

Cultural Competency – Things To Think About

- **Identity or individualism vs. collectivism:** What matters more to a person from that culture – their own personal wants and needs or the social harmony of the group they belong to? The United States and Japan could be seen as examples of an individualist and a collectivist society, respectively.
 - **Hierarchy or power distances:** Do people treat each other in a relatively egalitarian manner, or are status and seniority very important? The Scandinavian countries are frequently cited as egalitarian cultures, whereas Chinese culture emphasizes the importance of hierarchies.
 - **Truth:** The dimension is also called uncertainty avoidance vs. uncertainty tolerance.
 - **Achievement-oriented vs. care-oriented** would be a better way of describing this dimension. An achievement-oriented (or “masculine”) culture emphasizes competition and success. Care-oriented (or “feminine”) societies, on the other hand, prefer equality and solidarity.
 - **Virtue:** It’s more about which basic behavior a certain culture likes better: that which brings long-term benefits or what benefits you immediately.
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- Know what culture(s) you belong to.
 - Understand that culture is pervasive.
 - Don’t make assumptions or Don’t draw conclusions based on some aspect of their lifestyle.
 - Don’t assume that when you see something familiar it has the same meaning and significance as in your own culture.
 - Don’t make the mistake of thinking that your culture is more complex than others.
 - Allow yourself to like and dislike aspects of other cultures, but don’t condemn entire cultures.
 - Remember that when you judge another culture you are probably using your own culture’s standards as a measurement.
 - Don’t make the mistake of thinking that the people in your culture are diverse individuals, whereas the people in other cultures are indistinguishable.



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