



## Be Ready For Departure

Believe in your ability to solve problems and know when to ask for help. Rely on staff support.

Expect surprises, learn to anticipate challenges, and practice finding difference interesting.

Stay curious.

When interpersonal problems arise, focus on your contribution.

Practice getting comfortable with periods of feeling uncomfortable. It takes time to develop skills in your host culture.

## Helping Resources:

**Your program:**

**Emergency phone:**

\*\*\*\*\*

**Developed by**  
**Janice Abarbanel PhD**  
Psychologist and Health Educator  
j.e.abarbanel@gmail.com  
617 291 5626



## Wellness and Study Abroad

## DEVELOP AN EMOTIONAL PASSPORT



Make the most of your  
study abroad experience



Did you know?

## Cultural transitions intensify moods: Highs & Lows

Higher levels of stress accompany cultural transitions. The brain's logic/language centers can be diminished by the power of mood shifts. Learn to calm yourself down and manage your energy. You will be a more effective learner and on your way to achieving your study abroad goals.

Study abroad is a process, not an event. Welcome the whole journey, integrating pre-departure, in-country, and transition experiences. There are adjustments and surprises along the way.

Moods shift when  
cultures shift

### Some common *signals* that you have shifted cultures:

- Homesickness
- Irritability and hostility
- Boredom
- Withdrawal
- Need for excessive amounts of sleep
- Compulsive eating or drinking
- Stereotyping of host culture
- Loss of ability to work effectively
- Physical ailments

### Some effective culture shift *strategies*:

- Consult with mentors and peers.
- Develop a support network.
- Stay alert to the signals as signs of change.
- Eat well, exercise, keep a mood journal.
- Breathe! Slow down. Walk in the park.
- Build in quiet time.
- Minimize catastrophic thinking by turning "What if's" into "What else..."

Pay attention! Be prepared to get help if "signals" turn into persistent and worrisome behaviors.

It's a strength to ask for help  
from peers and advisors.

## Carry a Healthy Emotional Passport

**Learn to Culture Shift:** the normal capacity to transition into another culture with healthy expectations and skills for change and adaptation. With culture shift strategies, you can make the most of your intercultural experiences.

Practice noticing and regulating the intense emotions that are so often part of the study abroad experience.

Mood cycles are common. Notice your moods as "information". Build quiet spaces into your busy days as a way to integrate the emotional highs and lows.

- Stress is critical for growth. Learn to build in recovery periods for optimal learning and performance.
- Stay curious as your center of gravity is challenged.
- Review your goals for studying abroad - if you experience low moods, try to put things into perspective.
- There is no need for "shock" as you transition abroad.

