

Once the Adventure Ends: Making Sense of Life after Returning Home from the CCI Program



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Talking Points

- ❖ Process how you are feeling about re-entry.
- ❖ Develop strategies that help with re-entry and reverse culture shock.
- ❖ Strategize to move forward toward your goals.



Re-entry

“Re-entry shock is when you feel like you are wearing contact lenses in the wrong eyes. Everything looks *almost* right.”

Robin Pascoe, *Homeward Bound*



Reasons for Re-entry Shock

- ❖ You are returning to a place you think you know, but...
 - Things are not the same as before.
 - You have changed while you were gone.
 - You have a broader world view.



10 Reasons Why Re-entry is so Hard

- 1 - Home doesn't feel like home.
- 2 - You miss the (name it) in the U.S.
- 3 - You've been changed by your experience.
- 4 - You are mentally still abroad.
- 5 - People don't see the new you.
- 6 - You are no longer "special."



10 Reasons Why (cont.)

7 - Still don't fit in.

8 - Things at home seem boring in comparison.

9 - You feel out of sync.

10 - Feel like your direction has changed.

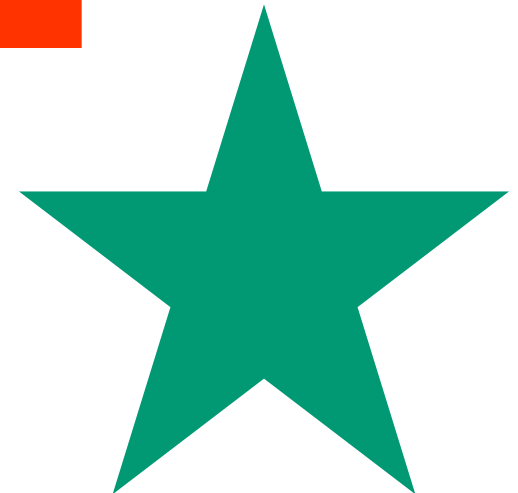
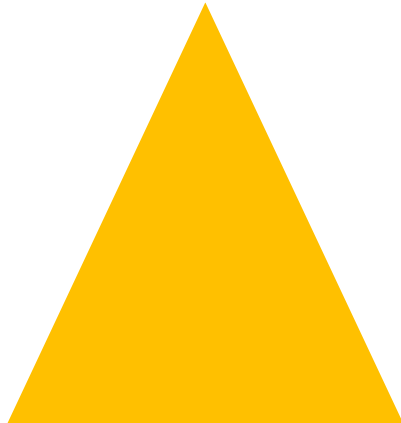
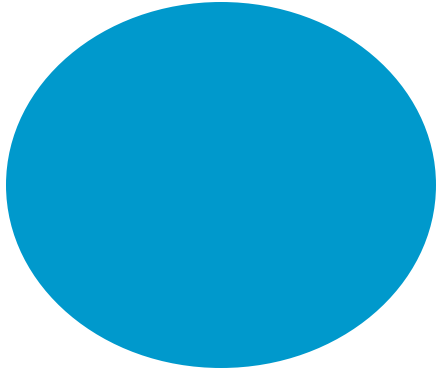


- Nobody understands.





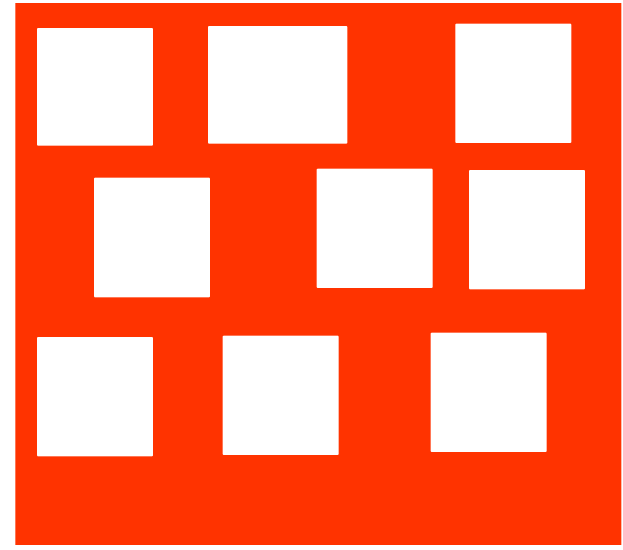
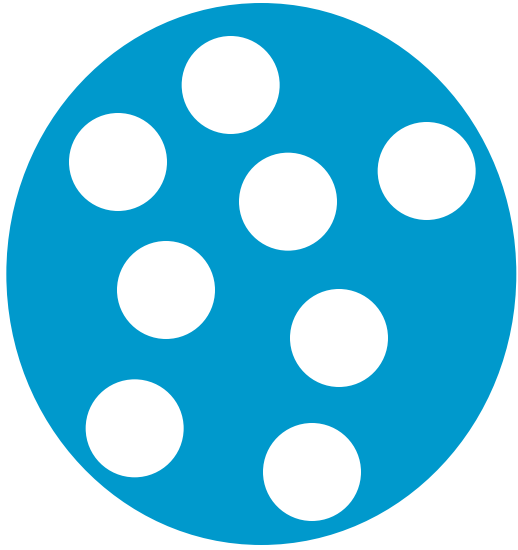
What Does This Mean For You?



