

Appendix A: Application Process for Overseas Nurses

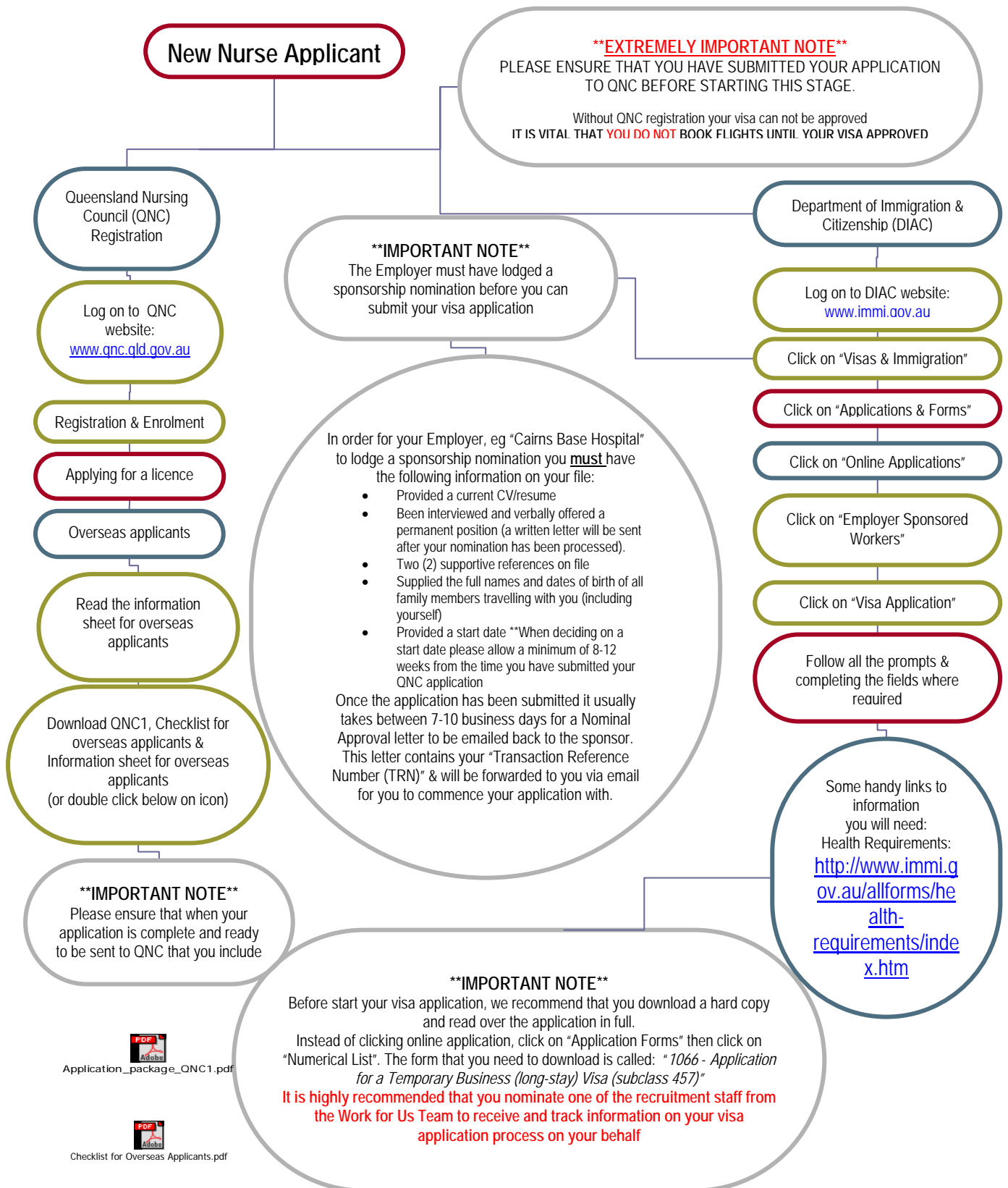


Diagram developed by Cairns Health Service District

Appendix B: Culture Shock

What is Culture Shock?

Part of the way you see yourself is in relation to others, or as belonging to a particular group. Personal identity becomes threatened when foreign landscapes, people and lifestyles replace familiar society. “Culture shock” is the term used to describe a person’s complex reaction to living in a new country or community. The experience of adjusting to a new and different environment causes stress in everyone. This occurs, to a greater or lesser extent, with every move to a new place. Some people adjust more quickly than others, or in more constructive ways. Some find it helpful to talk over problems; others withdraw into themselves and never seem to be able to adjust at all.

