

Navigating Cross-Cultural Adjustment

Brian O'Sullivan, LMFT



Why is living in a new culture challenging?

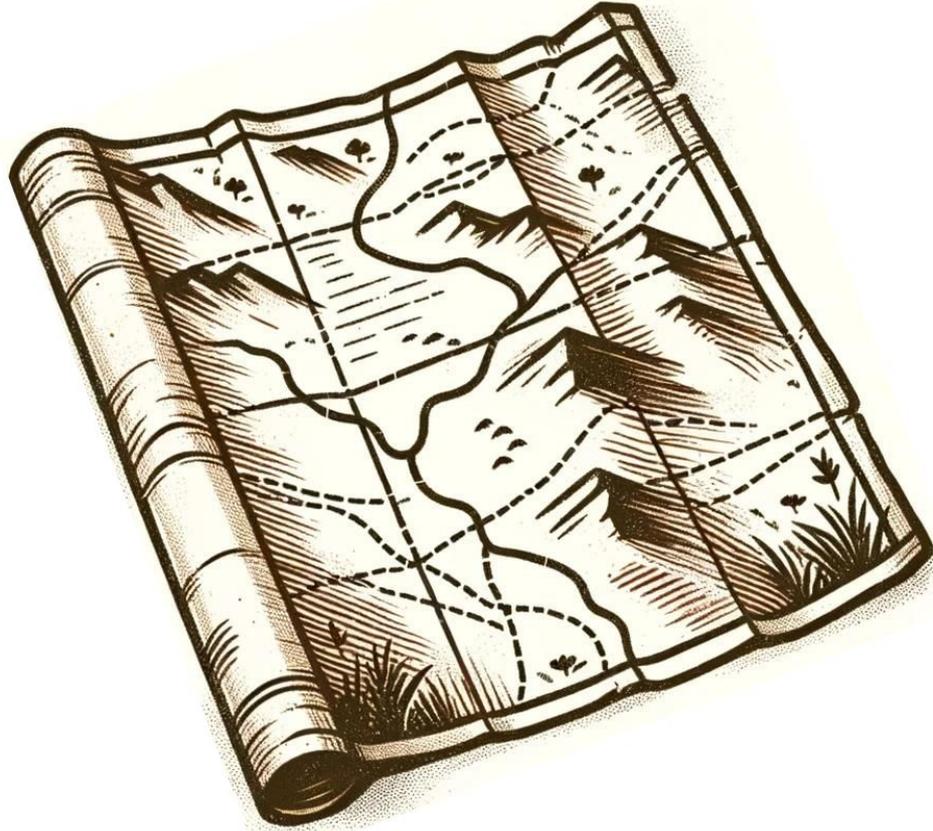


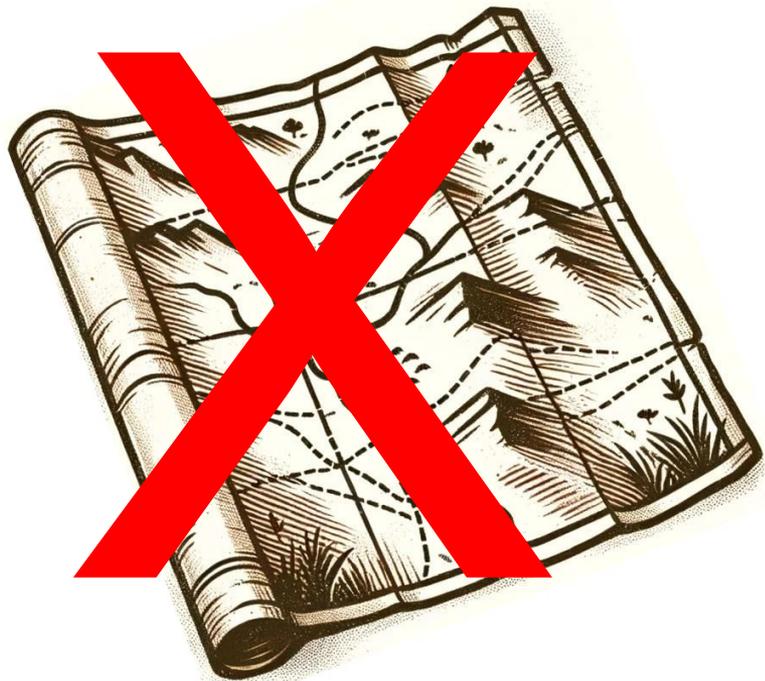


