



## Communication Across Cultures - Key

### 1. Eye contact

Cultures make eye contact to differing degrees. Some cultures like the US make a lot of eye contact. Others such as Asian cultures make less eye contact especially across gender and different levels of power. Women make less eye contact.

### 2. Personal space and distance

In different countries there is a different amount of space that is comfortable between two people who are talking. In places like Brazil, it is customary to stand close together less than 18 inches apart and some touching may take place. In other countries like the US and northern Europe there is more distance and touching is off limits.

### 3. Interruptions

In the US it is often customary to wait for the other person to finish their comment before you start making yours otherwise you may be seen as cutting someone off or not letting them finish. In Latin America for example, it is customary for people to overlap while talking or to talk at the same time.

### 4. Asserting one's view

In the US people are encouraged to participate and to state their view outloud and to speak up even when the point is minor or slightly different from the last speaker's point. In other countries so as Asian countries, one does not speak unless one has a different point to make and one does not try to make conflict too openly.

### 5. Loudness/Tone of voice

In Italy raising the voice simply expresses engagement and excitement. It demonstrates that you are interested in the conversation. In Asian countries, raising the voice may indicate conflict or tension rising.

### 6. Body Language/Gestures

Across different cultures, body language has different meanings. Nodding yes in Asia can simply mean deep listening not agreement.

Based on each of these areas, how do you perceive people who behave differently from you. For example, do you think less eye contact means less confidence or if a person is standing farther away that they are acting in a distant or aloof manner?