This is a discussion of the common symptoms and stages of culture shock, from the first reaction to the final comfortable adjustment to life as “normal”. Everyone experiences these symptoms to some degree and understanding them will help you to:

- Know what to expect
- Realise that your feelings are normal
- Empathise with others in the same situation
- Resolve your own difficulties more easily through awareness

Causes of Culture Shock

When you move to a new country you are suddenly confronted with a whole new set of signs and cues relating to the social order and to personal relationships. These include the many subconscious ways you have learned to behave in daily life, from what to say and do when meeting someone, when visiting, when working together, how to dress, how to make purchases, how to assess situations and how to interpret things others say and do. There are hundreds of these cues and they include words, gestures, facial expressions, customs, ways of thinking and implicit values which have been acquired over a lifetime and upon which all of us depend for our peace of mind and efficiency.

When you enter a new culture all or most of these familiar cues change. No matter how well you have prepared a whole series of subconscious props will suddenly be removed and you are left to cope with many bewildering or frustrating changes all at once. You must adjust to new housing, a new job, new friends, a new telephone system, new money, new foods, a new language or dialect, a new climate, new social regulations and new attitudes. Inevitably, this leads to some degree of anxiety.

In a new environment there are social rules you do not know. You have no way of knowing if you have violated any rules, and if so, what the consequences may be and how to compensate. Fortunately, by observing and asking questions of locals and other migrants, you can learn the appropriate behaviour. A good motto to follow is: OBSERVE, LOOK AND LISTEN; AND ASK IF YOU DON’T KNOW. Taking on a “Naive Learner” attitude, by observing the rules of the “playground” is a good start.

Physical Symptoms of Culture Shock

Physical symptoms may occur at any time and the seriousness or perseverance of the symptoms may not necessarily coordinate with your stage of adjustment.

Symptoms may include:

- Headaches
- Colds
- Symptoms associated with depression
 - Changes in sleeping habits
 - Changes in eating habits
 - Lack of concern for personal appearance
 - Listlessness
 - Crying spells
 - Loss of interest in things you usually enjoy
- Symptoms associated with stress
 - Changes in sleeping habits
 - Indigestion
 - Changes in bowel habits

- Changes in menstrual cycle

Stages and Symptoms of Culture Shock

The time periods required for the various stages of culture shock vary from person to person. On average, you will feel well adjusted, if the effort is made, within six months. The more experience you have living in foreign countries, the faster you will adjust each time.

Generally, migrants experience the symptoms of culture shock differently. Relocating presents many challenges that take you out of your comfort zone. In order to feel comfortable again it is necessary to become familiar with and adapt to the new environment. When feeling uncomfortable or even completely miserable, it is reassuring to know that you are gaining experience and becoming more worldly.

The Honeymoon Stage

This stage is characterised by a feeling of excitement, even exhilaration, upon arrival in a new “exotic” place. The new environment is fascinating and you feel privileged at having the opportunity to have moved here. You sense the possibility of adventure and look forward to new friends and your new job with enthusiasm. You may feel some anxiety, but it is far outweighed by positive feelings. Curiosity about the new society overcomes most negative stereotyped feelings and fears...it is time to explore and learn, and you are likely to be interested in local surroundings, attractions, customs, crafts, ways of dress, shopping areas and history. Most people feel very sociable at this time, enjoy parties and gatherings and make an effort to form friendships quickly. Everything is perceived to be great. People are friendly and you smile a lot. You feel “in control” as your own sense of culture is not threatened.

At this stage it is helpful to:

- ❖ Lower your expectations!
- ❖ Remember that friendships take time
- ❖ Be yourself and don't be in too much of a hurry to fit in
- ❖ Be a tourist - travel, explore, and enjoy looking with “new eyes”
- ❖ Send postcards home while you're feeling so positive
- ❖ Write a journal about these wonderful places/memories to read at your first Christmas away from home
- ❖ Book a holiday ahead, giving you something to look forward to
- ❖ Make contacts through clubs and associations
- ❖ Sign up for activities, e.g. gym, school associations, sports and hobby clubs
- ❖ Lay foundations for healthy habits and associate with positive friends
- ❖ Accept all invitations, and don't be fussy! Be brave - go by yourself!
- ❖ Invite others to your place
- ❖ Respond positively to outsider interest to your culture and promote it
- ❖ Get involved through your children (parties and playgroups)
- ❖ Orientate yourself with your local community (eg: buy local fruit and vegies)
- ❖ Remind yourself why you are here. Keep it all in context.
- ❖ Respond positively to all comments/questions about the community – never criticise
- ❖ Don't make judgements about your new location – you don't know the history
- ❖ Buy locally-made merchandise
- ❖ Spend time together with your partner, and take breaks together

