

Form: Cross Cultural Communication With Families (S)

Teacher: _____ Trainer: _____

Site: _____ Date: _____

Directions

- READ the items below.
- CIRCLE the cultural variation for each characteristic of nonverbal communication that best describes you.
- SUBMIT this form to your Trainer.

Characteristic	Cultural Variations
Body movements, gestures	<p>High: Lots of gestures to explain what is being said</p> <p>Middle: A gesture here or there to stress a point</p> <p>Low: No gestures</p>
Distance between speakers, comfort zone	<p>High: Close proximity, 18 inches to 1.5 feet</p> <p>Middle: Moderate proximity, 2 to 4 feet</p> <p>Low: Limited proximity, 4 or more feet</p>
Understanding of Time	<p>High: Precise, accurate, drives activity</p> <p>Middle: Approximate, within 5-10 minutes of agreed upon time</p> <p>Low: Approximate, flexible, within an hour of agreed-upon time</p>
Touch	<p>High: Repeated contact, hugs, kisses, hand shakes, back slaps</p> <p>Middle: Some contact, usually as part of a greeting</p> <p>Low: No contact</p>
Gaze	<p>High: Direct eye contact, shift in gaze is disrespectful</p> <p>Middle: Some direct eye contact mixed with gaze toward papers or other parts of the room</p> <p>Low: Averted gaze, direct eye contact considered disrespectful</p>

Continued

Characteristic	Cultural Variations
Turn-taking	<p>High: <i>Several social turns before getting to task at hand</i></p> <p>Middle: <i>Greeting, limited number of turns before getting to task at hand</i></p> <p>Low: <i>Greeting, immediate focus on task at hand</i></p>

Directions

- READ each of the three scenarios below that describe misunderstandings of nonverbal communication.
- WRITE at least two ideas as to why the misunderstanding occurred.

(1) Getting Down to Business

Ms. O'Malley works in a large early childhood center. She is very organized. She appreciates the value of the time a family takes to check in on their children. Out of respect, she tries to get right to the point. She's noticed that Ms. Ortega, Miguel's mother, always wants to talk about things that, while interesting, delay the conversation about how to best care for Miguel. It seems to annoy the mother when Ms. O'Malley tries to move the conversation along. She wants to have a good relationship with Ms. Ortega, but isn't quite sure how to go about it. What would you tell her?

(2) Look Me in the Eye

Ms. Johnson has a family meeting with Savuth's father and grandmother. His grandmother is concerned that Savuth has started to disrespect her since he started preschool. The example she gives is that he looks her straight in the eye when he speaks to her. Ms. Johnson is taken aback by this. She has always thought that all families expect children to make eye contact with the person speaking to them. What would you tell her?

(3) Let's Get Started

Mr. Morgenstein has gone out of his way to set up a consistent time to meet with Javon's mother. She seems pleased with his interest, but is always late for their meetings. This limits their time together because Mr. Morgenstein is on a tight schedule. Javon's mother thinks he's being inflexible. What can Mr. Morganstein do to improve the situation?

Trainer Sample Answers for Form: Cross Cultural Communication with Families**(1) Getting Down to Business**

Ms. O'Malley needs to be aware that different cultures have different rules for when it is appropriate to discuss a problem or concern. If Ms. Ortega is from a culture that takes time to check in socially before moving to a discussion of the task at hand, she may be caught off guard by Ms. O'Malley's immediate focus on Miguel's care. Ms. O'Malley should talk to Ms. Ortega about what she's observed, explain the reason why she is so focused, and work with her to find an agreeable length of time to socialize before discussing Miguel's care.

(2) Look Me in the Eye

Ms. Johnson assumes that direct eye contact is a sign of respect in all cultures. Many families come from cultures that discourage children from looking directly at an adult. It is considered rude and disrespectful. Ms. Johnson may want to talk to Savuth's grandmother about their different expectations. Sometimes children just need to be told that there are different rules at home and in school.

(3) Let's Get Started

It may be that Javon's mom and Mr. Morgenstein have a different sense of time. Mr. Morgenstein expects parents to show up at the exact time the meeting was set for. Javon's mom thinks about the meeting time as an approximate time for her to arrive. She doesn't worry if she's a few minutes late. It's hard for her to understand why Mr. Morgenstein can't just stay a little longer when she finally gets there. They need to talk about their different understandings of time and reach a compromise they can both live with.