
Slide 1



Participant Guide

Slide 2

MHN

Learning Objectives

Goals, as a result of this program:

- Build cultural awareness and understanding
- Bring cultural awareness into interpersonal communications
- Foster shared responsibility for mutual understanding
- Strengthen effective communication skills

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Slide 3

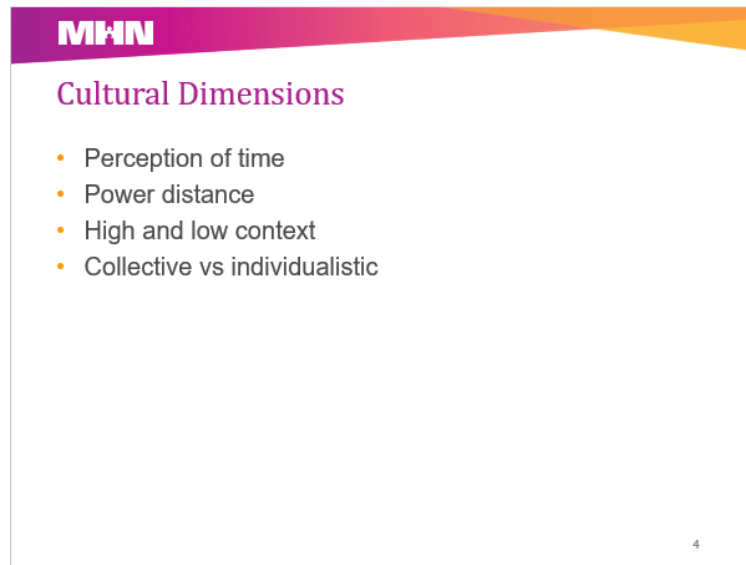
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Cultural Influence - Values, Beliefs and Behaviors

- Culture shapes our core beliefs, values, assumptions and attitudes about appropriate or “normal” behaviors.
- The behavior we accept as “normal” is formed from learned and inherited beliefs due to:
 - religious upbringing, ethnic, generational, class, and gender programming, educational socialization and the ethics we have been taught and accepted.
- These influences form the framework within which we think, look at life, perform and communicate in the workplace.

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Slide 4



Slide 4 features a header with the acronym 'MHN' in white on a purple background. The main title 'Cultural Dimensions' is in purple. Below it, a bulleted list contains four items: 'Perception of time', 'Power distance', 'High and low context', and 'Collective vs individualistic'. A small number '4' is in the bottom right corner.

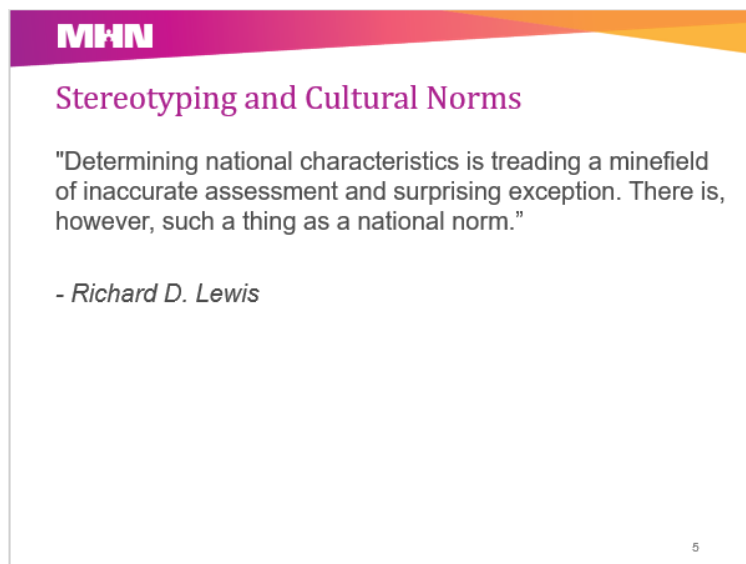
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Cultural Dimensions

- Perception of time
- Power distance
- High and low context
- Collective vs individualistic

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Slide 5



Slide 5 features a header with the acronym 'MHN' in white on a purple background. The main title 'Stereotyping and Cultural Norms' is in purple. Below it, a quote is displayed in black text, followed by the attribution '- Richard D. Lewis' in italics. A small number '5' is in the bottom right corner.

