaporeans and expatriates live here.

Making local and expatriate friends who can assist as you are finding your way around and help with answering the many questions you have upon arriving will help ease stress.

Reading magazines targeted at the expatriate population will help inform you about services available in Singapore and help you gain more knowledge about the culture you are being introduced to.

Try and be open-minded and familiarise yourself with the local customs and language.

Be patient! Many people new to Singapore will take some time to adjust and settle in and the majority realise that this is a wonderful, interesting, safe and clean environment in which to live!



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