

Working Effectively in Cross-Cultural Teams

Participant Handouts

Introduction:

of years you have worked cross-culturally:

Approximate # of countries your colleagues have been from:

Your objectives for this workshop:

Workshop Topics:

- Significance of cross-cultural teams
- Defining Culture
- Cross-cultural challenges
- Keys to being sensitive to culture
- Habits of healthy teams

What difficulties have you experienced with cross-cultural teams?

What was the impact on you, others, and/or the team/ministry?

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Definition of Culture

How do you define culture?

Are some cultures “better” than others? Why or why not?

Are there any perfect cultures on Earth? What does that imply about the culture from which you come from?

What aspects of your culture have you ever had someone point out to you as new, strange or different than his/her culture?

What aspects of culture are ultimately most important?

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Cultural Challenges:

What challenges have you faced when working with someone from a different culture?

What could you do in these situations to work better together?

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How to Be Sensitive to Culture:

3 Key Ingredients to working cross-culturally:

1. Understanding your own culture
2. Understanding the culture of those around you
3. Being able to modify your behavior and response to adapt to others

How to Be Sensitive to Culture:

- **Know Yourself and Your Own Culture**
- **Learn Other's Expectations**
- **Check Your Assumptions**
- **When in Rome . . . Ask Questions**
- **Listen**
- **Consider the Platinum Rule**
- **Remember that Conflict is Multi-Cultural**

Know Yourself and Your Culture

ACTIVITY: Pair up with someone from your same culture. Choose 5 to 10 questions from this page and the next that most interest you about your culture and discuss your answers.

Concrete Expressions

1. What are typical foods served in the culture?
2. Are there any typical styles of dress?
3. What do people do for recreation?
4. Do buildings have identifiable features?
5. How is public space used? For example, do people tend to "hang out" on the street, or are they in public because they are going from one place to the next?

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Recognized Behaviors

1. How do people greet one another?
2. Describe how a holiday is celebrated.
3. How would a visitor be welcomed to someone's home?
4. What are the norms around weddings? births? deaths?

Explicit Beliefs

1. How important is hierarchy?
2. How are gender roles perceived?
3. How do people view obligations toward one another?
4. What personal questions are acceptable to ask? What personal questions are considered taboo or inappropriate?
5. What are the cultural attitudes toward aging and the elderly and how to care for them?

Deeply Embedded Beliefs

1. How important is the individual in the culture? How important is the group?
2. How is space used (e.g., how close should two people who are social acquaintances stand next to one another when they are having a conversation?)
3. How is time understood and measured? (e.g., how late can you be to a business appointment before you are considered rude?)
4. Is change considered positive or negative?
5. What are the criteria for individual success?
6. What is considered humorous?
7. How do individuals "know" or learn things? (e.g., are people encouraged to question things? are they encouraged to master accepted wisdom?)
8. Are people encouraged to be more action-oriented or to be more contemplative?

What was most interesting or significant to you as you reflected on your own culture?

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Describe Your Culture in the following ways:

Aspect of Culture	Description of Your Culture
View of Authority	
Communication Styles	
Religious Convictions	
Focus more on Past, Present or Future	
Relationship vs Task Focus	
Hierarchy	
Dealing with Conflict	
Independence vs Value of the Group	
Gender Equality	

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Interview a person from another culture and write down their responses:

Aspect of Culture	Description of _____ Culture
View of Authority	
Communication Styles	
Religious Convictions	
Focus more on Past, Present or Future	
Relationship vs Task Focus	
Hierarchy	
Dealing with Conflict	
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Gender Equality	

Circle above the main differences between your culture and this culture?

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When in Rome... Ask Questions

Use Open-Ended Questions:

- What did you mean by that?
- How do you interpret the meaning of that?
- In your culture, what significance does that have?
- In your culture, why do people say/do that? With what intent?

Listen:

- What did you hear exactly?
- Can you restate it to the person in a new way to check for proper understanding?
- What conclusions/judgments are you making about what they said?
- What questions should you ask to clarify any conclusions you may be making?

The Golden Rule: Do to others as you would have them do to you. Matt 7:12

The Platinum Rule: Do to others as THEY would want YOU to do to THEM!

- How does s/he like to communicate?
- How does s/he like to make decisions?
- Does s/he like to work together or alone?
- Does s/he like you to be direct or indirect? Bring things up in private or public?
- Does s/he need detail or just needs to know the high level plan?
- Does s/he appreciate frequent feedback and follow-up or does s/he find that annoying?

How will you start following the Platinum Rule in your relationships/team?

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Summary

What are your 3 biggest take-aways from this workshop?

What do you plan to implement from this workshop, how and when?