External Factors

Internal Factors







Psychological & Emotional

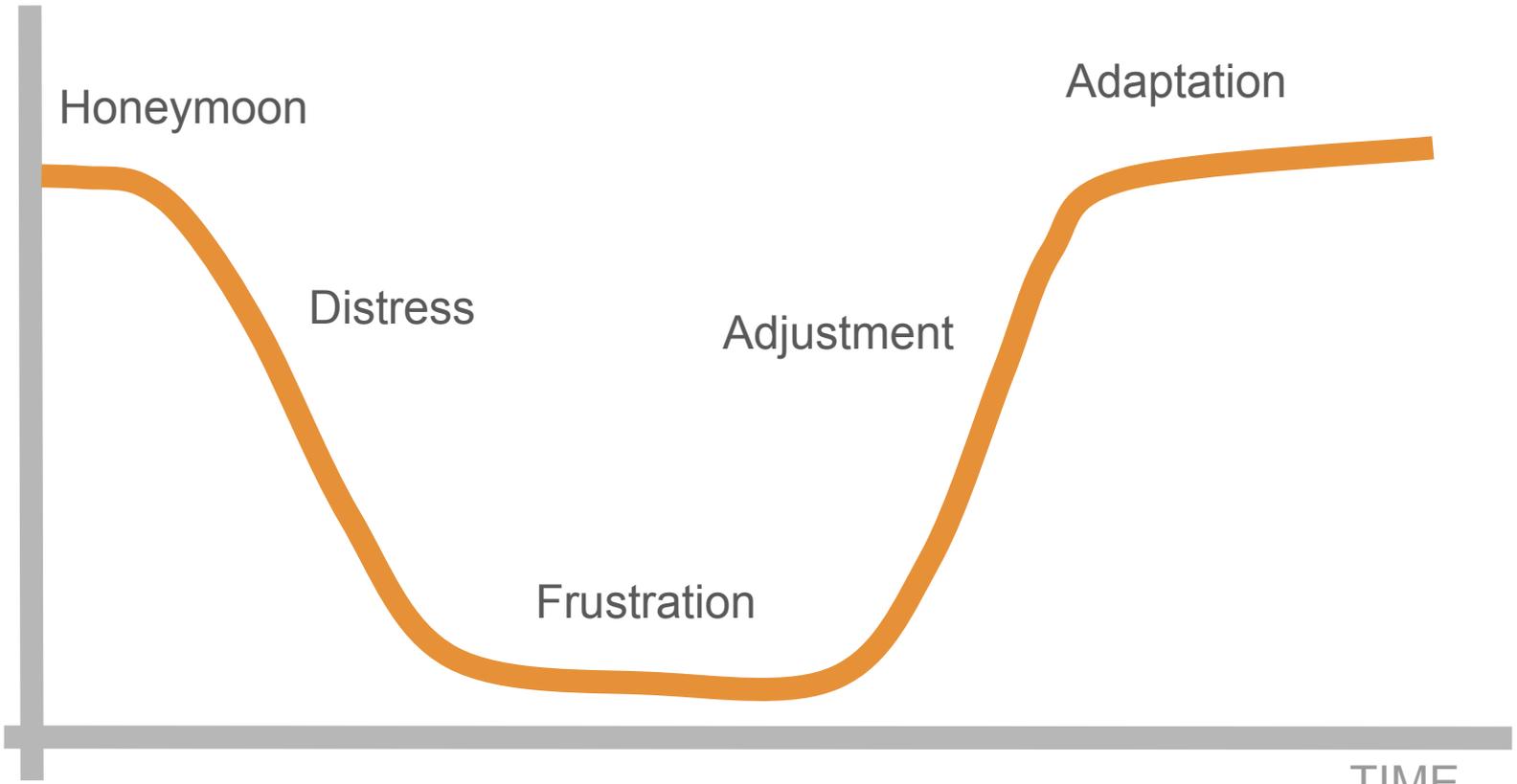


What are common reactions when adjusting to a new culture?