Success and adventure in transition



Circle Country and Square Country

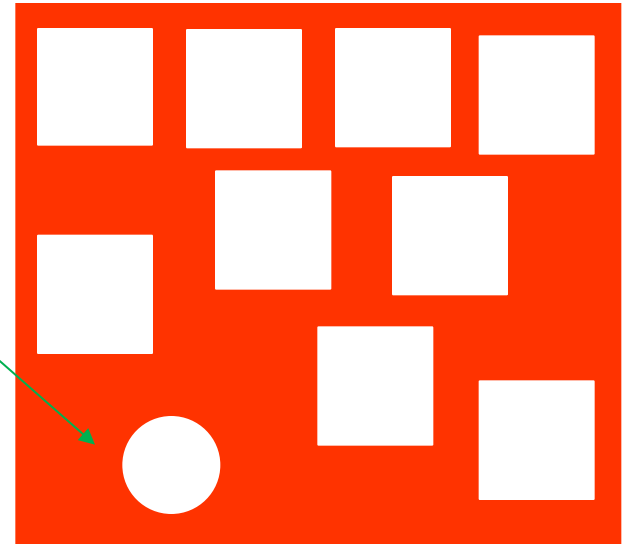
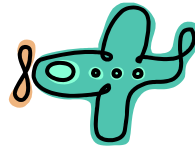
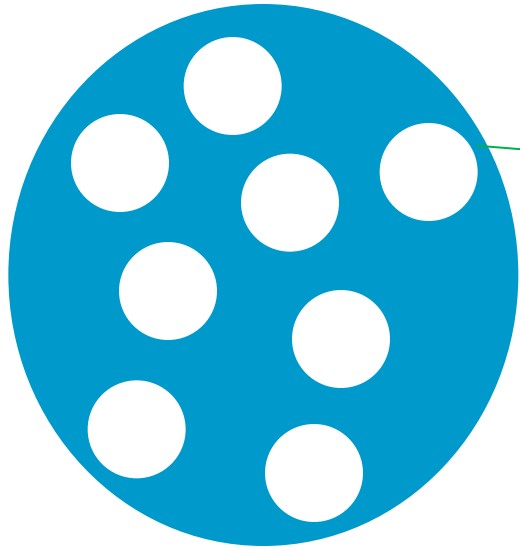


Adapted from Naomi Hattaway in Global Niche

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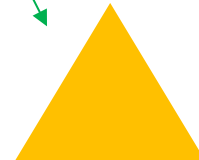
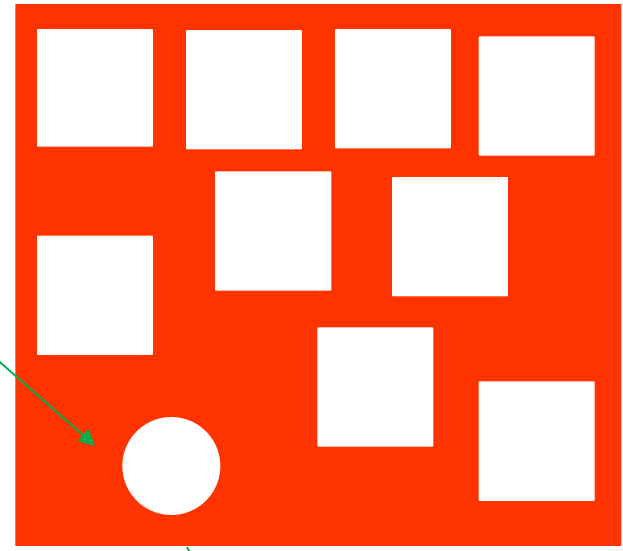
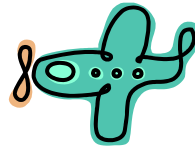
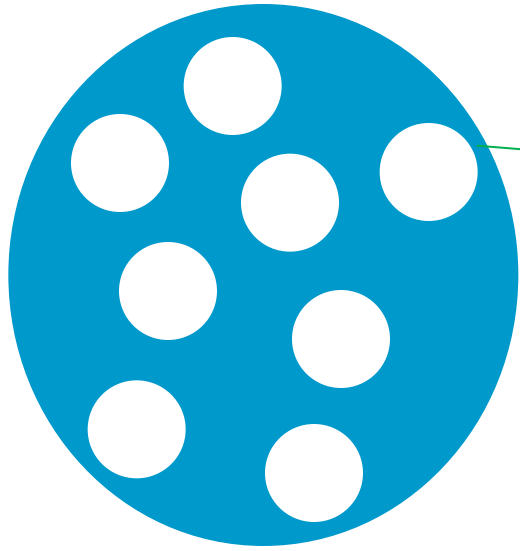


