WORKSHEET 51 · FOR THE PSYCHOLOGIST

Between two cultures

How I combine my culture of origin and the one here

AIM

Help the person observe how they combine their culture of origin and that of the host country across the areas of their life, and choose consciously what they keep, adopt or adapt.

WHO IT IS FOR

Expatriates, migrants, second generations, intercultural couples, parents raising children in another culture.

DURATION

20 min in session

HOW TO RUN IT

1. Introduce two simple questions: how much do I keep my culture of origin? How much do I take part in the culture here? They are not opposites.
2. Look area by area: language, food, friendships, work, celebrations, child-rearing, religion or spirituality, partner.
3. For each area: what comes from there, from here, from a mix? How does the person feel about it?
4. Identify the tensions (loyalty to the family, pressure from the host country) and what is chosen versus what is endured.
5. Choose an area in which the person would like to find a better balance.

POINTS TO WATCH

> There is no universally “right” strategy: research often links integrating both cultures with better adjustment, but it depends on the context (discrimination, status, welcome). Avoid judging the person’s cultural choices.

REFERENCES

Berry, J. W. (1997). Immigration, acculturation, and adaptation. Applied Psychology: An International Review, 46(1), 5-34.

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

PSYCHOLOGIST’S NOTES

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WORKSHEET 51 · WORKSHEET TO HAND OUT

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Living abroad means juggling two cultures. You can keep things from there, adopt things from here, mix them. There is no recipe: look at how you do it, area by area.

1. For each area, note what comes from your culture of origin.
2. Note what you have adopted here.
3. Note how you feel about that balance (from 0 to 10).
4. The area in which I would like a different balance: _____

Area (language, food, friends, celebrations, children…)	From there	From here	I feel good /10

What do I really choose and what do I endure?

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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