MHN

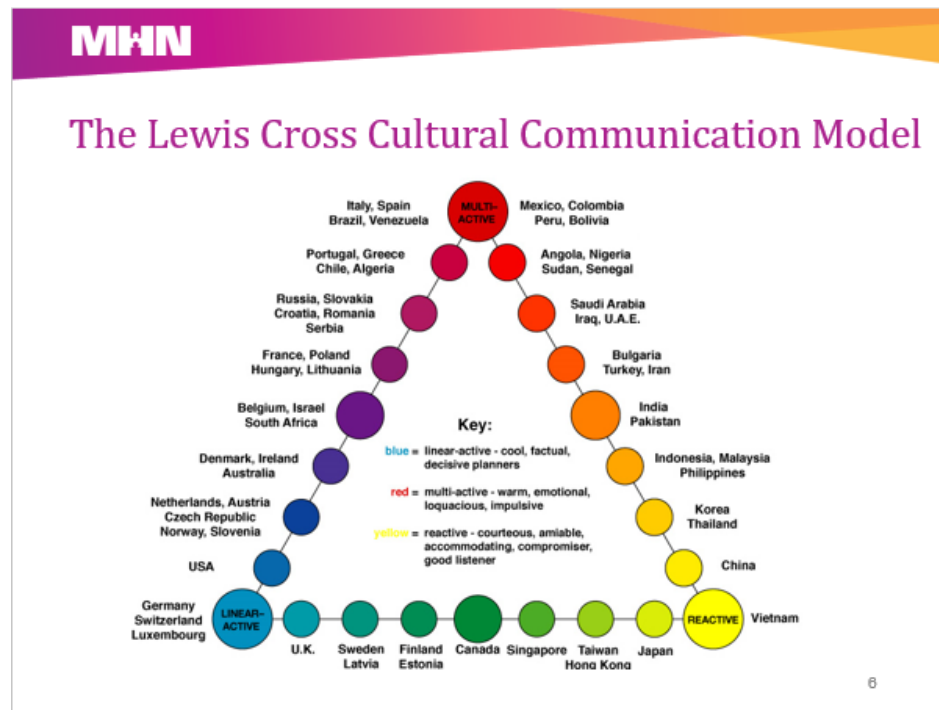
Stereotyping and Cultural Norms

"Determining national characteristics is treading a minefield of inaccurate assessment and surprising exception. There is, however, such a thing as a national norm."

- *Richard D. Lewis*

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Slide 6



Slide 7

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Why Each Type Is Important

DESCRIPTION	TYPES	NEEDED TO
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Task oriented Highly organized planners Complete action chains by doing one thing at a time Linear agenda 	Linear-Active (blue)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organize and plan See problems, analyze consequences Follow consistent policies Access rational thought Generate data Challenge us objectively
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expressive Talkative Spontaneous Likely to do many things at the same time Poor followers of agendas Attach great importance to family, others 	Multi-Active (red)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generate enthusiasm Motivate and persuade Create a positive social atmosphere Access emotions Generate dialogue Challenge us personally
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good listeners Rarely initiate action/discussion Prefer to listen to and establish other's position, then react and form opinion Attach great importance to family, community Respects age, wisdom, experience 	Reactive (yellow)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Harmonize Act intuitively Be patient See the big picture Think and act long term Access feelings Listen and empathize Challenge us holistically

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Applying the Model

- Do you view yourself as fitting best in one category?
Why, what stands out?
 - Perhaps you are a 'hybrid', being a blend of more than one? In what ways?

Activity – at work...

1. Do you express emotion outwardly? How (verbally/non-verbally)?
2. Do you tend to do most of the talking, most of the listening or?
3. Do you think best 'out-loud', 'silently', or both?
4. Are you able to provide your opinion 'on demand', or do you like to have time to think about a problem/question?

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Applying the Model *cont.* - Scenarios

How might you coach these individuals to be successful?

1. Claude is "Linear-Active". He wishes to point out a recurring mistake to his co-worker Leonard who is "Reactive".
Tip: Reactive's must not lose face.
2. Paul is "Multi-Active". He has been asked to deliver a 10 minute overview of his team's projects to his "Extra - Linear-Active" Director, Anne.
Tips: Linear Active's are agenda driven and well-organized.
3. Mei is "Reactive". She is often uncomfortable, being asked to make quick decisions with little information by her "Multi-active" and "Linear-Active" teammates.
Tips: Reactive's look at the big picture; take input from people & data.

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The slide features a purple and orange gradient header with the MHN logo. The title 'Common Cultural Differences' is in purple. The list of differences is in black text with orange bullet points.


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Common Cultural Differences

- Physical Contact
- Eye Contact
- Personal Space
- Facial expression
- Showing strong emotions (at work)
- Communicating disagreement
- Physical gestures

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Slide 11



The slide features a purple and orange gradient header with the MHN logo. The title 'Communication with Someone for Whom English Is a Second Language' is in purple. The list of communication tips is in black text with orange bullet points.

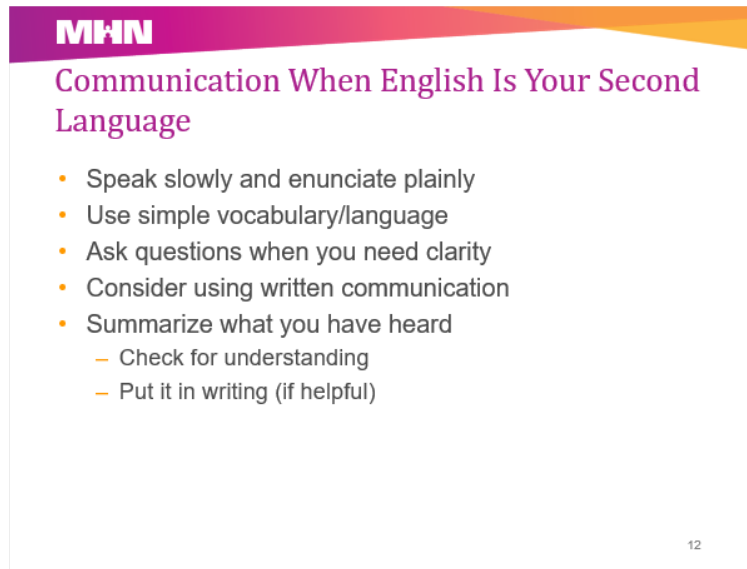
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Communication with Someone for Whom English Is a Second Language

