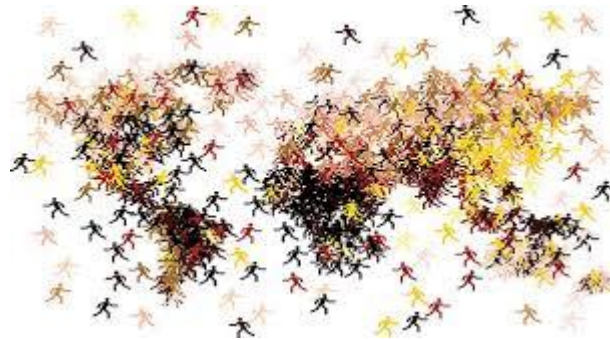
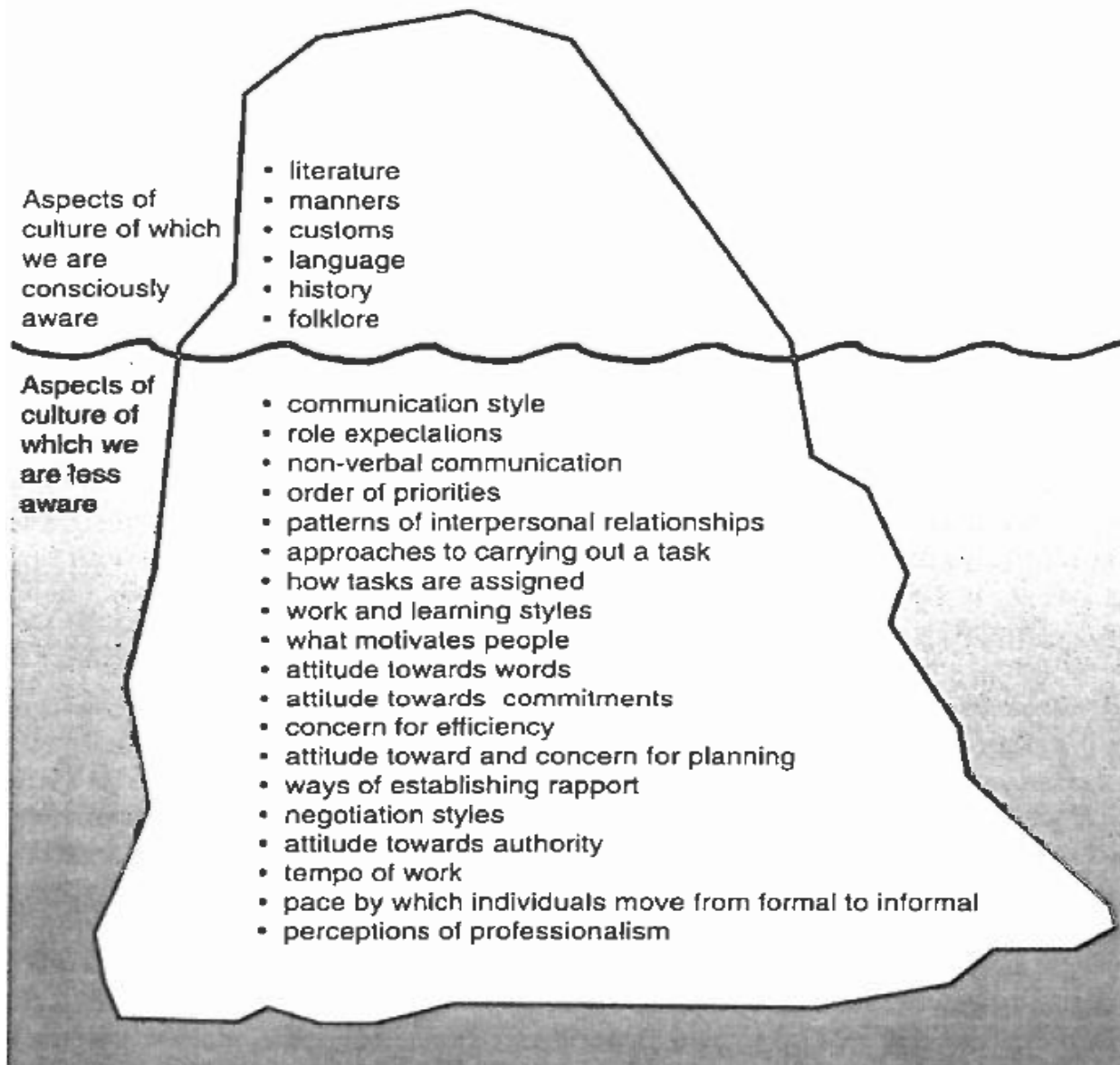


