

WORKING ACROSS COMMUNITIES

ENJOY the experience of working with people from cultures & communities different to your own 😊

My experiences working across different communities & cultures have been fascinating. In doing so I have learnt more about myself & my culture than I could ever have imagined!

A few things worth considering if working in a cross cultural context:

Don't assume expert status; *"You listened. You didn't pretend that you knew about our culture & you valued what we had to say"* (project participant, Minimising Health Impacts, Horn of Africa Community.)

Take time to understand the 'context' of where people have been & their situation here: eg the fact that they may have suffered trauma, loss of family relationships, loss of community religious & cultural systems, feeling devalued in the new culture, exposed to ignorance and lack of understanding.

Don't assume that people from the same country necessarily 'get on'- they may sometimes perceive each other as a threat.

Consult with community leaders but be wary not to over burden them. Culturally & linguistically specific resources are important but be prepared for the time attached to translation & back translation-validation

Don't make assumptions about literacy and be prepared to work in different ways if needed.

Be aware of the communication & relationship problems that can result from simple ignorance or lack of sensitivity.

Be willing to learn and adapt.

Show empathy, communicate respect and interest in other cultures

Assume there are differences until you are sure of similarities.

Be non judgemental, flexible and tolerant of other peoples customs.

Don't assume that your culture is better, it's just different.

Tolerate ambiguity. Don't get upset when unsure of a situation, status or other peoples reactions.

Don't assume the worst, look for other explanations if the other persons behaviour seems offensive.

Lisa Natoli
Stronger Families Learning Exchange
AIFS

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