- Speak slowly (*not louder*) and enunciate plainly
- Use a simple vocabulary and unambiguous language
 - Avoid slang, puns, idioms, metaphors, dual meaning words and double negatives.
- Be cautious with humor
- Keep your message brief
- Summarize what you have said
- Check for understanding
- Consider using written communication
- Encourage a two-way conversation

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Communication When English Is Your Second Language

- Speak slowly and enunciate plainly
- Use simple vocabulary/language
- Ask questions when you need clarity
- Consider using written communication
- Summarize what you have heard
 - Check for understanding
 - Put it in writing (if helpful)

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Effective Communication Skills

- Share the responsibility for mutual understanding
- Use effective listening
- Practice DHR (direct, honest and respectful) communication

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Share the Responsibility for Mutual Understanding

- Communication is a two-way street and involves both *sending* and *receiving* messages
 - When we're **sending** a message, what we think we are communicating may be very different from what was heard by the receiver.
 - When we're **receiving** a message, what we heard may be very different from what was said/intended by the sender.
- For communication to be effective, senders and receivers should *both* seek to ensure mutual understanding

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Share the Responsibility for Mutual Understanding

Strive for Clarity

Sasha says to her co-worker Jerod: "I think it's a good start but we should do it faster in the future."

What Sasha intended: to communicate to Jerod that they should do the process faster, starting *now*.

What Jerod heard: we'll start doing it faster in the *future*, not right now.

- How could Sasha be more clear?
- How could Jerod be sure he understands Sasha?

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Use Effective Listening

When we listen effectively we:

- gain greater understanding of the person's perception
 - *truth is subjective and a matter of perception*
- have more insight into the person's motivation, needs, attitude, and behavior
- possess a deeper understanding of differences and/or issues
- gain insight into potential paths for reaching agreement

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Use Effective Listening *Cont.*

Listening *effectively*, requires more than hearing words. It is an active, rather than passive process.

It requires that we:

1. offer focus and attention
2. let the other person talk
3. be conscious of our own thoughts and agenda
4. try to suspend judgment and evaluation
5. be willing to see things from another's point of view
6. use reflective listening
7. ask questions when we need clarification
8. observe the speaker's body language

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Practice DHR Communication

- Direct
 - where possible, have 1st-hand communications
 - speak directly to the person when you have an issue with them (do not talk about them behind their back)
- Honest
 - share truthful thoughts, feelings, and concerns about issues that are having a negative impact on you/others
- Respectful
 - communicate in a way that is respectful to yourself and to the other person
 - offer constructive ideas and potential solutions to problems

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Summary

Communicating effectively in a culturally diverse workplace requires that we:

- Strive to understand and respect differences
- Adjust our behavior when communicating
- Seek mutual understanding
- Be direct, honest, and respectful
- Focus on shared goals

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Resources

Books:

- *Beyond Culture*, by Edward T. Hall
- *The Culture Map: Breaking Through the Invisible Boundaries of Global Business*, by Erin Meyer
- *Cross Talk: Communicating in a Multicultural Workplace* by Sherron Kenton, Deborah Valentine

Internal

- Human Resources

External

- MHN Online, www.MHN.com

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Handout A: Cultural Dimensions

Power Distance

Power Distance is the: “*Level of acceptance of people, who have no power, of the unequal spread of power in their society.*”

Examples of **low power** distance cultures are: the Netherlands, the UK & USA, Germany, Nordic countries. Examples of **high power** distance cultures are: Belgium, France, Malaysia, The Arab World.

Examples of Low Power Distance Culture Characteristics

Low power distance culture:

- **Independence;** People are (relatively) independent of the Power Holder (parents, teacher, boss, etc.).
- **Good reason for hierarchy;** When there are, so called, hierarchical layers, there must be good reasons. Putting a management layer, or manager in place just like that, will not easily be accepted.
- **What goes for you goes for me;** Or equality: if you are allowed to do this, then I’m allowed to do the same as well.
- **Open door policy;** This could literally mean that the door of the manager is open, or that the management of a company is not automatically on the top floor of the building.

Examples of High Power Distance Culture Characteristics

High power distance culture:

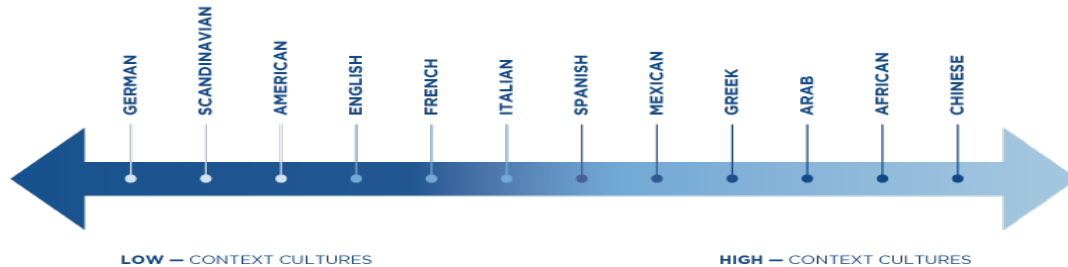
- **Dependence;** People are (relatively) dependent on the Power Holder. This could result in subordinates not taking own initiative, but rather wait for the boss to give instructions. There is also relatively little real empowerment.
- **Hierarchy is just there;** In other words, it is existential. It’s there, and that’s good and normal.
- **Special treatment;** Typically, there are privileges for the people in power. Like the parking place in front of the office, etc.
- **Gate keepers;** Gate keepers are those people who keep the power holder away from the people who have no power. Often the Power Holder derives a certain level of status from not being approachable.