grief Lack of concentration boredom headache
sadness/depression avoidance/isolation doubt
more/less sleep rumination homesick impatient
anger/frustration **NORMAL** under/over eating
inadequacy resentment obsessions apathetic
large mood swings hopelessness low grade fever
rejected loss of energy anxiety suspicious
muscle tension

SENSE OF WELL-BEING



Honeymoon

Distress

Frustration

Adjustment

Adaptation

TIME

SENSE OF WELL-BEING

Honeymoon

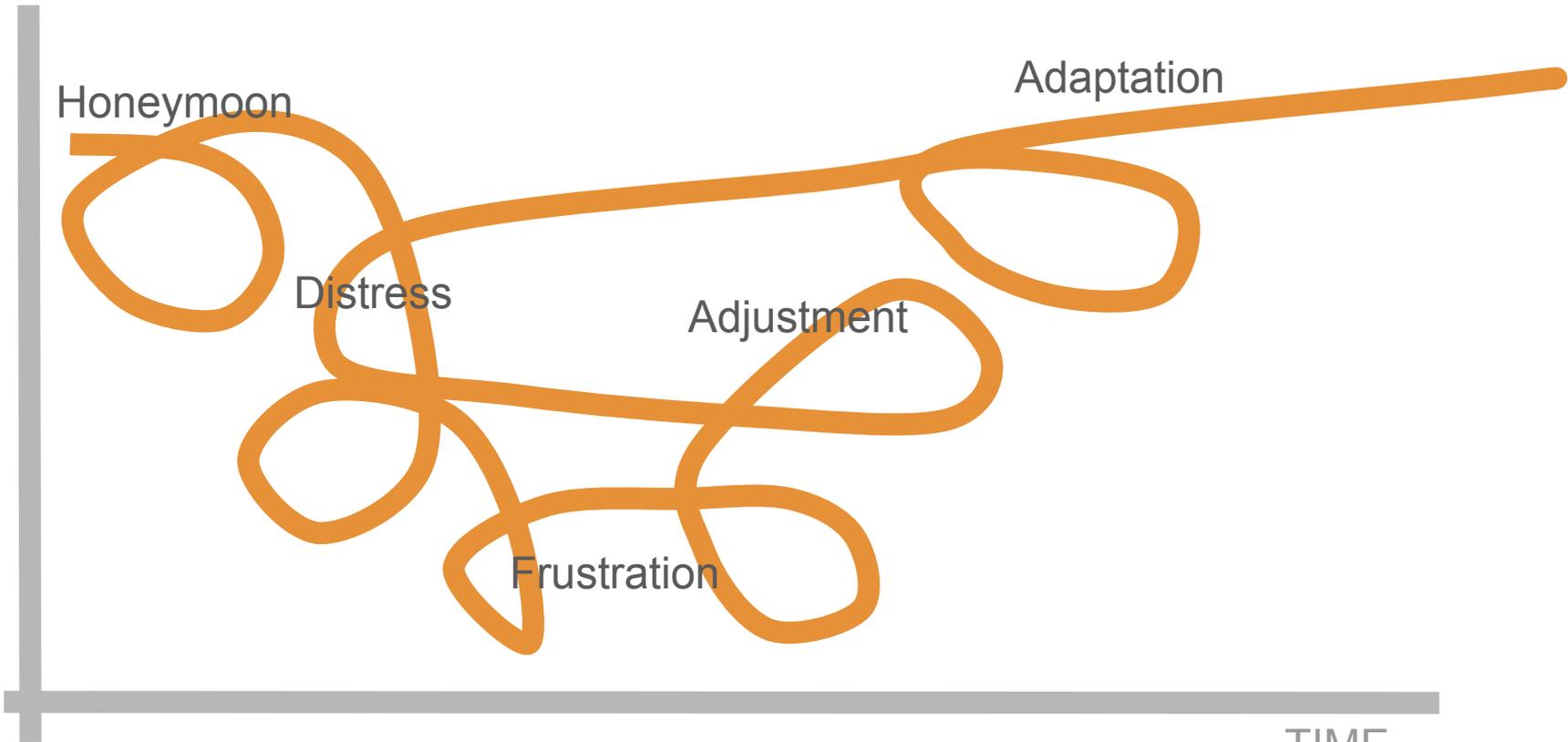
Adaptation

Distress

Adjustment

Frustration

TIME



What does full adjustment mean? How do I know I've adjusted?

