

AFRICAN AMERICAN

Values, Beliefs and Life Ways:

- Strong kinship bonds
- Strong work orientation
- Strong religious orientation
- Adaptable family roles
- Use informal support network – church or community
- Distrust of government & social services – feel “big brother doesn’t care about us”
- Most are assimilated to the Anglo-American culture
- Take care of their own
- Don’t like to admit they need help – strong sense of pride
- Lack of knowledge about available services and how the system works
- Natural remedies used frequently – laying on of hands and prayer are used to heal
- Poverty impacts education, self-esteem, quality of life and lifestyle across the lifespan
- Seniors are highly respected – aging represents respect, authority and wisdom
- Tend to keep things hidden within the family system – fear being disgraced or family being disgraced

Communication Tips:

- Familiar with Anglo-American communication patterns
- Show respect at all times – history of racism and sense of powerlessness impacts interactions
- Prolonged eye contact may be perceived as staring – interpreted as confrontational/aggressive
- Use community and/or religious leaders if assistance is needed
- May have limited education – written and spoken words should be adapted to level of understanding
- Don’t use “street slang” – this may be interpreted as ridicule
- Do not address by first name unless they request that you do so – interpreted as a lack of respect
- Decision-maker is usually the eldest adult child
- Do not like to be asked questions about finances and past relationships, whether married or not

LATINO

Values, Beliefs and Life Ways:

- Group has more importance than self
- Strong family ties
- Strong church and community orientation/interdependence
- Distrust/fear of “government” – immigration status may impact interactions
- Male (machismo) dominant – father/husband is head of household – women remain under authority/control of men
- Age dominant – respect for hierarchy
- Live for the present/today – fatalistic – feel powerless to control the future
- Take care of their own
- Negative view on asking for help – can take time before an agency is trusted
- Modesty is important
- Majority are Roman Catholic – church is seen as main source for services and information
- Very proud of heritage – never forget where they came from

Communication Tips:

- Respect is basic for all communication
- Like to be approached first – do not easily initiate conversation
- Eye contact is perceived as a more confrontational body language than a sign of respect
- Being ignored is a sign of disrespect and can be perceived as offensive
- Being personal, warm, trustworthy, and respectful is valued
- Avoid too much gesturing
- Encourage the individual to ask questions
- Make sure your questions have been understood
- Maintain an accepting attitude
- Let them know their ideas/thoughts/etc. are valued
- Personal space viewed as being closer than Anglo-Americans view it
- Very expressive in their communication
- Determine level of fluency in English – use interpreter if necessary
- Do not like to be asked about immigration status, religion and financial sources

ARAB/MUSLIM

Values, Beliefs and Life Ways:

- Male dominant – always the head of the family
- Modesty important, especially females
- Shame to be avoided at all times
- Don't like to admit they don't know something
- Honor and respect for families and friends needs to be protected and defended at all costs
- Believe in predestination/fate
- Men stand when a female enters the room
- Men protect women
- Women usually do not eat or socialize in the same room as men
- Patriarchal/hierarchical society – age and wisdom honored
- Family is the key social unit – have large families
- Religion is central to all things
- Time is less rigid – slower and more relaxed than Anglo-American
- Woman does all caretaking and defers to father/husband before answering questions
- Avoid touching females if of the opposite sex – use same sex mediator
- Do not discuss sexual matters with someone of the opposite sex

Communication Tips:

- Ask many questions to clarify that they understand
- Right hand is always used for clean activities
- A lot of hand gestures are perceived as obscene – ex: putting thumb & pointing finger together
- Observe distance between genders when there is no previous relationship
- Expect less eye contact from females if you are a male
- Avoid touching females if you are a male
- Always introduce yourself – do not talk to a woman until you've been introduced
- Do not shake a woman's hand unless she offers her hand first or if you're a woman yourself
- Do not ask an Arab about his wife or other female relatives
- Do not show soles of feet while sitting – this is considered rude
- Expect tardiness
- Greet in order of seniority
- Do not stare or maintain eye contact with a woman
- It is considered offensive to step or lean away