Note: Sometimes there are exceptions, high-power distance cultures may include some low-power culture characteristics and vice versa.

Source: <https://culturematters.com/power-distance-index-examples/>

High- and Low- Context Cultures

One framework for approaching intercultural communication is with high-context and low-context cultures, which refer to the value cultures place on indirect and direct communication.



High-Context Cultures

A high-context culture relies on implicit communication and nonverbal cues. In high-context communication, a message cannot be understood without a great deal of background information.

Asian, African, Arab, central European and Latin American cultures are generally considered to be high-context cultures.

Common tendencies:

Association:

- Relationships build slowly and depend on trust.
- Productivity depends on relationships and the group process.
- An individual's identity is rooted in groups (family, culture, work).
- Social structure and authority are centralized.

Interaction:

- Nonverbal elements such as voice tone, gestures, facial expression and eye movement are significant.
- Verbal messages are indirect, and communication is seen as an art form or way of engaging someone.
- Disagreement is personalized, and a person is sensitive to conflict expressed in someone else's nonverbal communication.

Territoriality:

- Space is communal. People stand close to each other and share the same space.

Temporality:

- Everything has its own time, and time is not easily scheduled. Change is slow, and time is a process that belongs to others and nature.

Low-Context Cultures

A **low-context** culture relies on explicit communication. In low-context communication, more of the information in a message is spelled out and defined. Cultures with western European roots, such as the United States and Australia, are generally considered to be low-context cultures.

Common tendencies:

Association:

- Relationships begin and end quickly.
- Productivity depends on procedures and paying attention to the goal.
- The identity of individuals is rooted in themselves and their accomplishments.
- Social structure is decentralized.

Interaction:

- Nonverbal elements are not significant.
- Verbal messages are explicit, and communication is seen as a way of exchanging information, ideas and opinions.
- Disagreement is depersonalized; the focus is on rational (not personal) solutions.
- An individual can be explicit about another person's bothersome behavior.

Territoriality:

- Space is compartmentalized. Privacy is important, so people stand farther apart.

Temporality:

- Events and tasks are scheduled and to be done at particular times.
- Change is fast, and time is a commodity to be spent or saved. One's time is one's own.

Adapted from: <http://online.seu.edu/high-and-low-context-cultures/>

Collectivist and Individualist Cultures

Cultures are typically divided into two categories: **collectivist** and **individualist**.

Individualist cultures, such as those of the United States and Western Europe, emphasize personal achievement regardless of the expense of group goals, resulting in a strong sense of competition.

Collectivist cultures, such as those of China, Korea, and Japan, emphasize family and work group goals above individual needs or desires.

Traits of **Collectivism**

- Each person is encouraged to be an active player in society, to do what is best for society as a whole rather than themselves.
- The rights of families, communities, and the collective supersede those of the individual.
- Rules promote unity, brotherhood, and selflessness.
- Working with others and cooperating is the norm; everyone supports each other.
- Contribute to a strong cohesive group

Traits of **Individualism**

- "I" identity.
- Promotes individual goals, initiative and achievement.
- Individual rights are seen as being the most important. Rules attempt to ensure self-importance and individualism.
- Independence is valued; there is much less of a drive to help other citizens or communities than in collectivism.
- Relying or being dependent on others is frequently seen as shameful.
- People are encouraged to do things on their own; to rely on themselves

Adapted from: http://psychology.wikia.com/wiki/Collectivist_and_Individualist_cultures

Handout B: Lewis Model Cultural Profile Descriptions

LINEAR-ACTIVE (Blue)	MULTI-ACTIVE (Red)	REACTIVE (Yellow)
Talks half the time	Talks most of the time	Listens most of the time
Gets data from stats, research	Solicits information first-hand from people	Uses both data and people sources
Plans ahead step by step	Plans grand outline only	Looks at general principles
Polite but direct	Expresses emotions	Polite and indirect
Partly conceals feelings	Displays feelings	Conceals feelings
Confronts with logic	Confronts emotionally	Never confronts
Dislikes losing face	Has good excuses	Must not lose face
Compartmentalizes projects	Lets one project influence another	Sees the whole picture
Rarely interrupts	Often interrupts	Doesn't interrupt
Job-oriented	People-oriented	Very people-oriented
Sticks to the facts	Juggles the facts	Statements are promises
Truth before diplomacy	Flexible truth	Diplomacy over truth
Sometimes impatient	Impatient	Patient
Limited body language	Unlimited body language	Subtle body language
Respects officialdom	Pulls strings	Networks
Separates the social and professional	Interweaves the social and professional	Connects the social and professional
Does one thing at a time	Multi-tasks	Reacts to other's action
Punctuality very important	Punctuality not important	Punctuality important

Adapted from: <https://www.crossculture.com/about-us/the-model/>

Handout C: Applying the Model to Workplace Scenarios

How might you coach these individuals to be successful?