Migration and Mental Health Culture, Change and Challenges

The process, predicaments and possibilities



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*American Field Services (n.d.) Orientation Handbook Resources.
AFS Intercultural/International Programmes Inc.*

Migration

- Complex psychological process with significant and lasting effects on an individual's identity
- Involves profound losses – family, familiar food, native music, unquestioned social customs, language, familiar landscape
- Sudden change from “an average expectable environment” to a strange and unpredictable one
- Renewed opportunity for psychic growth and alteration

Effects of Immigration

- New channels of self-expression
- New identification models, different superego dictates and fresh ideals
- The mixture of pain over losses inherent in the process and anxiety consequent upon altered external and internal reality mobilises a mourning process

Immigration and Identity – Turmoil, Treatment and Transformation. Salman Akhtar, 1999



Facets of Migration

- Age at migration
- Access to refuelling
- Pre-migration health
- Nature of the country left
- Magnitude of cultural difference
- Reception by host culture
- Experiences of efficacy in the host culture

Risk Factors for Mental Disorders

Pre-migration experience, migration and settlement

- Traumatic experiences or prolonged stress prior to or during migration
- Being adolescent or elderly at the time of migration
- Separation from family
- Inability to speak the language of the host country
- Prejudice and discrimination in the receiving society



Risk Factors for Mental Disorders

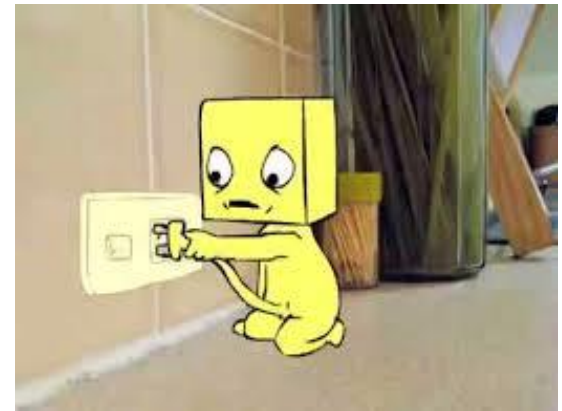
- Low socio-economic status and even more critically, a drop in personal socio-economic status following migration
- Non-recognition of occupational qualifications
- Isolation from persons of a similar cultural background
- Extent of acculturation

Klimidis et al. 1994.

Double Jeopardy for Migrating Adolescents

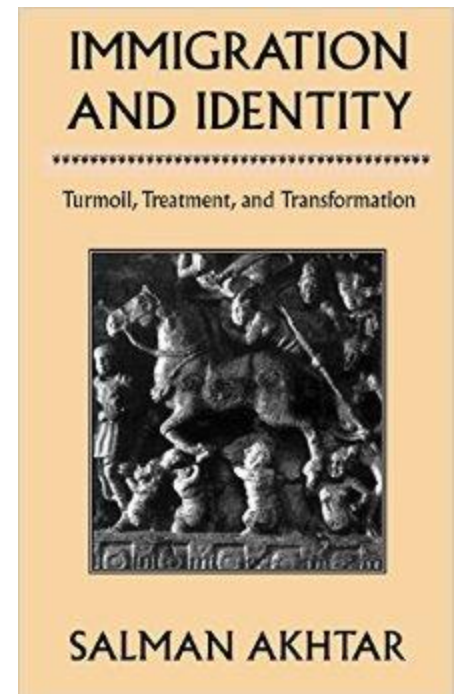
Developmental tasks, and tasks of acculturation

- Age at migration
- Culture shock – personal, social and academic
- Access to refuelling
- Pre-migration health
- Nature of the country left
- Magnitude of cultural difference
- Reception by host culture
- Experiences of efficacy in the host culture



Identity Transformation Following Immigration

- From Love or Hate to Ambivalence
- From Near or Far to Optimal distance
- From Yesterday or Tomorrow to Today
- From Yours or Mine to Ours



Salman Akhtar

Implications

- Policies
- Preparation
- Pastoral care
- Orientation
- Culture brokers or cultural interpreters
- Support systems
- Early intervention
- Health care