Assimilation

Integration

Marginalization

Separation

Alienation



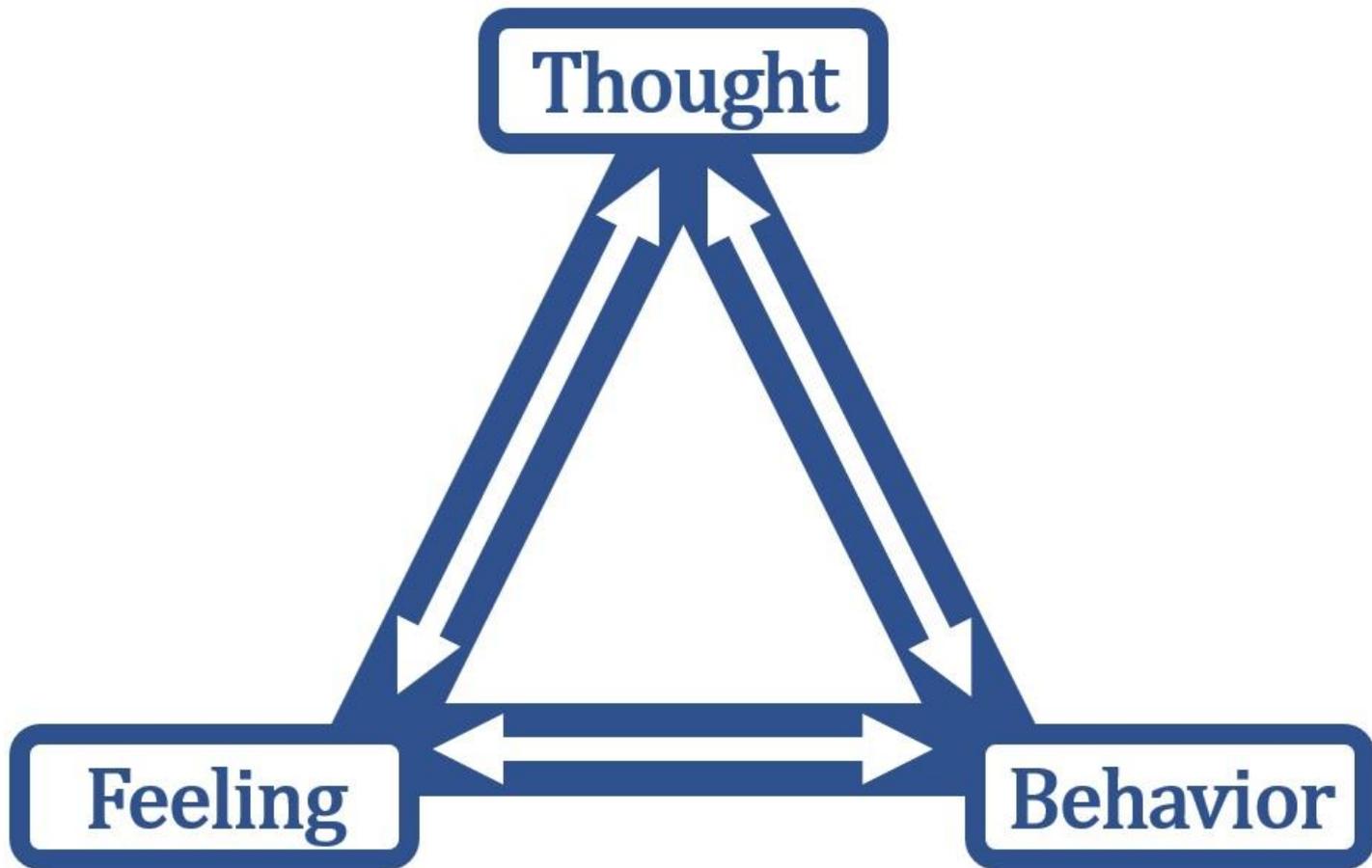
**Personal
Growth**

Living overseas

What are personal factors that influence adjustment?