1. Claude is “Linear-Active”. He wishes to point out a recurring mistake to his co-worker Leonard who is “Reactive”.

Tip: Reactive’s must not lose face.

2. Paul is “Multi-Active”. He has been asked to deliver a 10 minute overview of his team’s projects to his “*Extra* - Linear-Active” Director, Anne.

Tip: Linear Active’s are agenda driven.

3. Mei is “Reactive”. She is often uncomfortable, being asked to make quick decisions with little information by her “Multi-active” and “Linear-Active” teammates.

Tips: Reactive’s look at the big picture. And take input from people, and data.

4. Thomas is “Linear-Active”. He prepares the team meeting agenda each week and is frustrated because his “Multi-active” co-workers regularly interrupt the meeting with new issues.

Tips: Multi-Actives are spontaneous; have a hard time following agendas.

5. Olivia is “Multi-Active”. She is organizing a ‘meet and greet’ for her primarily “Linear-Active” co-workers and some newly hired “Multi-Active” team members.

Tips: Linear-Actives like a plan and organization; focus more on the task more than people. Multi-Actives don’t care for agendas and structure; more interested in people than the task.

6. Rosa would like to solicit opinions on a new process, from her direct reports. How might she be successful, considering they represent each of the three different styles?

Tips: Linear-Actives are polite but direct, Multi-Actives are emotional, Reactives are polite and indirect.

Handout D: Common Cultural Differences

Physical Contact and Eye Contact

Making physical contact (such as hand shaking) are customary for some people, and not for others.

Physical Contact

- In the United States, the handshake is a common greeting. Hugs and kisses are generally reserved for those you know well.
- For Islamic and Hindu religions people typically don't touch with the left hand. To do so is a social insult as the left hand is for toilet functions.
- Islamic cultures generally don't approve of any touching between genders (even handshakes).
- In some countries such as Italy and New Zealand, women offer their hand first.
- Most Latinos are more accustomed to physical contact. Even people who know each other only slightly may embrace as a greeting.
- Traditional Korean (and many other Asian countries) don't touch strangers, especially between members of the opposite sex.

Eye contact and Gaze

In some cultures, looking someone in the eye when they are talking to you is considered rude, while in other cultures refraining from doing so is considered disrespectful.

- In the United States and western cultures, direct eye to eye contact is a positive thing (children learn to look a person in the eyes).
- In Arabic cultures, prolonged eye-contact shows interest and helps to understand the truthfulness of the other person. (A person who doesn't reciprocate is seen as untrustworthy).
- In Japan, Africa, Latin American, and the Caribbean, eye contact is avoided to show respect.

Source: https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2017/04/24/how-close-is-too-close-depends-on-where-you-live/?utm_term=.764fa5055ca2

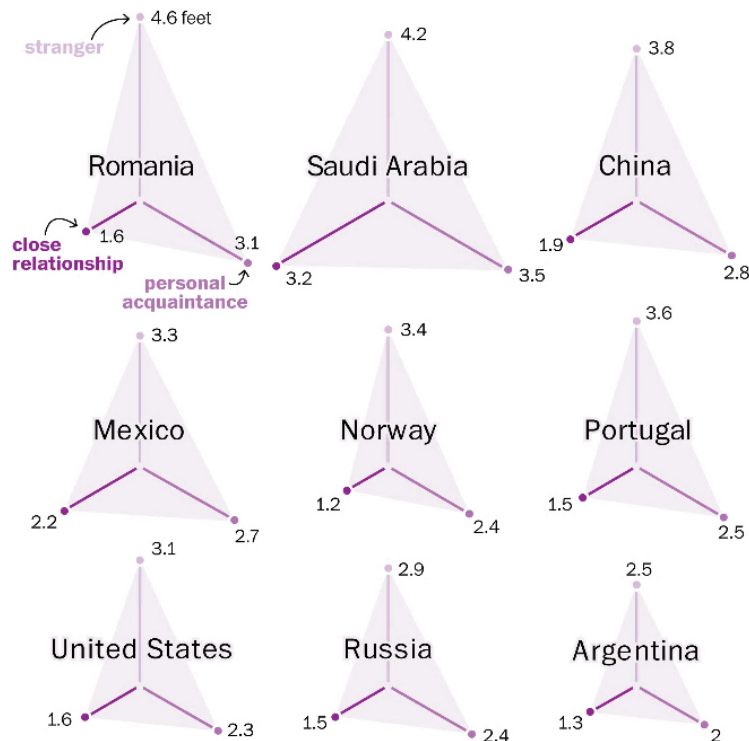
Personal space

Having personal space. Some people get very close when they interact with another person. Others are uncomfortable with this.

Researchers have sorted the world into “contact cultures” (South America, the Middle East, Southern Europe) and “non-contact cultures” (Northern Europe, North America, Asia). In non-contact cultures, people stand farther apart and touch less.

How close is too close? Depends on where you live.

Appropriate distance, in feet, for a ...