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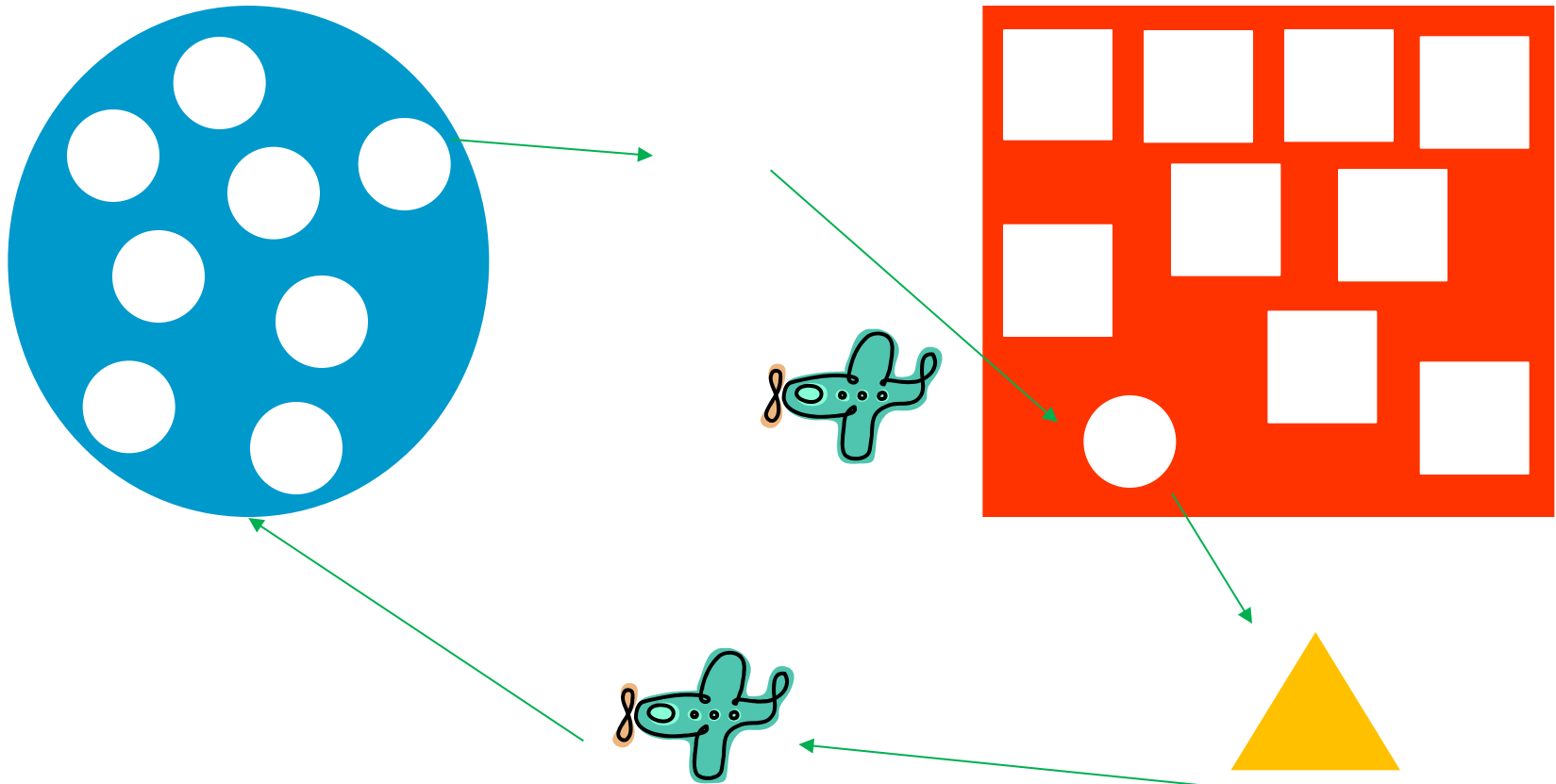


