

COMING HOME



and making sense
of the experience

It's kind of strange to be talking about coming home before you've even left but coming home is sometimes as challenging as going abroad is.



So we thought we would give you a bit of information on "Re-entry" now to help ease that transition.

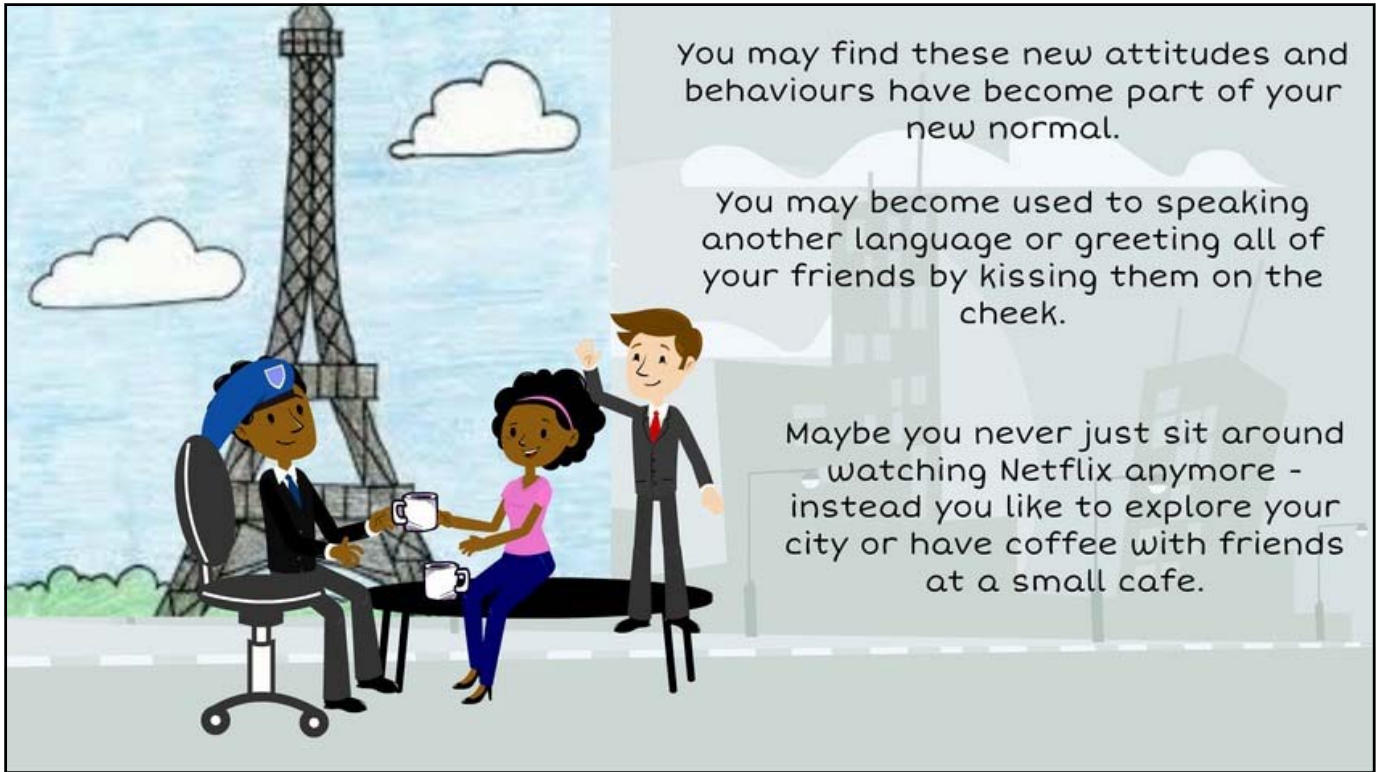
When you arrived in your host country you really didn't know what to expect. This was a totally new adventure for you. You likely experienced culture shock.



Things were different from home, and it may have taken you a while but you finally adapted to this new environment.



Remember we talked about values, attitudes and behaviours differing in different cultures? Well, very often, in adapting to your new environment, you will adopt some of these attitudes and behaviours without even realizing it.



And that's great!

That's what we hope you will experience while living in another country and culture.



When you experience having to adapt your behaviour to fit another cultural reality, you are truly on your way to becoming interculturally competent.

ok, so fast forward.

You are coming to the end of your trip.

While you may be sad to be leaving your adopted "home" and all of your new friends, you're excited to see your family and friends back home as well.

And so after many hugs and tears you hop a plane and head for home.

Going home is going back to the familiar. You know what to expect. You can't wait to see everyone and tell them all of your stories.

You want to find out what they have been up to as well.



It will be great...you will just settle right back into your old life.

Soon you will be back at school, hanging out with friends, going to class. Everything will be just great!

REALITY CHECK!!!

The transition back to home can be challenging!

You might have gained a new perspective as a result of your time abroad.

You might have another frame of reference to think about intercultural situations or global events.

You may be even more open to trying new things.

You might want to keep discovering, and be less willing to settle for what was.



Common Challenges of Coming Home

Boredom

After all the newness and stimulation of your time abroad returning to old routines (however nice and comforting) can seem very dull.



"No One Wants to Hear"

One thing you can count is that no one will be as interested in hearing about your adventures as you are in sharing them.