Source: Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology

TIM MEKO/THE WASHINGTON POST

For more information: https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2017/04/24/how-close-is-too-close-depends-on-where-you-live/?utm_term=.dfbb6e35881a

Facial Expression

- In a **low-context** cultural environment (Western Caucasians for example), people tend to express themselves as explicit as possible, thus exaggerating facial expression becomes a complementary tool for further elaboration of the speaker's meaning.
- On the contrary, a **high-context** culture usually indicates an enormous amount of "taken for granted" shared knowledge, therefore people believe that limited amount of information should be enough for successful communication. Which means the "complementary tool" function of facial expression becomes less important.
- An experiment done by the University of Glasgow shows that Western Caucasians and East Asians have different understanding in the facial expression signals of the 6 basic emotions, which are the so-called "universal language of emotion"—happy, surprise, fear, disgust, anger and sadness.

- The results show that Western Caucasians tend to distribute their expressive features across the face, including eyebrows and mouth; while the East Asians tend to use their eyes to express most of the emotions, especially by changing the direction of gazing

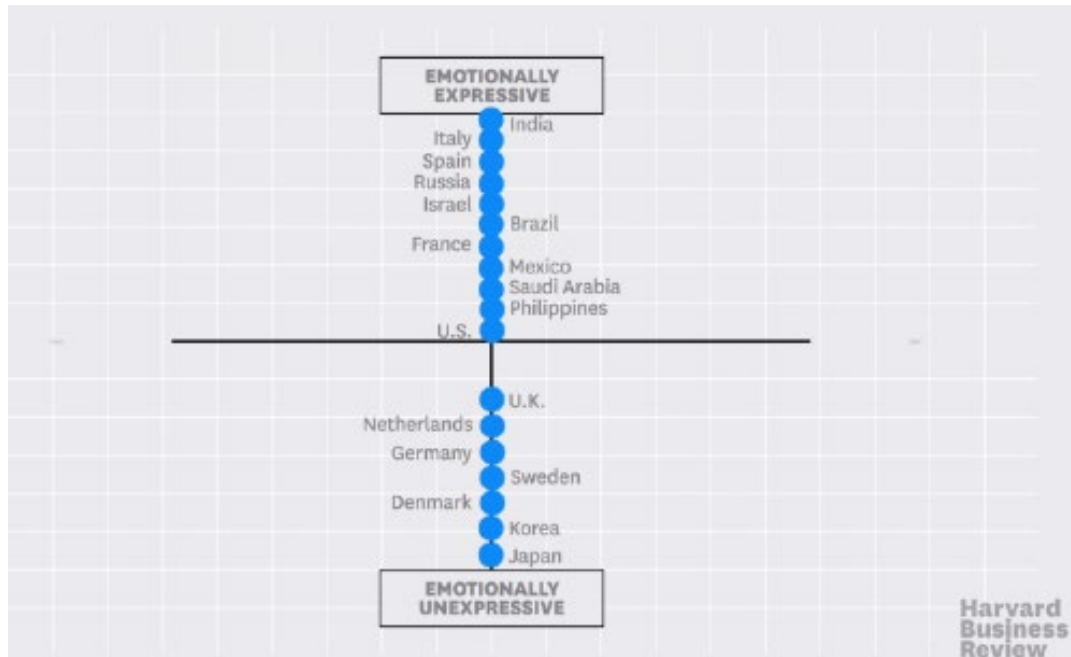
Adapted from: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/High-context_and_low-context_cultures#Facial_Expression

Showing strong emotions (at work)

Some people think it's appropriate, while others do not.

- Take for example, the expression of enthusiasm. In the United States, it's largely acceptable, even admirable, to show enthusiasm in a business setting, assuming it's appropriate for the situation.
- In contrast, during the regular workday in Japan, individuals are not typically emotionally expressive. Even if they feel excited about their work, they will rarely show it explicitly.
- In China, expressing too much outward enthusiasm, especially in front of a boss, could be seen as showing off, which is not typically condoned in Chinese culture.
- In the UK, people are typically far more understated and subdued than are Americans. A truly outstanding achievement, for example, is often characterized as "not bad." And when people ask how each other are doing, the typical answer is "fine" (as opposed to "Great!" or "Good!" as it might be in the U.S.).

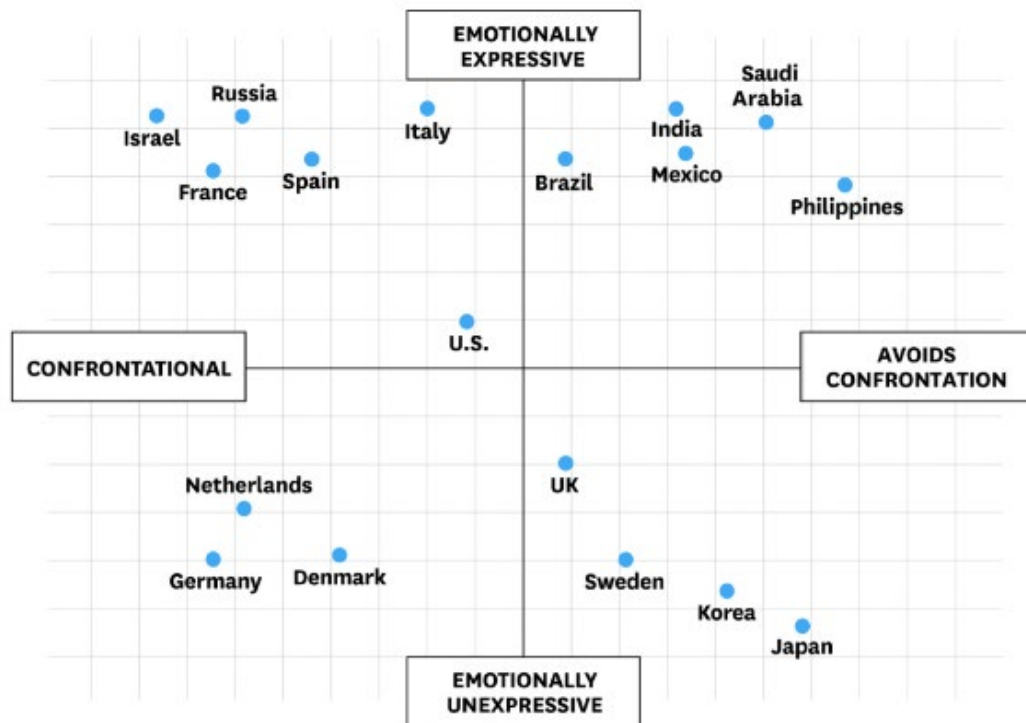
Source: <https://hbr.org/2015/04/emotional-intelligence-doesnt-translate-across-borders>



