

## **Exercise Topic 5.3: Cross-cultural communication skills checklist - by Culturewise Ltd.**

### Key objectives:

- To explore generic strategies for improving cross-cultural communication
- To enable learners to reflect on which strategies may be useful in any given situation

Timeframe: 30 minutes

Materials: Cross-cultural communication skills checklist

### **Background rationale:**

This activity is useful as a way of consolidating some of the generic skills associated with effective cross-cultural communication.

### **Procedure:**

1. Provide a copy of the 'Cross-Cultural Communication Skills checklist' handout to the learner and make sure that the instructions are understood.
2. Work with the learner to provide some practical examples of each skill, identifying any specific skills that are particularly applicable in another country or culture of interest.

### **Discussion Points:**

It is important to encourage learners to explore the types of behavior associated with each strategy and reflect on what might be most relevant to them.

### ***Summarize frequently***

- Confirm and reconfirm your understanding and intentions at every step in the dialogue
- Use big, bold signposts to tell people where you are going

### ***Aim for dialogue, not debate***

- If your counterparts are unwilling to negotiate, aim for a better understanding of each other and establish a positive relationship, without pressurizing others to change their own views
- Identify common goals and develop a shared perception of equal status

### ***Be structured and clear***

- Say exactly what you mean and mean exactly what you say
- Structure your language in a clear and logical way with one idea per sentence
- Be realistic about what you can achieve

### ***Be open and friendly***

- Demonstrate patience, positive feedback and human interest (this works well in any culture)
- Give more than the minimum and mirror your partner's tone
- Use humor (but take care)

### ***Invite feedback; do not just expect it***

- Ask how people are doing and make sure that they have understood you correctly
- Look for covert or hidden signs of disagreement
- Watch out for suggestions that are really requests

### ***Use questions effectively and often***

- Use simple, straightforward questions
- Make sure that the answer you get is the answer to the question you asked

### ***Keep positive***

- Keep your language positive, constructive and optimistic
- Use tone and tempo to stress the important information
- Build in pauses for understanding

### ***Grade your language to that of your counterpart***

- Find out your counterpart's language competence and do not overestimate it
- Keep your sentences short and simple
- Avoid idioms or sarcasm and take care with humor

### ***Make sure your verbal and non-verbal communication agree***

- Make sure that your body language mirrors your spoken language: all communication channels need to reinforce the same message
- Be yourself, and use body language that is natural to you

### ***Know yourself to know others***

- Identify and keep in mind the response you want from the communication
- Be aware of your stereotypes and communication styles - and the way in which you may come across to other people

## Cross-cultural Communication Skills Checklist

Read each of the following strategies and techniques for communicating effectively across cultures.

On the right-hand side, write down some specific behaviour that describes how you can put each strategy or technique into practice. The first two have some examples already inserted.

Strategies and techniques	How you can put this in practice
Clarify frequently	Paraphrase what you think you have heard to make sure that you understand the communication accurately.  Emphasize the feelings expressed, as well as the substance.  Confirm that you accurately understand and acknowledge the message, even if you do not agree with it.
Use active listening	Demonstrate interest.  Acknowledge comments with your head or voice.  Avoid mistaking vagueness for ambiguity or disinterest.
Summarize frequently	
Aim for dialogue, not debate	

Be structured and clear	
Be open and friendly	
Invite feedback, do not just expect it	
Use questions effectively and often	
Keep positive	
Grade your language to suit your counterpart	

Make sure that your verbal and non-verbal communication agrees	
Know yourself to know others	