The Disintegration Stage

When the novelty starts to wear off, thoughts about difficulties and feelings of loneliness begin to prevail. Good things about home predominate. You wonder if you should have come here, why everything has to be so unrelentingly strange and difficult and whether you will ever be really happy here. You don't understand how other people do it. You find you may prefer the company of people of your own nationality, and you may need the security of familiar structured activities, such as social clubs or church activities. Discussions with others reinforce the difficulties of blending into the new culture. Self-doubt and depression may set in. You may want to “retreat” from the local environment, as if too much exposure would threaten your personal equilibrium. This tends to be a stage of reassessment and disenchantment. You may feel your needs and goals are not being met because of perceived organisation or personal obstacles. You may experience outrage, rejection of previous or present work values, fatigue and perceptual distortion related to anger and frustrations. By this stage, all difficulties and problems of your homeland are forgotten and only the good things are remembered.

Emotional and attitude symptoms of this stage include:

- A vague feeling of depression and dissatisfaction
- Questioning of personal values and goals
- Loneliness – missing close relatives and friends
- Resentment towards the necessary adjustments
- Impatience with other people
- Tiring of new friends, especially if the friendship has been intense in the first few weeks. You associate the person with the place, and tire of everything at once.
- Losing interest in local activities or surroundings
- Unwillingness to decorate your residence, resisting the idea that it is “home”
- Losing enthusiasm for the job
- Seeking release through compulsive eating or increased consumption of alcohol, or entering into a superficial or impulsive romantic liaison
- Unreasonably negative, stereotyped attitudes toward local people and culture
- Unreasonably negative attitudes towards work, the organisation, the job and co-workers
- Constant complaining about living and working conditions and an unwillingness to concede positive factors
- Exaggerated reminiscence and glorification of “life back home”, forgetting the problems and remembering only the good points
- Excessive concern with personal sanitation and cleanliness of food and water
- Excessive fear of disease, contamination and dangers
- A feeling of mistrust of people, a fear of assault, theft or being cheated
- Antipathy towards local foods, sounds, smells, manners or language
- Extreme withdrawal or introspection or extreme emotional dependence on friends, and demands on their time, due to a fear of being left alone
- Frequent sick leave from work
- Inefficiency at work – a greater need for supervisory approval and a reluctance to delegate authority

Coping strategies include:

- ❖ Analyse your negative feelings and establish the causes. Many people put too much blame for their misery on the new country or environment, when in fact they have brought their problems from home. It is common for people to volunteer for service in a foreign country because they are trying to escape problems at home – family difficulties, a failed relationship, social problems, or problems with work or career.
- ❖ Try to discover the source of your biggest frustrations and deal with them. Life here is simply not so difficult or unpleasant that it justifies extreme dissatisfaction
- ❖ Approach the experience of living here with a spirit of adventure – expect differences and problems; these are the trade-offs for travel and adventure
- ❖ Maintain a positive attitude. Look for creative ways to cope and expect to adapt. If you don’t look for ways, you won’t find them
- ❖ Concentrate on good things and events in your life even if it means writing them down and reviewing the list periodically
 - ❖ Avoid repeating or dwelling on old lurid stories of outrageous or frightening experiences undergone by foreigners – a few bad incidents may have happened over a course of many years
 - ❖ Do what you can to become familiar with the country. The more you learn about it, the more interest you will develop and the more comfortable you will feel
 - ❖ Try to keep your personal habits and routines as far as possible as they were at home
 - ❖ Ask others if they have found effective ways of coping with problems and share your ideas
 - ❖ Stay healthy - exercise, avoid excessive alcohol or over-eating
 - ❖ Get out and be with positive people
 - ❖ Listen and observe
 - ❖ Keep busy and set daily goals, while making a concerted effort to achieve them
 - ❖ Think of it as a passing phase/stage
 - ❖ Utilise resources, such as a counsellor or psychologist to assist you during this phase
 - ❖ Protect your relationship from derailing through daily communication with your partner
 - ❖ Become involved in the community – be active
 - ❖ Get involved in mood enhancing activities e.g. sports, craft, music...join a club

- ❖ Adapt to the new culture to your own level of comfort
- ❖ Get out of the house every day
- ❖ Smile at least once an hour
- ❖ Phone home when feeling good and when feeling sad
- ❖ Keep in contact with new friends
- ❖ Find someone with similar interests/cultural background
- ❖ Go home if you need to
- ❖ See the relocation experience as finishing a good book, before starting a new one

The Reintegration Stage

The third stage is when you discover the plot and start playing the game. There are still difficulties but you take a “this is my cross and I have to bear it” attitude. You stand up to the things and people that are frustrating us. You become determined to work things out and get things done.