Source: https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2016/05/11/the-secret-to-disagreeing-with-people-from-20-different-countries-in-one-chart/?utm_term=.be11f8b3a226

Communicating disagreement

Some people prefer to communicate directly about disagreement, whereas others prefer to avoid it. Certainly, people vary significantly within any given culture due to their own individual upbringing, experiences, and personality, but differences do exist between cultures.



SOURCE ERIN MEYER
FROM "GETTING TO SI, JA, OUI, HAI, AND DA," DECEMBER 2015

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Erin Meyer, Harvard Business Review

Source: https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2016/05/11/the-secret-to-disagreeing-with-people-from-20-different-countries-in-one-chart/?utm_term=.be11f8b3a226

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Physical Gesturing

Gestures made with the hands and arms may have different meanings, depending upon the culture.



In Brazil, Germany, Russia, and many other countries around the world, the **OK sign** is a very offensive gesture because it is used to depict a private bodily orifice. The OK sign actually does mean "okay" in the United States, however in Japan it means "money," and it is commonly used to signify "zero" in France.



The **thumbs-up** sign is commonly used in many cultures to signify a job well done. However, if it is used in Australia, Greece, or the Middle East, especially if it is thrust up as a hitchhiking gesture would be, it means essentially "Up yours!" or "Sit on this!"



Simply **pointing with the index finger** at something or someone is considered a very rude thing to do in China, Japan, Indonesia, Latin America, and many other countries. In Europe, it's thought of as impolite, and in many African countries the index finger is used only for pointing at inanimate objects, *never* at people. It's best to use an open hand with all your fingers together when you need to point at something or someone.



Curling the index finger with the palm facing up is a common gesture that people in the United States use to beckon someone to come closer. However, it is considered a rude gesture in Slovakia, China, East Asia, Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, and many other parts of the world. It's also considered extremely impolite to use this gesture with people. It is used only to beckon dogs in many Asian countries -- and using it in the Philippines can actually get you arrested! The appropriate way to beckon someone in much of Europe, and parts of Asia, is to face the palm of your hand downward and move your fingers in a scratching motion.

Source: HUFF Post Business: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/gayle-cotton/cross-cultural-gestures_b_3437653.html

Handout E: English As a Second Language

Communication with Someone for Whom English Is a Second Language

Speak slowly (not louder) and enunciate plainly.

Allow those who don't have the same native language as you the time to interpret what you are saying. Most non-native English speakers find Americans to speak very fast. Enunciate plainly.

Use a simple vocabulary and unambiguous language.

Avoid words that require a dictionary when communicating cross-culturally.

Avoid slang, puns, idioms, metaphors, dual meaning words and double negatives.

Term	Description	Examples
Slang	Words and phrases that are regarded as very informal.	“a buck” (dollar) “go Dutch” (pay separate) “feeling blue” (sad)
Pun	A play on words using homonyms or similar sounding words, usually as a joke, sometimes as an insult.	“An elephant’s opinion carries a lot of weight”. “A skunk fell in the river and stank to the bottom.”
Idiom	Word combinations that have a different meaning than the literal meanings of each word.	“Break a leg” “Kick the bucket”
Metaphor	A figure of speech that is used to make a comparison between two things that aren't alike but do have something in common.	He is a “night owl”
Dual or multi-meaning	Words that have more than one meaning.	pail/pale, no/know, buy/by/bye.
Double negative	Two negative words used in the same sentence	I didn't see nothing. That won't do you no good.

Be cautious with humor.

- Humor is notoriously culture-specific. What is funny in one culture might not be in another.
- While humor is a good icebreaker, it can backfire if the person does not understand the context or implied meaning.
- If you laugh, they may think you are laughing at them, rather than at a misunderstood joke.
- What you may interpret as wit, they may interpret as an insult.

Keep your message brief.

- Use short bits of information, and confirm understanding before you go on.
- If it seems your listener doesn't understand a word or phrase, try rephrasing it.

Summarize what you have said.

- By summarizing what you have said, you can verify that everyone is on the same page.

