



Aspects of 'Goodbye'

Denial: You do not want to say goodbye. In fact, you pretend that it is not happening at all. You deny that that you are actually leaving. This is a defense mechanism that protects us from the shock, disappointment and sadness of this stage of the experience ending. We block out the reality and hide from the facts. This is a temporary response that carries us through the first wave of saying goodbye.

Possible behaviors or actions: Not wanting to pack, not wanting to make arrangement to ship luggage home. Avoids discussion about plans for the airport. Does not make arrangements to say goodbye to important people. Today, one might be thinking 'I don't need this Re-Entry orientation'.

Anger: When you feel scared, nervous, anxious, and sad, you might deal with all these emotions by being angry. Arguing, fighting, and being rebellious are all defense mechanisms. You are not ready to leave, and sometimes it is easier to be angry with people rather than looking at the real cause of the anger--which is actually sadness.

Examples: Reacting impatiently to host family requests. Arguing with family and friends. Not wanting to listen to others. Being tempted to break rules. Easily frustrated and on edge.

Bargaining: The normal reaction to feelings of helplessness or anxiety is often a need to regain control. This sometimes occurs by trying to "bargain" and change the situation.

Example: Wanting to change your travel plans. Looking for ways to prolong the departure. Making plans that are not realistic---I will get a job this summer and stay in the States. If I get all As, I can I just stay and go to college here in the US.

Sadness/Sorrow: Feeling of sadness and regret are a normal reaction to this stage of your exchange experience. These feelings can happen before or after you have left the US.

Example: Not wanting to talk to anyone, isolating oneself. Staying away from friends and family, and just wanting to be alone.

Adjustment: Let others be there for you and help comfort you through the process of saying goodbye. The best thing you can do is to allow yourself to feel the emotions as they come over you. Resisting it only will prolong the natural process of healing.

Example: Make plans to continue interacting with the international students that you have met. Figure out ways to stay in touch with your American family and friends. Realize how much you have grown and recognize that this special experience will be with you forever. 3-4 Weeks Before You Leave.