Previous experience
Cultural background
Personality
Genetics
Mental health
Psychological skills/knowledge

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy



Thoughts

Do we choose our thoughts?





Cognitive Distortions

Black & White Thinking

Personalization

Catastrophizing

Emotional Reasoning

Mind Reading

Negative Filter

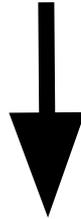
Should Statements

Observing

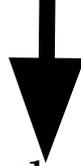


Thinking

Downward Arrow Technique



“What if I get nervous at the party?”



“What if I get nervous at the party and start sweating?”



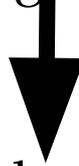
“What if I get nervous, start sweating, people think I’m crazy, and I live alone the rest of my life?”



Core Belief/Fear:

Something is wrong with me/people think I’m “crazy”

“I’m not going to pass this test”



“I’ll never learn Japanese”



“I’ll have to return home after spending a lot of time and money ”



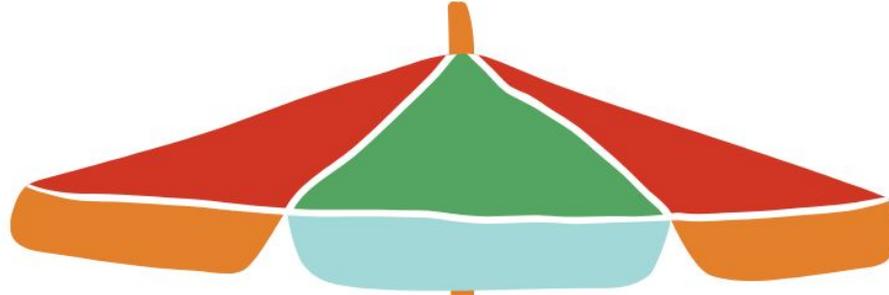
Core Belief/Fear:

I’m a failure/I won’t make anything of my life

Rumination



Rumination



Visualizing

Analyzing

Mental Checking

Mental Reviewing

Worrying

Monitoring

Rumination



Any type of mental engagement with the “problem”
- Dr. Michael Greenberg

Change Relationship with Thoughts

Stopping the thought vs **stop arguing with the thought**

Trying to solve the problem vs **stop trying to solve the “problem”**



Behavior

Thinking

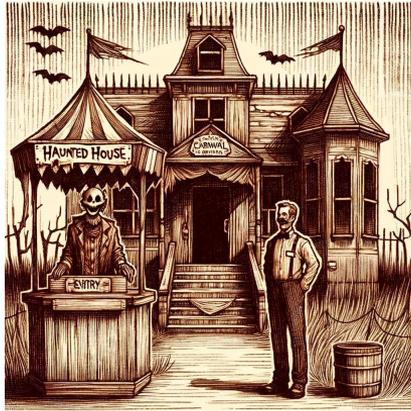


Alarm



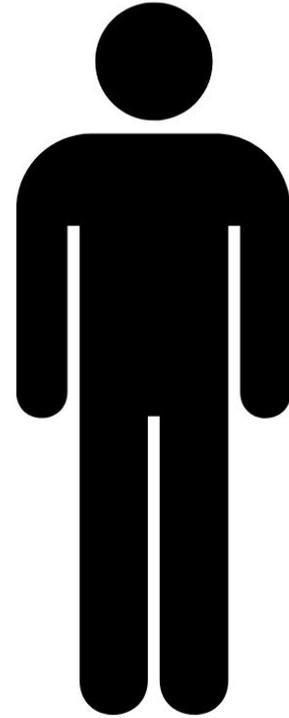
Paradoxical Intervention

“The harder I try to get rid of it, the worse it gets”



“The harder I try to increase it, the better it gets”

Changing Our Relationship with Anxiety



Changing Our Relationship with Depression



General Tips

Schedule worry

Get thoughts out of your head and onto paper

Take anxious thoughts to the extreme

Opposite action / Paradoxical interventions

General Tips

Breathing

Meditation

Label, label, label

Exercise

General Tips

Neuroplasticity

Patience

Persistence

Alcohol / drug abuse

isolating

Feeling out of control

Thoughts of suicide

persistent self-criticism / guilt / shame

International Mental Health Professionals of Japan
(IMHPJ)

TELL Japan

O'Sullivan Counseling



Questions?