

The Four Stages of Culture Shock

STAGE	CHARACTERISTICS	SUPPORT TO OFFER
Honeymoon	An initial reaction of enthusiasm, fascination, admiration, and friendly superficial relationships with hosts. Because refugees have not come to Canada by choice, they may be less enthusiastic.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide orientation and information • Focus on the practical aspects of becoming independent in Canada (i.e. language training, transportation)
Challenge and Crisis	<p>Differences in language, concepts, and values lead to feelings of inadequacy, frustration, and anger.</p> <p>These differences may become an obstacle in making new relationships and challenges in communication can be difficult and lead to loneliness and isolation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate empathy and explain that feelings of anger or frustration are normal and legitimate • Share information about culture shock • Help the newcomer focus on what they are able to do, rather than what they are not • Give opportunities to learn together about cross-cultural communications • Talk through difficult situations and learn how these are dealt with in the newcomer's culture • If you sense they need mental health supports, assist them in finding appropriate help
Recovery	<p>In this stage, the refugees begin to resolve feelings of crisis as they strengthen their language skills and understanding of Canadian culture improves. Factors known to facilitate this include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having a sense of purpose • Being engaged in a community • Having structure in life • Strong social support structures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set aside time to share stories back and forth with the refugees, as their English-language abilities improve • Work with them to seek out meaningful volunteer or work opportunities in the community (ensuring that English language learning is still prioritized) • Walk alongside them as they develop a plan for life in Canada
Adjustment	Refugees find their place in Canada and enjoy Canadian life and culture. Challenges will continue to exist as they develop a new cultural identity.	Continue to provide support and friendship. Walk alongside them as they continue to build a new life in Canada.