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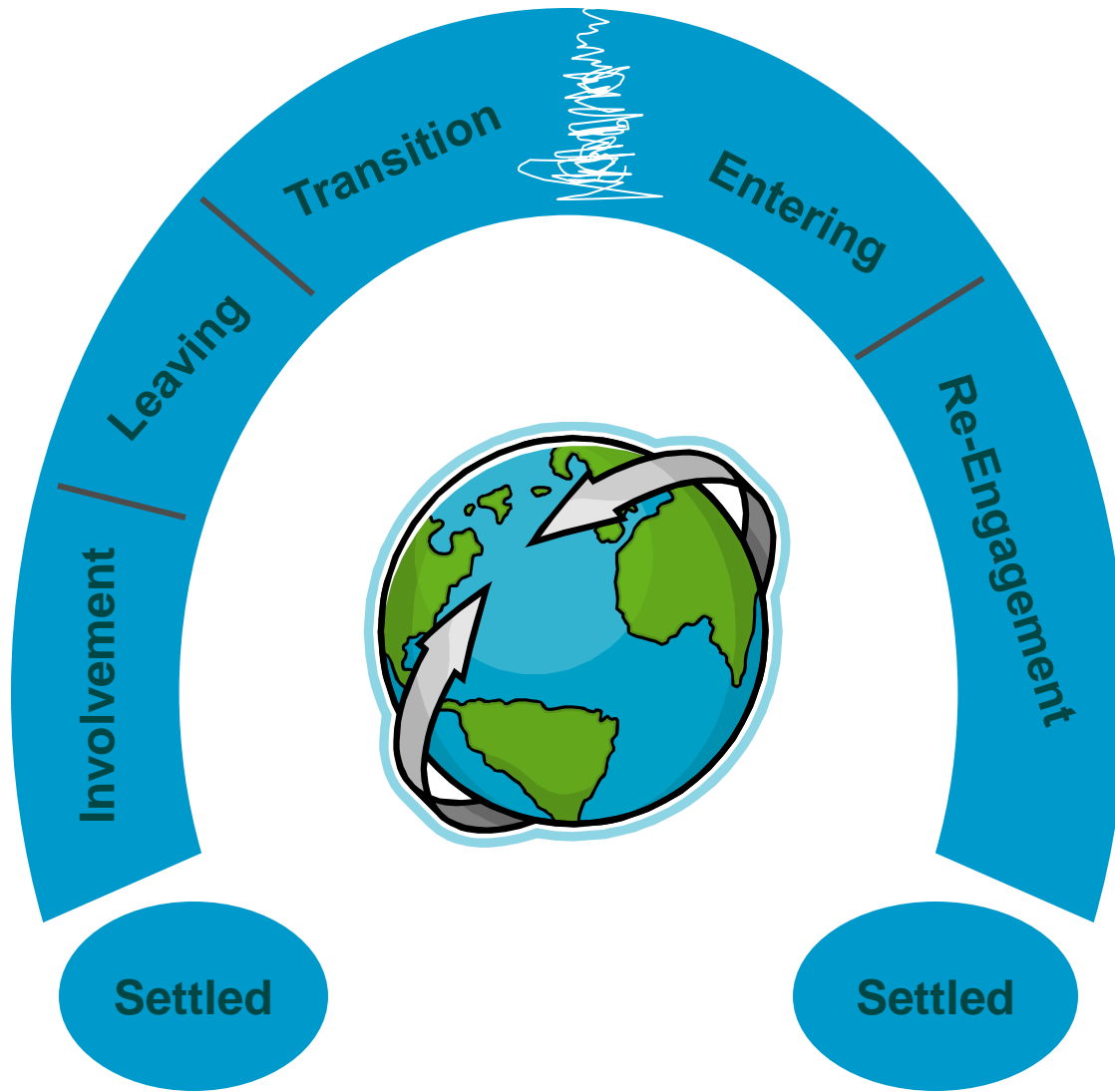