Not being able to explain

Even when asked to explain all the feelings about your study abroad experience, you may not be able to relay them coherently.



Reverse "Homesickness"

Just like you missed home at first, you might experience "reverse" homesickness for the people, places, and things that you grew accustomed to abroad.



So the difficulty comes when you try to reconcile the changes that have taken place in you, the changes that have taken place at home (while you were away), missing the friends you made while away, and trying to incorporate your new knowledge and skills into your life going forward.



Now you're probably thinking...and just how do I deal with that???

Here are a few tips that might help...

Remember that journal we told you keep while you were abroad...well keep writing in it when you come home.



Written reflection can be a powerful tool when trying to make sense of your study abroad experience. Make time for it.

Get involved in international/
intercultural initiatives at home

Hang out at QUIC and introduce
your friends to it! QUIC is for
everyone. Remember you are an
international student too!!!

Attend all of the international/
intercultural events that you are
invited to (watch the QUIC
Facebook page for upcoming
events)



Join/create clubs with an international focus

Consider volunteering at QUIC

Incorporate your international experiences into your academic work

Invite an international student into your study/work group - for a
coffee - consider being their mentor!

Check out intercultural training opportunities at QUIC!

Attend QUIC's Re-entry Session in September!

The session is a great way to debrief your experience AND you get a chance to meet and talk to a whole group of students who are experiencing the same things as you are...and they just "get it"!

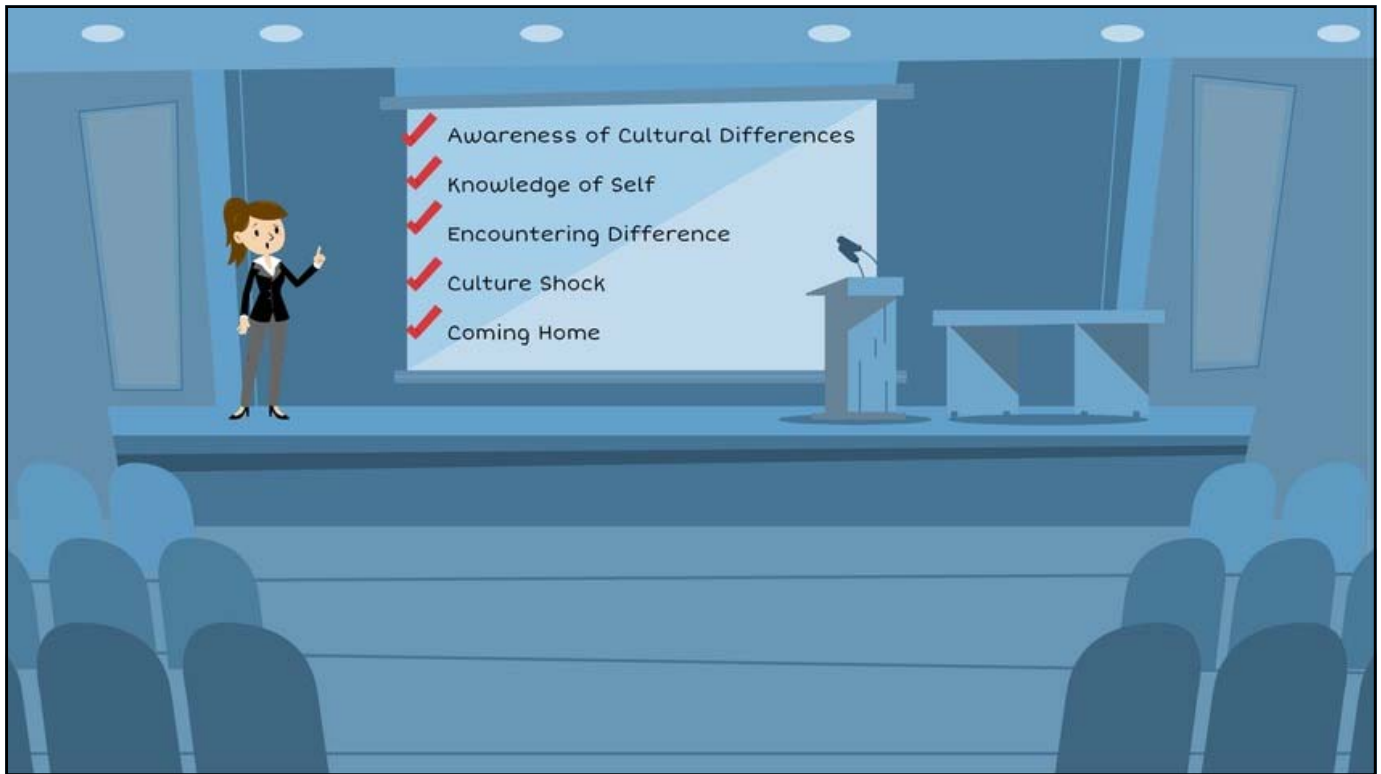


Plus, you have a whole room full of people who want to hear ALL your stories about your time abroad!

Finally, you might find it helpful to visit Career Services, here on campus. They will be able to help you articulate the skills you have acquired onto a resume or application for grad school.



Things like resiliency, coping and problem-solving skills, intercultural competence, a global perspective, language skills, and more.



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