Culture Shock

Spending any amount of time studying abroad is an impactful experience. While many students have had their study abroad experience cut short because of the coronavirus, that doesn’t take away from the impact it’s made.

A lot of people talk about the culture shock you feel when you start a new chapter in your life in another country, but the reverse culture shock you feel returning to the United States is just as jarring. In fact, most students say the reverse culture shock is worse than the shock of going abroad. Why is this?

When you’re getting ready to head abroad everything is new and exciting, you don’t really know what to expect and you’re open to everything coming your way. When you head home you know exactly what you’re going back to and what you’re leaving behind.

For students, whose programs ended early because of COVID-19, not only are you dealing with reverse culture shock but the fact that something you’ve likely been planning for and working towards for years did not go as planned. These can be overwhelming and frustrating times, and we’ve got a few ways for you to stay mentally healthy and cope with this unprecedented change.

1. Take your time
2. Stay connected to your host culture
3. Stay connected with your friends from abroad
4. Focus on your online courses
5. Scrapbook your travels
6. Take advantage of your resources (You’re ahead of the curve already, if you ahead made it this far in this guide)

You might experience something we like to recall reverse culture shock. Life at home has gone on without you, but in this instance, you have come home to a pandemic.

Here are a few tips to help with dealing with reverse culture shock.

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What’s Up with Culture

Students go abroad and experience living in another culture. That can include taking classes, internships or just experiencing a different culture. Diving into another culture, you gain language competency, deeper knowledge of the host country and culture as well as the opportunity to interact successfully with a variety of people in new situations.

Take a look at the 75 Long-Term Outcomes of your study abroad experience

Take some time to just reflect on your experiences and how you are doing.