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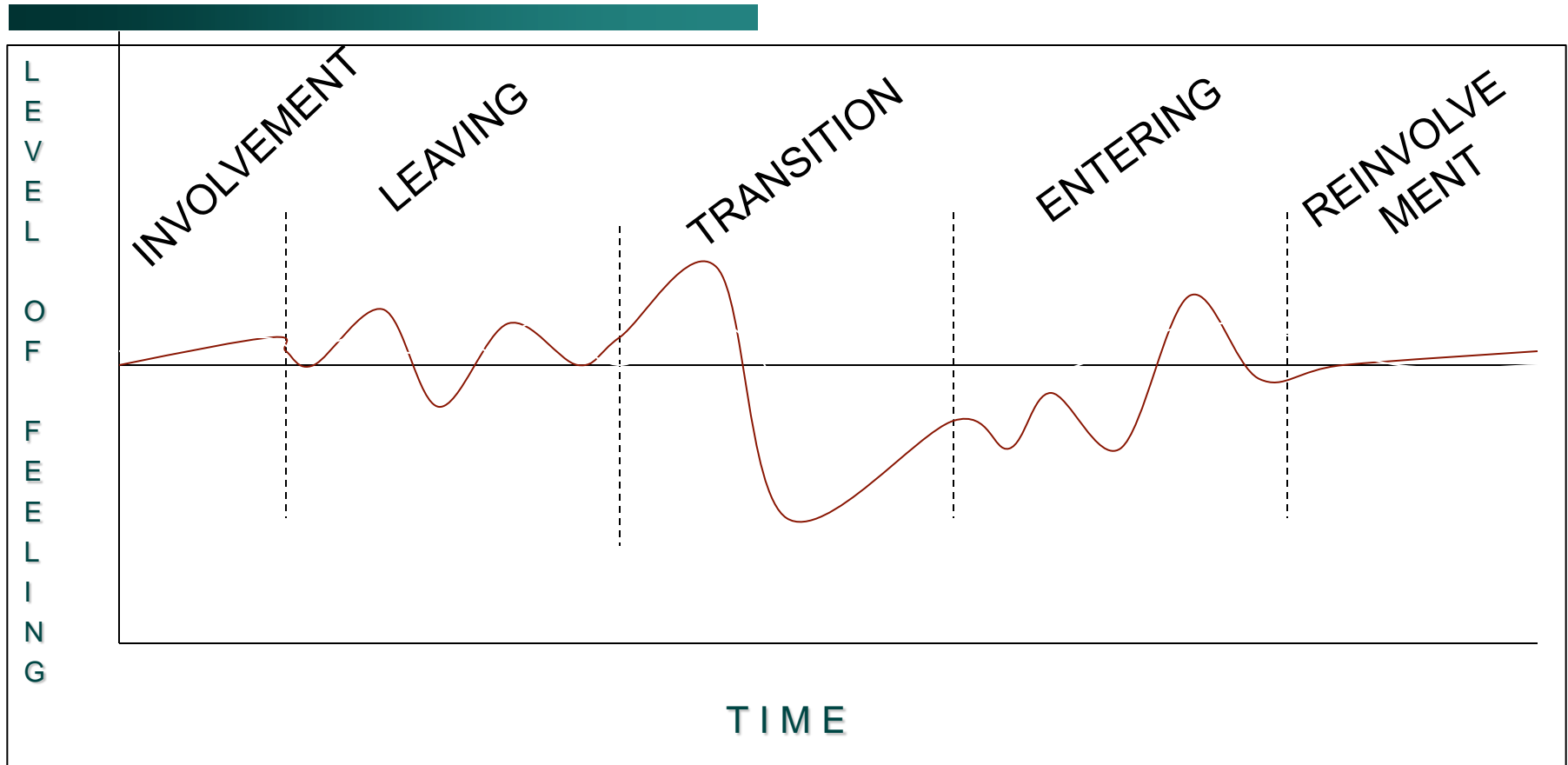




