

Tips on Dealing with Culture Shock:

- **Immerse Yourself in US Culture:** Become familiar with the local community, sightsee, make new friends, and expand your knowledge of English by learning local dialects and idioms.
- **Focus on Positives:** You're improving your English, advancing your career, and learning new skills that will help you in your future.
- **Stay Busy:** Visit tourist attractions, try new foods, and excel in your training program.
- **Maintain the Familiar:** Talk to family and friends abroad, prepare your traditional food, share your culture with American colleagues and other members of your community.
- **Connect with Fellow Foreign Nationals:** Meet other exchange visitors and international assignees.
- **Connect with Colleagues:** Learn about the US from American colleagues.
- **Be Patient:** Adjusting to life in a new place may take some time.
- **Be Prepared:** Learn about the US and the community where you will be living before your trip.

US Culture

US culture is diverse and hard to define. But there are some common characteristics:

- **Individualism:** Americans value self-reliance and independence. Consequently, you are expected to make your own decisions and take responsibility for your own actions.
- **Diversity:** The US is incredibly diverse and open to other cultures. Don't be afraid to share your culture or learn about new cultures.
- **Equality:** Social status is less important in everyday life in the US. Economic, social, demographic, and cultural differences are not emphasized openly.
- **Punctuality:** Americans like to be on time and do things as efficiently as possible. Provide advance notice if you are going to be late for an event or meeting, business or social.
- **Greetings:** Don't be surprised if strangers say "Hello" or "Hi" and smile at you. When people ask "How are you?" they don't expect a negative answer. You should answer "I'm fine, thanks" or "I'm good, how are you?" or something along those lines.
- **English Language:** People may automatically assume you can speak English like a native speaker. Don't hesitate to politely ask the other person to slow down or repeat what they said if you don't understand or missed something.
- **Religion:** Religions are practiced openly in the US, but people don't usually talk about religion in the workplace.

US Work Culture

- One's career or livelihood is very important. "What do you do for a living?" is a common question when you meet new people in the US.
- Men and women are treated equally and fairly, and they share the same responsibilities and expectations.
- Businesses value quality, quantity, and efficiency.
- Americans tend to be relatively direct (getting to the point quickly) when doing business.
- Although direct communication is used generally, indirect communication is used when making requests and giving feedback. "Would it be possible for your team to finish this by 5 p.m.?" is considered to be more polite than saying "Finish this by 5 p.m."
- When providing feedback, Americans typically try to mix negative with positive feedback and provide constructive criticism. Try to give a complete assessment, mentioning areas of strength along with areas for improvement.
- Physical contact is generally avoided in the workplace except for handshakes when greeting someone for the first time or when you conclude a meeting.
- Americans use informal style when addressing colleagues. Age and hierarchy don't play an important role in communication, and it's acceptable to call your boss by his or her first name.
- It is considered rude to answer a cellphone call during a meeting. If you must take a call during a meeting, politely excuse yourself from the meeting to answer your phone in another room.