

# Life in the USA



Fall 2009 Orientation

## Adapting to a New Culture

- Step One: get excited as you prepare to leave your home culture
- Step Two: feel happy to be in new culture; you notice some differences but they aren't a problem
- Step Three: go through culture shock!
- Step Four: understand differences in the two cultures
- Step Five: go through re-entry shock

## Adapting to a New Culture

### Culture Shock

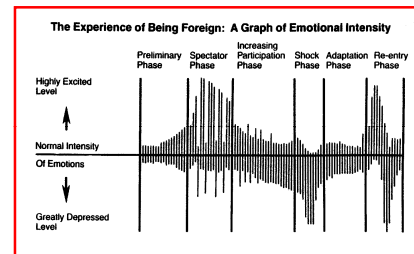
#### Symptoms

- homesickness
- sleeping a lot or very little
- depression
- negativity towards new environment
- unexplained reactions to everyday situations

#### Solutions

- recognize the symptoms and take action
- get involved with campus activities
- talk to someone
- Remember culture shock is only one step in the process

## Cultural Adaptation Process



Lewis, Tom J. and Robert E. Jungman, editors. *On Being Foreign: culture shock in short fiction*. Yarmouth Maine: Intercultural Press, Inc., 1986.

## Basic Cultural Information

### Classroom

- attendance counts!
- speak up in class-- questions are encouraged
- use your syllabus
- take advantage of office hours
- record class sessions for later review
- general rule: 1 hour of class time requires 1.5-2 hours of study time
- join study groups
- plagiarism carries heavy consequences
- get a classmate's phone number or e-mail



## Basic Cultural Information

### Understanding Americans



- "Americans are so busy!"
- punctuality is important
- go "dutch"
- silence is uncomfortable
- Americans are open and direct when speaking
- use your English!!!
- Taboo Topics
  - Money, religion, private life, some controversial topics
- Take advantage being from another country! You can ask about these things, but carefully
- "I hope you don't mind my asking, but..." is
- "May I ask you a personal question?"



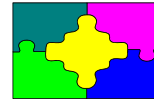
## Basic Cultural Information

### *Understanding Americans*

- individualism, independence and responsibility very important—taught at a very early age
- defining American culture is very difficult—most people can't describe it!
- generalizations are common, but can offend...be careful!
- 'all people are created equal', but that is not what you will always see




## Keeping Busy On and Off Campus



## Keeping Busy On Campus

### *Resources*

- Mace & Crown – ODU student newspaper 
- Campus Information Center (CIC) in Webb Center
- Campus offices: Office of Intercultural Relations (OIR), Office of Student Activities and Leadership (OSAL)
- ISSlist—everyone is a member after checking in with ISSS
- OIR listserv
- University calendar online



## Keeping Busy Off Campus

### *Resources*



- The Virginian Pilot--local newspaper
- [www.hamptonroads.com](http://www.hamptonroads.com)--events in the Hampton Roads area
- [www.fandango.com](http://www.fandango.com)--movie times and tickets
- Transportation
  - HRT public bus—FREE for students with ODU bus pass
  - University shuttle to Downtown Norfolk--FREE
  - taxi
  - 622-3232, 855-4444



## Keeping Busy Off Campus

### *Programs and Opportunities*

- Downtown Norfolk
- Virginia Beach
- Downtown Portsmouth
- Religious organizations
- Volunteer Work
  - Red Cross
  - schools and libraries
  - many, many other places



Questions?

