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**RE-ENTRY ADJUSTMENT OF
HIGH SCHOOL EXCHANGE STUDENTS
TO NEW ZEALAND.**

**Cross-cultural transition
within a loss and grief framework.**

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of the requirements for the degree of
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Abstract

While it is generally assumed re-entry into a person's own culture after life abroad can be problematic, little attention has been given in the theory or research to the re-entry life of sojourners, and even less to adolescent sojourners. The aim of the present study was to examine a new conceptual framework for the readjustment process using existing loss and grief models. This study examined nine variables associated with the grieving process (Despair, Anger/Hostility, Guilt, Social Isolation, Loss of Control, Rumination, Depersonalization, Death Anxiety and Somatization) and applied them to the cross-cultural transition of American Field Service (AFS) high school exchange students back into New Zealand after one year abroad. 207 sojourners responded to mail-in questionnaires measuring grief (Grief Experience Inventory; GEI) and psychological adjustment (the short form of the Profile of Mood States; POMS-SF). Their responses on the POMS-SF were compared to that of a home based control of high school students while responses on the GEI were compared with three reference groups and a control group from the GEI manual. Results suggest sojourners are more similar to people grieving after a death than people experiencing loss by divorce. While sojourners were typically satisfied with their exchange, 61% noted re-entry was problematic. Further support for the results came from the unsolicited qualitative information participants provided. The theoretical basis of the present study proved useful and it is suggested that future research could develop this methodology further.

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