



# Guide To Culture Shock

Most people experience some degree of psychological disorientation when they move for an extended period of time into a culture that is markedly different from their own. The essence of culture shock consists in the basic “they’re doing it the wrong way” reaction familiar to all expatriates– the intense sense that something doesn't make sense, or isn't being done correctly, or is just plain wrong!

### CULTURE SHOCK HAS TWO FEATURES:

1. It doesn't result from a single, specific event; it results from experiencing multiple different ways of doing things, organizing, perceiving, or valuing which are fundamentally different from our own. This difference threatens our basic (and unconscious) belief that own ways of doing things (our customs, habits, behaviors and values) are the “right” ways.
2. It does not arise suddenly. It is cumulative– it builds up slowly, over time, from a series of small events, each of which may seem insignificant by itself. In this way, *some people who have lived in another culture for more time may experience more intense culture shock than newcomers!*

*Provided as a community service by PSI, Bangkok's professional and experienced group of expatriate mental health professionals. PSI is located in a private and peaceful setting in the city center.*

### Some Signs of Culture Shock

Homesickness	Withdrawal	Irritability	Marital/Family Stress
Boredom	Compulsive eating/drinking	Difficulty working	Physical Ailments
Chauvinistic Attitudes and Behavior	Stereotyping of host citizens	Hostility toward host citizens	Exaggerated Cleanliness

### What To Do

- Ψ Learn as much as you can about your new environment & host culture
- Ψ Try to avoid harsh judgments of habits or values different from your own; no one has a monopoly on 'Truth' or 'The Right Way' to do things.
- Ψ Remember that your judgments are not logical or rational– they are rooted in values and preferences– which are emotional!
- Ψ Accept that there are many different and legitimate ways to do things, and being flexible yourself!
- Ψ Discuss your reactions with other people. Avoid discussing your reactions

## PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES INTERNATIONAL

9/2 Sukhumvit 43  
Bangkok, 10110  
BTS Phrom Phong  
Free Parking Outside Our Door

Phone: 02-259-1467  
Fax: 02-262-0605  
E-mail: [psi@psiadmin.com](mailto:psi@psiadmin.com)  
[www.psiadmin.com](http://www.psiadmin.com)