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Emotions of the Transition Cycle



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Involvement

- ❖ Belonging
- ❖ Inclusion
- ❖ Having status / reputation
- ❖ Knowing others / other know you
- ❖ Have roles, routines, responsibilities
- ❖ Know how things work
- ❖ Feel safe, affirmed, secure



Leaving Stage

- ❖ Anticipation versus sadness
- ❖ Distancing / separating
- ❖ Giving up roles and responsibilities
- ❖ Feeling left out / rejected
- ❖ Loosen ties
- ❖ Withdrawal
- ❖ Denial



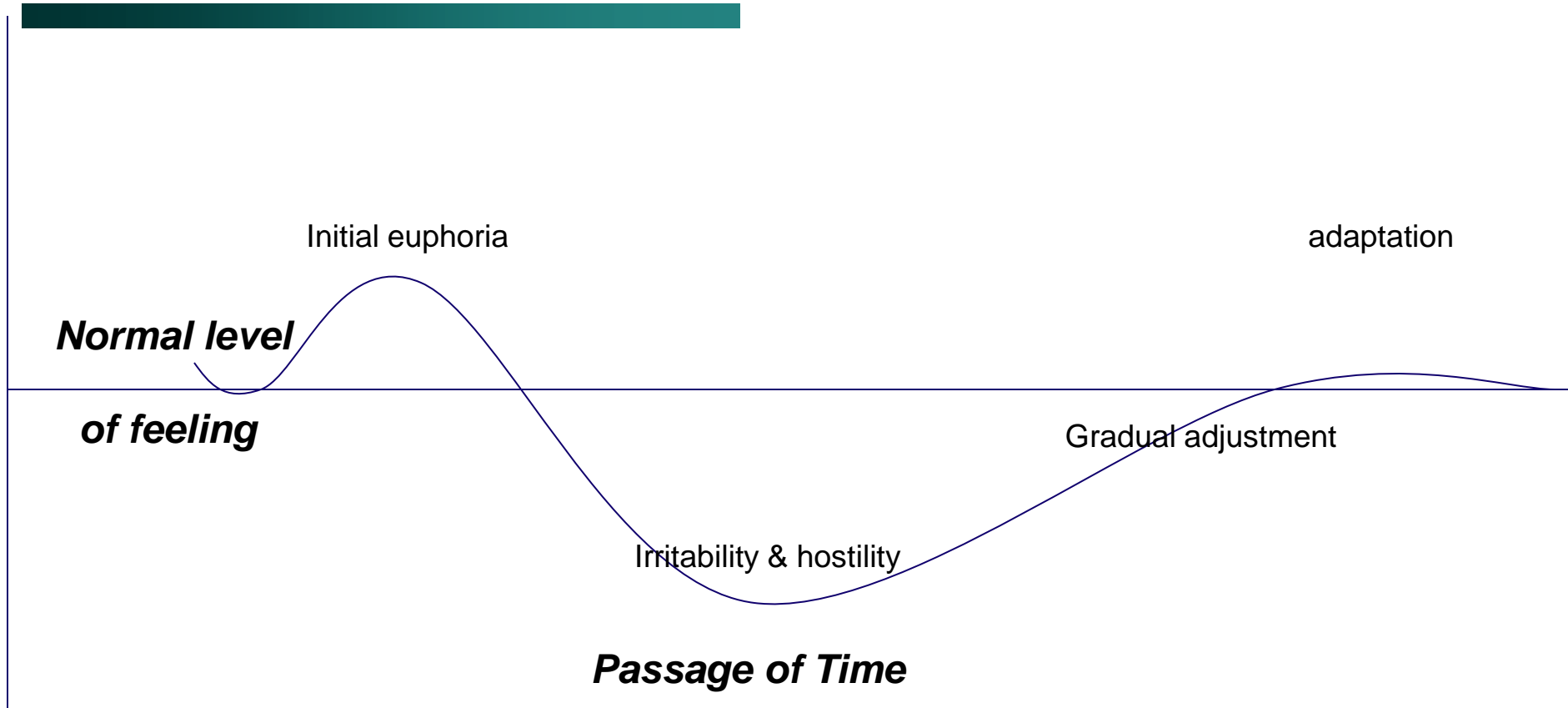
Transition Stage

- ❖ Anxious / fearful
- ❖ Uncertainty
- ❖ No status / reputation
- ❖ Ambiguity
- ❖ Emotional ups and downs
- ❖ Disappointment
- ❖ Uneasiness with friendships
- ❖ Overwhelmed by daily tasks

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Culture (Transition) Shock



Adapted from L. Robert Kohls, "Survival Kit for Overseas Living", 2001

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Entering Stage

- ❖ Feeling marginalized, like an outsider
- ❖ Desire to connect and make friends
- ❖ Need to re-learn ways of behaving in light of cultural differences
- ❖ Need to re-evaluate values
- ❖ Negative: vulnerable, uncertain, marginal
- ❖ Positive: renewal, hope, anticipation

