

INCLUDING YOUR FAMILY IN GLOBAL MEDICINE



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DISCLOSURES

I have no relevant financial relationships with ineligible companies to disclose.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Identify advantages of including your family in global medical work.
2. Effectively prepare your family for global life by anticipating some common issues.
3. Recognize frequent problems faced in adjusting to a new culture.
4. Prepare for unique scenarios facing the family.
5. Discuss concerns faced by the family in returning to their home culture.

BENEFITS OF INCLUDING YOUR FAMILY IN GLOBAL MEDICAL WORK

- Able to stay long term
- Change your worldview and that of your family
- Include your children in service to others
- Develop cross-cultural awareness
- Expand your medical opportunities and skills, and opportunities for family
 - ✓ Social skills, observational skills, language, music, etc.



CHALLENGES OF INVOLVING YOUR FAMILY

- Different medical culture
- Global logistic issues
- Social
- Educational
- Culture Stress
- Moving with Older Children



THIRD CULTURE KIDS



- Definition of TCK
- Uniqueness of kids who grow up in different cultures
 - ✓ Cultural Fluidity: navigate multiple cultural identities; blending customs, behaviors, and languages
 - ✓ Adaptability: flexible and quick to adjust to new environments
 - ✓ Open-Mindedness: broad worldview, embrace diversity, intuitively understand multiple perspectives

THIRD CULTURE KIDS

- Uniqueness of TCK (cont'd.)
 - ✓ Strong but complex identity: feel at home in many places, but may struggle with belonging and identity
 - ✓ Multilingual Skills: may speak multiple languages
 - ✓ Easy Relationships: tend to form rapid but sometimes superficial relationships with others
 - ✓ Global Mindset: often have a natural curiosity for international affairs, cross-cultural issues, and global events

THIRD CULTURE KIDS

- Share many things in common with kids who grow up in other cross-cultural settings
- Challenges of TCK's
 - ✓ Confused loyalties
 - ✓ Never totally fit in
 - ✓ Sometimes poor integration into home culture
 - ✓ Frequent good-byes – difficulty in forming deep, consistent relationships

The Third Culture Kid Experience: Growing Up Among Worlds By Pollock and VanReken.
Yarmouth, Maine: Intercultural Press, 1999

EDUCATIONAL CONCERNS

- One of the biggest determinants of location
- Fewer options
- No special needs resources
- May need to consider:
 - ✓ Homeschooling
 - ✓ Boarding school
 - ✓ Local school
 - ✓ International school



INVOLVE YOUR KIDS IN LOCAL SERVICE

- Develop a family culture of sharing your combined skills and resources with those in need
 - ✓ Use your home as a base to reach out to others
 - ✓ Distribute leftover food and outgrown or un-needed items in attractive format
 - ✓ Join local community service group supporting those in need



INVOLVE YOUR KIDS IN LOCAL SERVICE

- Share what you are learning within the healthcare work, and discuss impact of local social conditions and cultural characteristics
 - ✓ Discuss advantages and disadvantages of local norms
 - ✓ Practice tolerance and acceptance; avoid judgmental attitude



PREPARATION FOR LIVING OVERSEAS AS A FAMILY

General preparation:

- Make sure of general agreement within the family – consider waiting a bit if not!
- Talk about and imagine it – visualization exercises
- Learn about the new culture
- As a family, read about history and current events in anticipated country
- Spend time with families in your area who immigrated from the culture you will be joining

PREPARATION FOR LIVING OVERSEAS

Specific preparation:

- Consider affiliating with an organization that supports family involvement
- Address specific issues with field organization and/or colleagues
 - ✓ Housing and local transportation
 - ✓ Child-care options
 - ✓ Schooling of children
 - ✓ “Decompression time”

PREPARATION FOR LIVING OVERSEAS

- As a physician or medical worker:
 - ✓ Focus on improved understanding of your non-white patients – their cultural background, wellness/illness belief system, role of medical professional
 - ✓ Seek out patients and friends from culture you will be moving into – invite them into your home
 - ✓ Identify and seek training in new skills you may need globally – procedures, diagnostic ultrasound, OB skills, dental skills

PREPARATION FOR LIVING OVERSEAS

- Start living counter-culturally as a family
 - ✓ Invite acquaintances of different ethnicities to family dinner or outing
 - ✓ If home-schooling to be used in global setting, begin this prior to leaving
 - ✓ Begin down-sizing family and personal items
 - ✓ Begin language learning and practice use during family times



ADJUSTING TO YOUR NEW CULTURE

- Language and culture learning critical in the home environment
- Things are “different”, not better or worse - learn gracious language
- Preserve time and energy for your children
- Make your home an oasis for all
- Be a good role model of patience and tolerance



