what is cross-cultural communication?

- ability to successfully form, foster, and improve relationships with members of a culture different from your own
- interacting with and/or comparing two or more cultures, and understanding their values, beliefs and norms

for people to communicate effectively, they must be able to send and receive verbal and nonverbal messages accurately and appropriately:

- not only do you have to send the message accurately, but you also have to be able to receive the message

30–40% of what is communicated conversationally is verbal

(condon & yousef, 1975; ramsey & birk, 1983; singelis, 1994)

10% of conflicts is due to difference in opinion and 90% is due to wrong tone of voice... bringitdown

"quote from fb, 2012"
For communication to work
...requires the ability to see behaviors and reactions are often culturally driven and while it may not match our own behaviors, it is culturally appropriate for THAT PERSON

(Sue, 2008)

4 Basic Elements of Communication

1. Verbal
   - What we say/how we say it
     - Accents, tone, volume, rate of speech, slang, use of acronyms

2. Non-Verbal
   - What we say when we're not talking
     - How something is “said” (body language)

Elements of Communication

3. Communication Style
   - How we prefer to express ourselves
     - Gestures (Form of kinesics)
     - Assumptions about ways of speaking and interacting with each other (i.e., use of acronyms)

4. Values & Attitudes
   - What we believe is right
     - This is the MOST complex
     - Include our deep beliefs about our own identity about the world & how we judge other people

VERBAL

- Accent
  - “I just love your accent”
  - Why do we tend to like some accents, but not others?

- Tone of Voice
  - Vocal expression varies in different cultures

- Volume
  - Loudness/softness is culturally influenced

VERBAL (cont.)

- Jargon, Slang & Humor
  - In groups, we may use “specific” jargon, slang and humor (includes acronyms)
  - Each culture may have its own
  - What is humorous to you may be offensive or confusing to someone else

About Acronyms

- DPS?
- IEP?
- DSW?
NONVERBAL

PROXEMICS
- Use of personal and interpersonal space
  - In U.S., intimate relationship: contact to 18 inches; personal relationship: 1.5 to 4 feet; social relationship: 4 to 12 feet; public (speeches): greater than 12 feet
  - People tend to grow more uncomfortable when others stand too close rather than too far away
  (Goldman, 1985)

- We also tend to allow closer proximity or move closer to people who we like or feel personal attraction toward

KINESICS
- Bodily movements
  - Facial expressions, gestures, eye contact
  - Much of our assessments about people are based upon their expressions (J.C. Pearson, 1985)

- In U.S., people attribute smiling to intelligence, good personality and pleasant
  - In other cultures, it does not necessarily mean happiness but may convey other meanings
    (could mean embarrassment or apprehension)

What does this picture "say" to you?

NONVERBAL
- Head Movements
  - Nodding or shaking head, lifting chin
- Shaking Hands
  - In some cultures touching anyone with left hand may be considered obscene
- Eye Contact
  - In the U.S., lack of eye contact may mean sneakiness, deception, shyness, depression
  - In other cultures, lack of eye contact is considered respectful
**PARALANGUAGE**
- Vocal cues other than words
  - Loudness of voice, pauses, silence, rate of speech, inflection
- **Rate of Speech**
  - We often judge a person’s intelligence or emotional state by rate of speech
- **Silence** is considered respectful in some cultures. In the U.S., people often feel uncomfortable with silence

**Volume & intensity**
- For some cultures, talking loudly may be seen as boisterous or aggressive
- Talking too softly may be seen as passive

**Directness in conversation**
- In U.S., people tend to want to “get to the point”
- In other cultures, this may be seen as rude or immature

**VALUES & ATTITUDES**
- These make up a significant portion of how people see the world and treat others
- Beliefs used to judge what is normal and healthy vs. what is not may be inadvertently applied to others
- Culturally different workers may have different worldviews than their supervisor

**Problem with being unaware of Cross-Cultural communication**
- A person may interpret your behavior as cold, aloof, or that you are not genuinely interested in what they have to say
- In some cultures, this may appear as though you are acting in a superior manner

**When Communication Fails**
- [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m4ql27Zi6ng&feature=player_detailpage](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m4ql27Zi6ng&feature=player_detailpage)

**What does this mean?**
- This means being sensitive to cultures AND to the differences among people
Language Barriers

- Keep in mind that although English is considered the language of business, it is a mistake to assume that every person speaks “good” English.
  - There may be extensive use of cultural jargon within communities
  - Those who speak English as a second language are often more limited in English fluency than native speakers.

We should not make ‘black and white’ or ‘sweeping’ statements about cultural differences but we CAN increase our understanding of them!

What to Do

- Be Prepared
  - Increase your knowledge of how race, culture, gender, and class may affect communication styles

- Be Aware
  - Acknowledge your own values, assumptions, attitudes and communication style

What to Do

- Provide information in plain English and appropriate languages
- Provide information that is easily understood

What to Do

- Evaluate paperwork, and instructions for clarity
  - Revise if needed
- Engage community members from diverse cultural backgrounds in the planning and decision-making process

What to Do

- When you communicate cross culturally, make efforts in keeping your communication clear and simple
- Try to avoid humor until you know that the person you are communicating with “gets it”
Food for Thought

Cross-cultural communication is not a “one size fits all” approach. There are cultural differences within cultures!

EACH person has their own culture

The Close Talker

- http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_detailpage&v=NGVSIkE13mM

About those Acronyms...

- You can:
  - Spell it out first then put acronym in parenthesis
  - Ex: Information Technology (IT)
  - OR you can write acronym and then spell it out
  - Ex: OIED(Office for Institutional Equity and Diversity)

- DO NOT make up your own!!