Check for understanding.

- Don't assume your listeners understand your explanation of an issue simply because they may smile, nod their heads, or say 'yes' when you ask them if they understand.
- The meaning of "yes" varies from "maybe, I'll consider it" to "definitely so," with many shades in between.
- Ask in a respectful way, if they would share their understanding

Consider using written communication.

- Sometimes individuals who speak English as a second language possess strong or even exceptional English writing skills. Depending upon the situation, this may be a great alternative.

Encourage a two-way conversation.

- Allow room for the person to chime in with their perspective, to give feedback and/or to ask questions.
- Grant the person time to respond if that suits their communication style.
- Where appropriate, let the person know that you are open to continuing the conversation as they would like. This can go over well when a person needs time to think through and respond.

*Communication When English Is Your Second Language***Speak slowly and enunciate plainly.**

Allow those who you are speaking with the time to interpret what you are saying.

Use simple vocabulary/language.

Keeping it simple can be key for understanding.

Ask questions when you need clarity.

As difficult as it may be to ask questions, it can lead to greater understanding.

Consider using written communication.

If your written language skills are strong, consider using them as an alternative.

Summarize what you have heard.

Check for understanding by saying what you understand and asking questions. Put it in writing if that may be helpful.

Handout F: Effective Listening Skills

1. Offer focus and attention

Effective listening requires your full attention. Doing something else while a speaker is trying to communicate with you is not only rude, it keeps you from focusing on what is being said and prevents you from observing body language. It also makes the speaker feel unimportant and rushed. Hold your calls at work.

Non-verbal attention - Make eye contact and lean in toward the speaker, which will communicate your interest in what s/he is saying. Face the speaker squarely. Keep an open posture with arms and legs uncrossed. Nod when the speaker makes a point to show you're paying attention.

2. Let the other person talk

Don't interrupt, offer an opinion, advise or interpret. When you cut in with suggestions or anecdotes of similar experiences you've had, you shut down the speaker. Most likely, you're busy preparing your answer, rather than focusing on what is being said. That's not listening – it's waiting. Listen and get all the facts.

3. Set aside your own thoughts and agendas

This can be *really* hard to do. We're driven by what we want or need, or think is right. That's natural. Just remember ... so is the other person. And what *they* want, need or believe is just as real and true for them.

4. Try to suspend judgment and evaluation

And we thought #3 was hard! A more realistic goal may be, to be aware of our judgments and evaluations. And to try not to be overrun by them. Having restraint, while having that kind of awareness; that's coming from a very skilled place.

5. Be willing to try and see things from another's point of view

Again, this is not about agreeing with them, it's about trying to understand. Try stepping into their shoes for a moment and explain their side; their perception of things.

6. Use reflective listening

In reflective listening, you demonstrate your understanding of what you've heard by restating the speaker's message in your own words.

"You're saying, Fred, that you're angry with me because I gave you a poor review you feel was unfair?"

Paraphrasing – is a brief, succinct statement reflecting the content of the speaker's message. It clarifies the message, encourages the speaker to disclose his/her emotions and helps you both move toward a solution if there's a problem involved.

Template: “You think or feel (insert the word or feeling) because (insert the event or circumstances that made the speaker think or feel that way.)”

As in: “You feel unappreciated because I didn’t ask your opinion on the proposed project at this morning’s staff meeting, is that right?”

Some people find it helpful to use some standard phrases:

- “So, you feel...”
- “It sounds like you..., is that right?”
- “You’re wondering if...”
- “If I understood you correctly, you think we should...”
- “You thought I, is that right?”

Reflective listening is a primary skill in effective listening. It is the pathway for engaging others in relationship, building trust, and fostering motivation to change. Reflective listening appears deceptively easy, but it takes hard work and skill to do well.

7. Occasionally ask open-ended questions.

Asking questions shows that you are listening and helps you gather information. If your speaker is droning on and on, open-ended questions will get him back on track. Note that this point begins with “occasionally” — you don’t want the speaker to feel interrogated.

- Encourages talking
- Gives the other person control of what they want to share
- Indicates your interest
- Prevents you from jumping to conclusions
- Discourages “yes” and “no” responses

8. Observe the speaker’s body language to “hear” what they’re NOT saying. Emotions often leak out despite best efforts to control nonverbal expression. Notice the person’s facial expressions, gestures and posture. Tight, closed posture indicates defensiveness and closed mindedness. Note discrepancies between what the person says and how she acts. If she says she’s happy, does she look and act happy?

When you use these skills, you may:

- Help the other person clarify information
- Help the other person express feelings
- Build rapport and empathy
- Role model effective communication skills

Handout G: Brent & Janette – Listening Opportunities

BRENT: There is something bothering me.

JANETTE: I'm way too stressed out to talk about anything right now.

BRENT: I'm upset about what you said about me in the meeting.

JANETTE: You're picking on me. Leave me alone! Another time!

BRENT: Don't blow me off. When are we going to talk about this? You never take responsibility for what you do.

JANETTE: You aren't respecting what I told you about my stress. I'm going for a walk. See you later!

For discussion:

Clearly communication did not go well.

1. What is Brent's need? Janette's?

2. What could each have done to:
 - a. Assert his/her needs in a way that could have been heard by the other?

 - b. Work with the other's needs, while respecting his/her own?