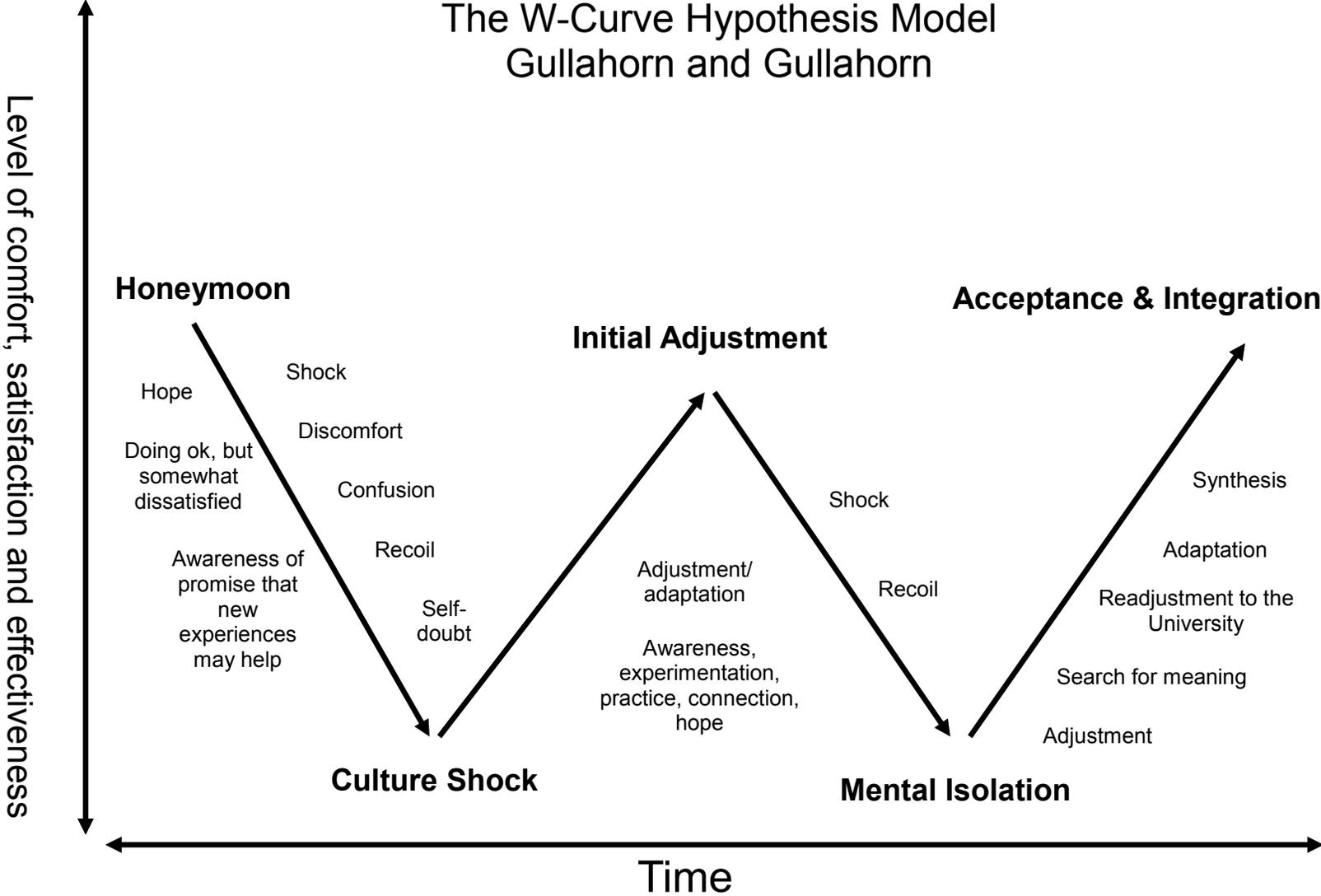


# The W-Curve Hypothesis Model

## Gullahorn and Gullahorn



Source: Hoffenburger, K., Mosier, R., & Stokes, B. (1999). Transition experience. In J.H. Schuh (Ed.), Educational programming and student learning in college and university residence halls. Columbus, OH: ACUHO-I

# The W-Curve Hypothesis Model

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### Stage A: Honeymoon

- Before students arrive at school and for the first few days.
  - Students are enthusiastic and want to meet new people. The want to get away from home and start out on their own.
  - University faculty and staff provide very welcoming environment
- Housing-related
- Excited about new roommate and living on their own.

### Stage B: Culture Shock

- New set of surroundings hard to adjust to.
  - Too many or too few people around, depending on the size of the student's hometown.
  - Expectations differ from prior experiences
  - Students have difficulty finding their way around and feel lost.
  - Excitement wears off and people withdraw.
- Housing-related
- Community bathrooms are problematic
  - Excitement about living with a roommate wears off

### Stage C: Initial Adjustment

- Physical adjustments occur and students feel more "at home" on campus.
  - This stage occurs more quickly for extroverts than introverts
  - Gap between home and university customs/values persist
- Housing-related
- Minor roommate irritations begin to diminish
  - Students become friends with people in the hall besides/ in addition to their roommate

### Stage D: Mental Isolation

- Even though students have adjusted to the physical environment, other things stand out as "different"
  - Feeling that getting to know others is hard.
  - Feeling that no one else feels the same way.
  - Feeling alone
  - Values are challenged
  - Cliques may form
  - Critical time period for many students
- Housing-related
- Larger roommate issues may surface
  - Students tend to sit alone in their room

### Stage E: Acceptance & Integration

- Students feel good again.
  - Students feel more completely "at home"
  - Students feel they are part of their new environment/ community
  - Home values are reconciled with university values
- Housing-related
- Roommate issues likely to be resolved/ overcome
  - New friends are made on and off campus