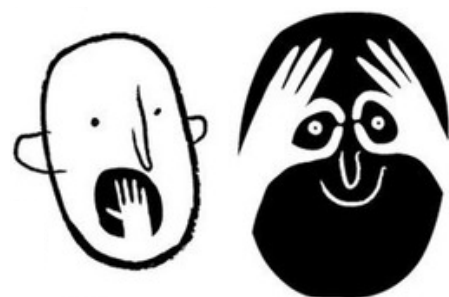




GUIDELINES FOR MULTICULTURAL COMMUNICATION

1. AVOID STEREOTYPING

The best use of a generalization is to add it to your storehouse of knowledge to better understand and appreciate other interesting, multi-faceted human beings.



2. PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE

Only by doing and leaving our comfort zone we can work towards improving our cross-cultural communication.

3. THERE IS NOT ONLY "ONE RIGHT WAY" TO COMMUNICATE

Keep questioning your assumptions about the "right way" to communicate. For example, think about your body language; postures that indicate receptivity in one culture might indicate aggressiveness in another.



4. MAKE IT WORK

Don't assume that breakdowns in communication occur because other people are on the wrong track. Search for ways to make the communication work, rather than searching for who should receive the blame for the breakdown.

5. LISTEN ACTIVELY AND EMPATHETICALLY

Try to put yourself in the other person's shoes. Especially when another person's perceptions or ideas are very different from your own, you might need to operate at the edge of your own comfort zone.



7. PAUSE

Stop, suspend judgment, and try to look at the situation as an outsider.

6. ALWAYS RESPECT OTHERS

Respect others' choices about whether to engage in communication with you. Honor their opinions about what is going on.

8. BE PREPARED FOR A DISCUSSION OF THE PAST.

Use this as an opportunity to develop an understanding from "the other's" point of view, rather than getting defensive or impatient. Acknowledge historical events that have taken place. Be open to learning more about them. Honest acknowledgment of the mistreatment and oppression that have taken place on the basis of cultural difference is vital for effective communication.



9. AWARENESS OF INEQUALITY

Awareness of current power imbalances -- and an openness to hearing each other's perceptions of those imbalances -- is also necessary for understanding each other and working together.

10. PEOPLE ARE MULTIDIMENSIONAL

Remember that cultural norms may not apply to the behavior of any particular individual. We are all shaped by many, many factors -- our ethnic background, our family, our education, our personalities -- and are more complicated than any cultural norm could suggest.

