WORKSHEET 47 · FOR THE PSYCHOLOGIST

My adjustment curve

Mapping the ups and downs of settling in a new country

AIM

Normalise the emotional ups and downs of adjusting to a new country (enthusiasm, disillusion, adjustment) by drawing one's own curve, without locking it into a single model.

WHO IT IS FOR

First months or years abroad, international students, accompanying partners.

DURATION

15-20 min in session

HOW TO RUN IT

1. Present the classic curve (discovery, shock, adjustment, adaptation) as a common description, not a rule: research shows very varied paths.
2. Ask the person to draw their own curve since arriving, with the key moments (good and difficult).
3. For the dips: what was happening? What helped them recover?
4. For today: where are they? What would help them now?
5. Identify upcoming risk periods (winter, holidays, anniversaries of leaving).

POINTS TO WATCH

> Avoid predicting a "dip" for someone who is doing well: present the curve as a possible map. A difficulty that lasts or gets worse deserves an assessment (depression, anxiety), not just the explanation "it's culture shock".

REFERENCES

Oberg, K. (1960). Cultural shock: Adjustment to new cultural environments. Practical Anthropology, 7(4), 177-182.

Ward, C., Bochner, S. & Furnham, A. (2001). The Psychology of Culture Shock (2nd ed.). Routledge.

PSYCHOLOGIST'S NOTES

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WORKSHEET 47 · WORKSHEET TO HAND OUT

My adjustment curve

Settling in a new country is not a straight line. There are often highs (discovery), lows (tiredness, loneliness) and recoveries. Your curve is unique: draw it.

1. Identify the important moments since you arrived.
2. For each one, note how you felt, from 0 (very bad) to 10 (very good).
3. For the low moments: what helped you recover?
4. And today, where are you?

Moment (date)	What was happening	How I was /10	What helped me

What would I need now, at this point on my curve?

These exercises do not replace therapy. If you are in distress or having suicidal thoughts: 112 (European Union), 3114 (France) or the emergency number of the country where you live.

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