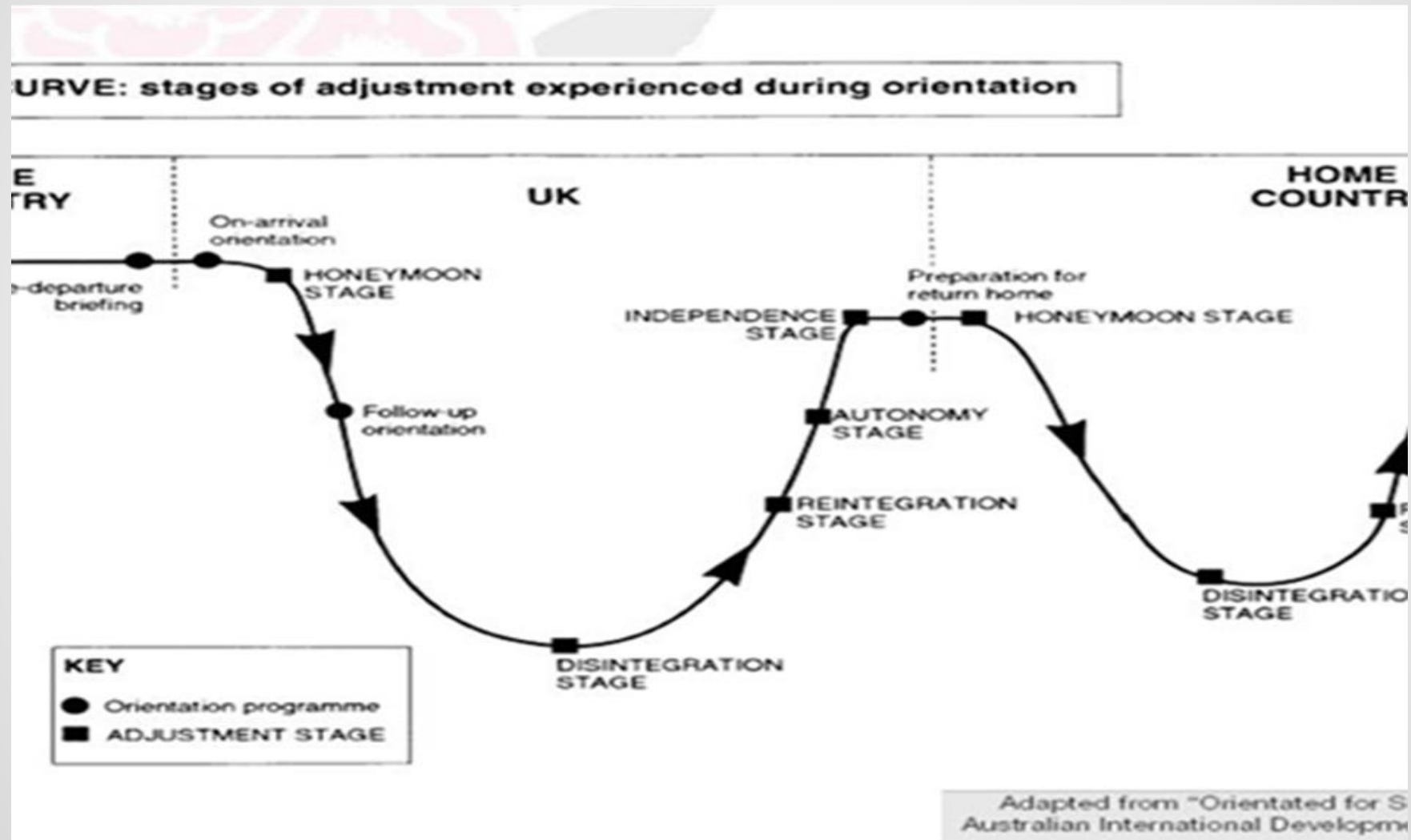
ISSUES IN MOVING WITH TEENAGERS

- Move as a family-unit when possible
 - ✓ Shared adventure
 - ✓ Equal buy-in
- Communicate a sense of fitting into a larger picture
- Family Health
 - ✓ Focus on communication skills
 - ✓ Global living amplifies issues
- Educational/Social opportunities may determine location

TIPS FOR RE-ENTRY INTO HOME ENVIRONMENT

- Expect reverse culture shock - pause between worlds
- Explore your own changed attitudes, and assist the family with their new thought patterns
- Be deliberate about a slower lifestyle
- Not everyone will be interested in your foreign adventures or broader perspective

CULTURE SHOCK



TIPS FOR RE-ENTRY INTO HOME

- Schedule regular family time to process changes
 - ✓ Probe deeper follow-up to “How was your day?”, or “How are you feeling now?”
 - ✓ Talk often about feelings, emotions, fears, conflicts, and new pleasures and joys
 - ✓ Work to integrate new worldview and acceptance into your daily interactions
 - ✓ Anticipate internal conflicts regarding wealth and resources if leaving a very poor country

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS?