

CHECK-LIST FOR INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

Following are some areas in which to be particularly attentive to possible cultural differences. This attentiveness will pay off in improved communication if you 1) recognize a cultural difference from your own "natural" style; 2) adapt your behavior to accommodate the difference; and/or 3) call attention to the difference to explain confusion in communication.

LANGUAGE USE

1. Honorifics. What are appropriate titles? When are first names appropriate (if ever)? What difference does status make in using titles?
2. Vocabulary. What jargon is shared by the other person (if any)? When are you using slang or culture-specific metaphors (such as football parallels or references to television shows)?
3. Grammar. Are you speaking at the same "level" of complexity as your partner? Are you being logical and organized in presentation of ideas?

COMMUNICATION STYLE

1. Greeting Rituals. How long is an appropriate greeting? Are compliments appropriate? Are different status people greeted differently? What physical behavior (e.g. handshaking, other touching, if any) is expected?
2. Circular or Linear Conversation. Are you expected to come directly to the point, or should you provide more "background" information first? How will your partner react to direct approaches?
3. Subtlety or Directness. Should problems be confronted directly and openly, or is subtle allusion and hinting more appropriate? Should compliments be given openly?

NONVERBAL BEHAVIOR

1. Paralanguage. How might cultural differences in "tone of voice" be affecting your perception of the other person? To what extent are you depending on tone of voice to convey feelings to someone who might not know how to interpret the tone?
2. Body Language. How is more pronounced gesturing or more restrained gesturing affecting your perception? How is eye contact different? Are you assuming that less eye contact means inattentiveness? What is an appropriate distance to stand or sit from the other person? When is it all right to touch the other person (if ever)?
3. Time Language. When is "late"? What might be an appropriate reason to be late?

VALUES

1. Individualism or Group Orientation. How important is individual effort? When is it appropriate to get help? From whom should one receive help? How important is individual competition relative to group cooperation?

2. Egalitarianism or Recognition of Status. Should everyone ideally be treated the same, or Should people be treated differently depending on their status or relationship with you? Are you reacting negatively to what you see as "hypocrisy"?

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