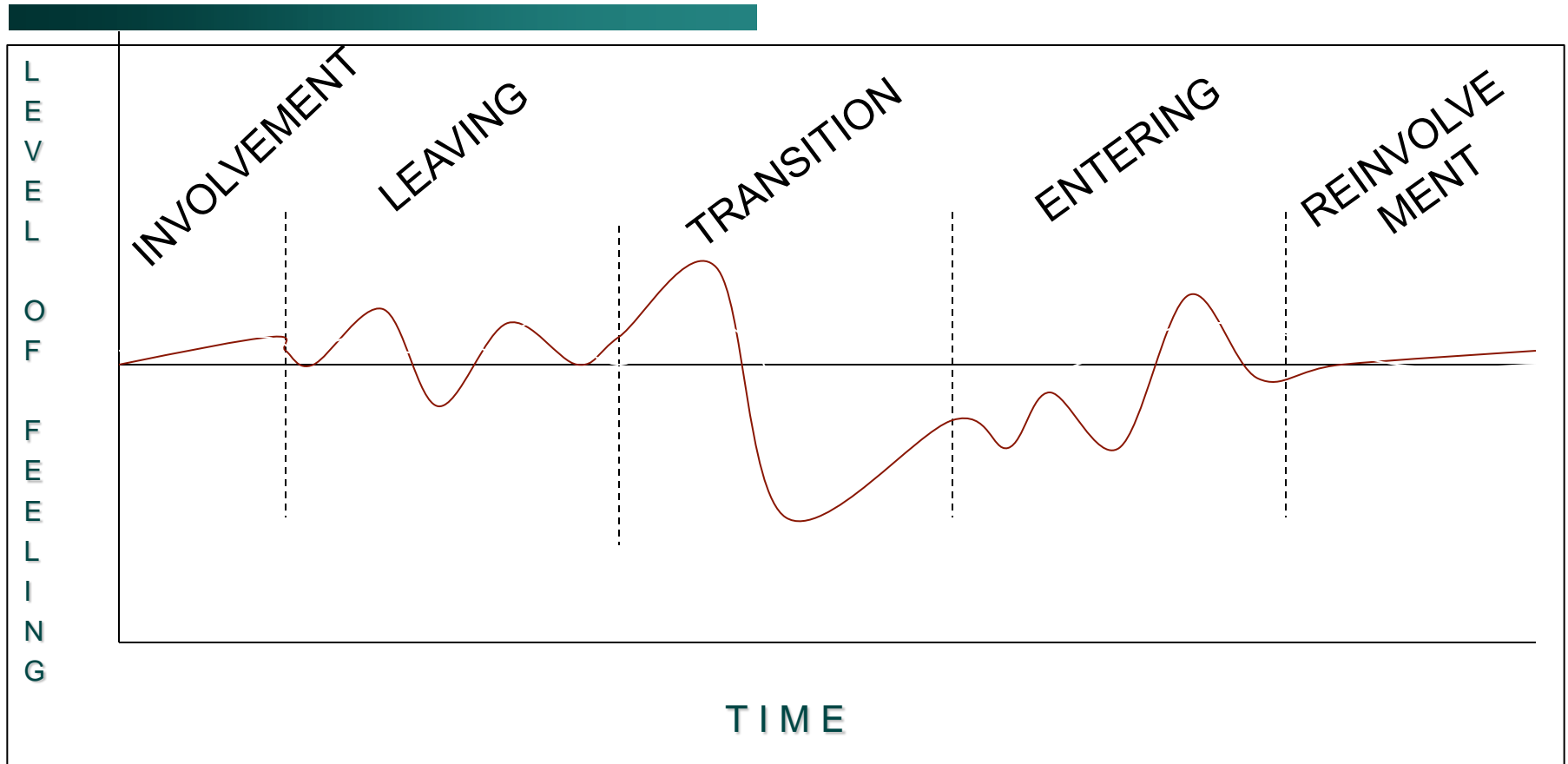


Re-involvement

- ❖ Once again experience the emotions of the involvement stage:
 - Belonging
 - Inclusion
 - Safe
 - Secure



Emotions of the Transition Cycle



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Emotional Responses

❖ What is normal?

- Emotional Instability – happy days, blue (sad) days, crying
- Fearful / uncertain / isolation
- Loss of self-esteem / self-confidence
- Self-doubt
- Exaggerated problems and responses to them
- Ambiguity / misunderstandings / easily offended
- Anxiety / depression



Emotional Responses

❖ What to watch out for:

- Failure to move ahead (thrive)
- Paralyzed
- Live in the past
- Hard to get out of bed
- Difficulty getting anything done
- Things that brought you joy no longer do
- Deep sadness that will not go away

❖ Could be a more serious form of depression



Getting Help

❖ Coping mechanisms:

- Get out with people
- Exercise
- Do something for someone else
- Focus on the positive

