



AAFP GLOBAL HEALTH SUMMIT
Primary Health Care and Family Medicine: Health Equity for All

**Around the World and Back Home Again:
 Reentry Shock**

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Culture Shock

- Discomfort experienced in an unfamiliar environment:
 - * a cultural environment different from one's own
- The personal disorientation of experiencing an unfamiliar way of life
- Process of initial adjustment

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Learning Objectives

- Describe and recognize the signs of reentry shock.
- Develop a plan to prepare for reentry shock prior to departure.
- Address reentry shock when it occurs with identified coping strategies.

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Sources of Culture Shock

- Language



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Sources of Culture Shock

- Food



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Sources of Culture Shock

- Sleeping arrangements
- Homesickness
- Bathroom
- Technology gap



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What is Reentry Shock?



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Culture Shock



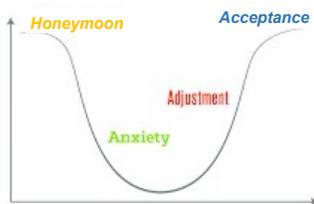
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What is Reentry Shock?

- "Reverse Culture Shock"
- Adjustment/ difficulties upon re-entering one's own culture
- Difficulty of returning to what's routine
- Degree of difficulty is based on degree of immersion in the culture

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Stages of Culture Shock



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Significance of Cross-Cultural Reentry

- Largely neglected and underestimated
- Affects:
 - Psychological well-being
 - Social readjustment
 - Cultural identity

12

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Significance of Cross-Cultural Reentry

- Individuals: emotional distress may persist > 6 months.
- Magnitude of distress can reach clinical levels.
- Intensity of grief - comparable to a bereaved individual.

13

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Reentry Stages

*Family & friends are only mildly interested

Initial Excitement:
Enjoy being at home

Judgmental Stage:
Nothing at home seems good; finding fault.

Realization Stage:
Noticing significant changes at home and in oneself.

Start feeling out of place

Balanced Re-adaptation:
Integrating the experience abroad with living at home or finding other ways to cope with reentry.

REVERSE CULTURE SHOCK
Frustration

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Intensity of Reentry Shock

- More intense than culture shock
- Related to:
 - 1) Unexpectedness of difficulties encountered
 - 2) Lack of preparation for reentry
 - 3) Grief over what they left behind
 - 4) Attitudes of home country individuals towards the returnee

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Upon Reentry

- What feelings & symptoms might you experience upon reentry?
- What was most challenging?
- How do you feel about your home culture now?
- What might you expect of your family and friends?

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A Review of the Literature

- Data Collection: Surveys and interviews
 - **retrospective self-reporting
- Populations investigated: corporate and students
- Difficulties of reentry transition have been acknowledged
- Research re: reentry programs is lacking

15

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Home Culture

- Judging the home culture
- Focusing on everything you don't like

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Expectations of Family & Friends

- Others do not understand you
- Difficulty communicating with others
- Difficulty relating to others
- Feeling resistant to family and friends

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Feelings & Symptoms of Reentry Shock

- Reverse Homesickness
- Negativity towards your native culture
- Need for excessive sleep
- Change in values, goals, priorities, attitudes
- Disdain for American things
- Communication is difficult

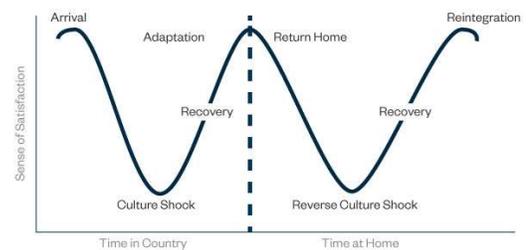
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Consumer Overload



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Culture and Reverse Culture Shock



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Feelings & Symptoms of Reentry Shock

- Frustration/ Irritability
- Boredom
- Restlessness
- Feelings of isolation/ alienation/ withdrawal
- Feelings of depression
- Difficulty concentrating

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Reentry Experience



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25

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Handling for Reentry

- **Be prepared** – expect an adjustment period
- Start a blog/ journal
- Sketch/ take photos and submit to the local community
- Read about your host country
- Start a tradition
- Connect with new friends in the new culture and at home

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Reentry Experience



26

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Handling Reentry

- Readjust without losing what you learned/ new values
- Resist returning to the “old you” to fit expectations
- Share your experience
- Acknowledge others may not understand
- Look for opportunities to practice new language skills

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Preparation for Reentry Shock

- Gain a basic understanding of culture shock and reentry shock
- Schedule a post-return debriefing with trusted mentors/ colleagues:
 - Discuss the experience
 - Discuss reentry

27

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Benefits of Reentry Shock

- Adapting to the host country... now another place called home
- Learning to function and thrive in new and uncomfortable situations

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Reassurance

- Reentry shock is normal!
- It allows growth.
- Worldviews and priorities may change

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Seeing Medicine and the World in a New Light

- Around the world and back home again...
 - What impact did your experience have on your practice of medicine?
 - How did the view of your world, home culture or family change?



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