



## **YOU FEEL YOUR CLIENT/PATIENT HAS BIG PROBLEMS MANAGING HER/HIS NEW SITUATION.**

The experience of a changing socio-cultural environment can entail different stresses for individuals. Getting accustomed is a process that takes time. People have many difficulties in adapting to new situations, getting to know the new environment and language, learning the new social rules, what is accepted and what is not. These difficulties can affect the relationship between you and your client/patient. Think about culture shock and try to put yourself in the position of a person who comes into a completely new environment. How do you think you would behave?

### **PRACTICAL EXAMPLE**

Sarah is a psychotherapist in a rehabilitation clinic for children near Berlin. Alexander, a 10-year-old boy spends a few weeks at the clinic together with his mother to improve his weight problems. He has immigrated to Germany with his family just a few months ago and he has a hard time. Although his mother speaks German quite well, he refuses to speak German and has many conflicts with the other boys in the clinic. He even beats other children for minor reasons. Even though the clinic staff is very patient with him, he seems even more rebellious.

### **SOLUTION**

Fortunately, Sarah knew about the possible symptoms of culture shock and that adapting to a new situation can cause a lot of stress. She found out that Alexander is confused by the way the clinic staff acts. In Russia he was used to have very strict teachers who would react immediately with very strict measures if a child broke the rules. Here at the clinic, situations like this are handled differently. She finally, got a better understanding of the reasons why Alexander behaved this way and developed ways to work with him. For example, she organized boxing lessons in the gym, after she learned that he was practicing boxing in Russia. Sarah also, took the opportunity to talk to Alexander's mother about how she can help Alexander find his way in the new situation.

## OPTION 01

Be aware that each person handles culture shock differently and that the time needed to adapt can also, vary greatly. Accept that negative feelings in coping with culture shock are often, part of the normal process.

## OPTION 02

Try to think about how you can support your client/patient in overcoming culture shock. Maybe you can integrate some elements that make the client feel more familiar in the new environment e.g. food, music, magazines, photos from the country of origin.

## OPTION 03

Try to understand what the patient/client really needs in their situation to feel better. Try to find ways to give your patient/client a lot of structure and orientation, which can help them have a feeling of stability.

## OPTION 04

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