At this stage you can:

- ❖ Build a network of friends
- ❖ Take a holiday
- ❖ Maintain communication with people “back home”.
- ❖ Continue to mix more with the locals and multi-cultural groups and get involved with local community groups.

The Stage of Creative Independence and Becoming Functional

At this stage, you are finally feeling in control and positive about being where you are. You have a greater self-understanding and are more tolerant of others. You achieve a sense of comfort while operating in the new culture and are able to help other migrants get through their culture shock stages. You are generally successful in communicating with locals and are no longer stereotyping. Operating effectively in a new environment where many of our basic assumptions about life and operating principles are no longer applicable can be extremely daunting. Blending into a new culture is a very personal experience. By having an open mind, you can understand the new rules and ultimately accept them.

The desired form of resolution is biculturalism, where you retain the best practices of both previous and present work cultures

• Adapted from an article by Dr Maretha Cronje, Organisational Psychologist, Perth, incorporating the contributions of the Participants at the RMFN WA Workshop on 25 October 2003

Appendix C: Acronyms

Commonly used health practice acronyms

#	Fracture		
A/O	Alert and Oriented	DOB	Date Of Birth
ABG	Arterial Blood Gases	DUI	Driving Under the Influence
ACLS	Advanced Cardiac Life Support	Dx	Diagnosis
AED	Automatic External Defibrillator	ECG	Electro Cardiogram
AFA	Advanced First Aid	ED or ER	Emergency Department
AICD	Automatic Implantable Cardioverter/ Defibrillator	EEG	Electroencephalogram
Ambo	Ambulance Officer	EENT	Ears, Eyes, Nose And Throat
AMI	Acute Myocardial Infarction	ET or ETT	Endotracheal (tube)
APLS	Advance Paediatric Life Support	ETA	Estimated Time of Arrival
ATLS	Advanced Trauma Life Support	ETOH	Ethanol (Ethyl Alcohol)
ATSP	Asked to see patient		Foreign Body Hospital Based Central Information System History Intensive Care Unit
BD	Twice daily	FB	
BLS	Basic Life Support	HBCIS	
BP	Blood Pressure	Hx ICU	
C/O	Complains Of	ID	Identify/Identification
CA	Cancer	IV	Intravenous
CAD	Coronary Artery Disease		Payroll system; not an acronym
CCU	Cardiac / Coronary Care Unit	LATTICE	
CO2	Carbon dioxide		Level of Consciousness (in Glasgow scale)
COPD	Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease	LOC	
CPAP	Continuous Positive Airway Pressure	LPM	Litres Per Minute (oxygen)
CPR	Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation	MEDS	Medication
CPR	Pulmonary Resuscitation	MI	Myocardial Infarction
CSF	Cerebral Spinal Fluid	MICU	Mobile Intensive Care Unit
CT	Computerized Tomography		Magnetic Resonance Imaging
CVA	Cerebro-vascular Accident	MRI	
D/C	Discharge	MSDS	Material Safety Data Sheet
DNR	Do Not Resuscitate	MSO	Medical Support Officer
DOA	Dead On Arrival	MVA	Motor Vehicle Accident
		Mx	Management
		NAD	Nil Abnormalities Detected
		NBM or NPO	Nil By Mouth
		NFR	Not For Resuscitation
		NDKA	No Known Drug Allergies
		NOK	Next of Kin
		NS	Normal Saline
		OD	Overdose

Commonly used health practice acronyms – cont.

OPD	Outpatient Department
PE	Pulmonary Oedema / Embolism
PEARL	Pupils Equal and reacting to light
PEARLA	Pupils Equal and Reactive to light and Accommodation
PET	Positron Emission Tomography
PT	Patient
QA	Quality Assurance
Rx	Prescription
SDL	Standard Drug List
Sx	Symptoms / Signs
TDS	Three times a day
TIA	Transient Ischemic Attack
TKO	To Keep Open
TKVO	To Keep Vein Open
TPR	Temperature, Pulse, Respirations
Tx	Treatment
VF or V-fib	Ventricular Fibrillation
Y/O	Year-old

Additional acronyms used in health that you may come across can be found at:
<http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcsite>.