

CULTURAL ADJUSTMENTS COPING EFFECTIVELY

Do you feel isolated being in a new culture? Do you have difficulty managing multiple roles? Do you feel overwhelmed by the demands of the host culture. Well, you are not alone and it is very normal for international students to experience the culture shock. Here are some guidelines that I think could be useful in helping you to cope effectively so that you can be successful in your academic pursuit.

1. **Be “thick-skinned”** Don’t be afraid to ask questions when you are not sure about anything whether it is as simple as “Where could I get Asian’s spices and food?” or as difficult as “How can I apply day care or school for my children?” Many loving and warmth Americans are very happy and ready to help you. You could also ask those “seasoned” international students because they have already walk the same path that your are now walking.
2. **Focus:** Focus requires you to clearly understand your PRIORITY. It is very important for you to know that your primary goal in the USA is to “STUDY”. Yes, there are many new things and activities that you want to participate that could enrich your life experiences. But first thing first, you must focus and do well in your study and other things will follow suit.

3. **Time Management:** Time management is not just about managing your time effectively but also managing your personal lives. In the United States you may find a new sense of freedom and independence. For example, you don’t have to tell your parents where you are going and what time you will be back at home. However, freedom and independence must require DISCIPLINE. Discipline allows you to manage your time effectively so that you could study and also involve in other activities (e.g., social parties, car trips, etc). As for those who are married with children, time management is essential for your mental well-being. Time management allows you to effectively manage your time and energy among study, work, family, and leisure.
4. **Building Connection:** Being in a new country, you will lose your familiar support from your immediate family members, relatives, and friends from your home country. Thus, it is important for you to build your connection and support from your newly found friends and American hosts. There are many student organizations and social clubs on campus that you could make new friends.
5. **Having Fun!** Having fun does not mean that your recklessly involve in activities (e.g., abuse of alcohol, gambling, and drugs) that undermine your study and

personal well-being. As mentioned in the above, you could effectively manage your time to have fun activities that provides stress reduction after a day of hard work. Examples, exercise, listening to your favorite music and movies, eating at your favorite restaurants, hobbies, etc.

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