❖ A professional mental health counselor

- Normalize feelings
- Navigate re-etnry
- Develop strategies

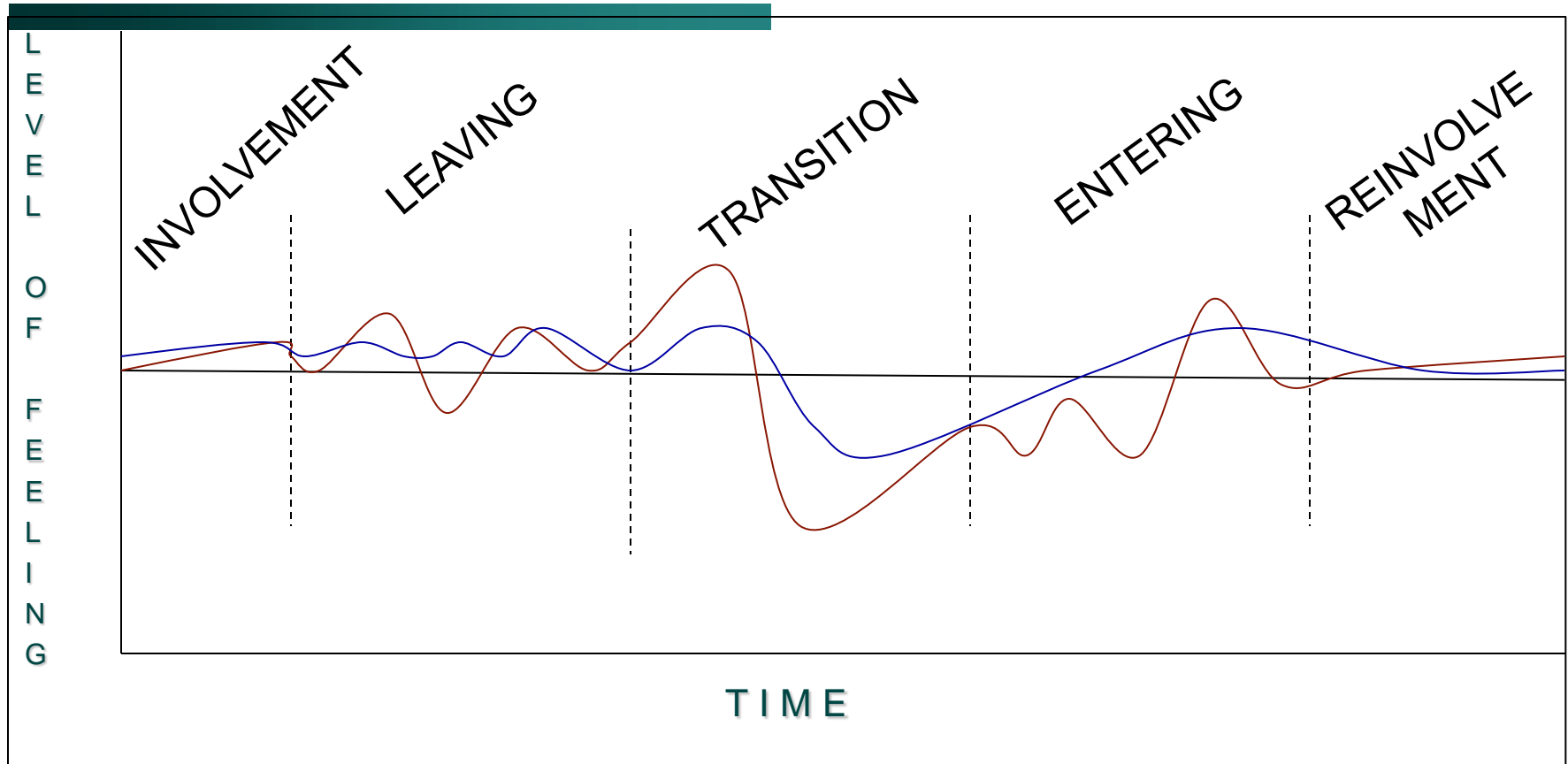


Getting Help (cont.)

- ❖ www.internationaltherapistdirectory.com
- ❖ Face-to-face with trusted person
- ❖ Virtual support
 - IAmATriangle.com
 - Facebook – Re-entry/Repatriation Stories



Transition Cycle After Training



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Preparing for Change



Things Shift While You are Away



Friends and Cliques Change

When I left [home], I had one best friend and many other close friends. When I came back, there were still my good friends, but now they were all best friends because they went through so much together last year when I was away. I still feel left out sometimes, and it's going to take time before I fit in again.

Craig Storti, *The Art of Coming Home*



Will People Want to Hear about Your Journey?

- ❖ You're bragging!
- ❖ (I'm jealous.)



- ❖ Everything is better in U.S?
- ❖ Who ARE you?
- ❖ I have news, too, you know.



Moving Forward in Re-entry









Coping With Negativity

- ❖ Dealing with loss and grief
- ❖ Healthy grief:
 - Name the losses
 - Spend time with them
 - Come to closure
- ❖ Make a list of who you can go to for support.



Looking Forward

- ❖ Negativity? → Flip it!
- ❖ What kinds of things bring you joy and make you feel alive?
- ❖ Make a list of places to go and people to see.
- ❖ Go and start your new adventures!



