

# Developing Cultural Awareness:

The Culture Shock “W” model describes what individuals from different cultures tend to experience, however, these individuals can begin at any phase.

## Phases:

1. Honeymoon
2. Culture Shock
3. Initial Adjustment
4. Mental Isolation
5. Acceptance & Integration

### Initial Adjustment Phase:

“I feel I’m beginning to understand the new culture. My coping skills are getting better. Things feel familiar and I feel a sense of belonging.”

### Honeymoon Phase:

“Everything is new and exciting! New food, new people, new places!!”

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### Acceptance and Integration Phase:

“I’m starting to feel at home in my new country. I feel a sense of routine, trust and belonging. I have a bicultural and multicultural identity... if I go home, I may experience culture shock again!”

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### Culture Shock Phase:

“The excitement is wearing off. My English isn’t improving. I feel overwhelmed.”

What are my goals for being here? ...  
Should I go back home? ...

### Mental Isolation Phase:

“I’m starting to feel lonely. I miss my friends, my family and my home country. I’m still frustrated with the language; my self confidence is low. Canada has both good and bad things to offer.”

## What We Know About Culture Shock:

- It can make communication difficult
- It can cause anxiety, depression and loneliness
- It can lead to poor self-confidence
- It can lead to positive and negative attitudes about the new country

## Emotional Symptoms:

- “I miss home...”
- “I feel lonely, sad and depressed....”
- “I don’t know who I am...”
- “I feel resentment.....”
- “I feel ‘information overload’....”

## Physical Symptoms:

- “I can’t sleep/ I sleep too much...”
- “I have no energy...”
- “I feel physical pain and aches....”
- “I eat too much/too little...”

# What About Those Born in Canada?

As previously stated, Culture Shock “W” model describes what individuals from different cultures experience. So what about those of us born in Canada?

## Phases:

1. Denial
2. Defense
3. Minimization & Acceptance
4. Adaptation
5. Integration

### Minimization Stage:

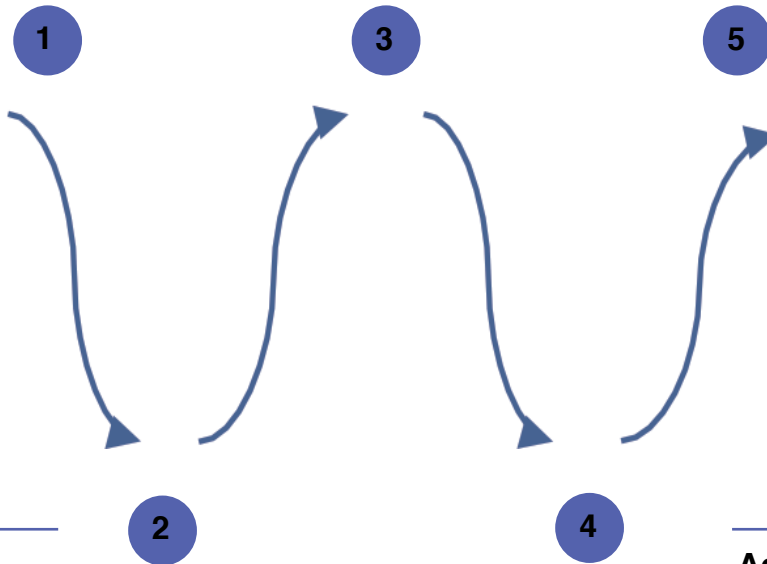
“Basically, all humans are alike. There’s really no differences that exist – only cultural similarities.”

### Acceptance stage:

“I accept and recognize differences in cultural values.”

### Denial Phase:

“I am physically and socially isolated from other cultures. There’s little to no contact between us. The reality around me is the only thing I am aware of.”



### Integration:

“I am able to see things in a cultural context. I think about what I can do to accommodate and support individuals from various cultures.”

### Defense stage:

“I notice different cultures and I feel they threaten my world. I think my culture is better than the other cultures.”

### Adaptation stage:

“I realize that accepting differences is a process. I can empathize with someone of a different culture than my own.”

### Goes Like This...

The model describes how we become sensitive to cultural differences by passing through low experience to increased experience and appreciation for diversity!

### Tips to Improve

#### Intercultural Communication:

- Be aware of your own culture
- Be aware that your understanding is not the same as someone else’s
- Try to put yourself in another person’s situation
- Don’t stereotype
- Be respectful and mindful of your behavior. Other cultures will appreciate this attitude