

Communicating With Young People from Different Cultural Backgrounds

The United States is a culturally, ethnically, and racially diverse country. Culture shapes people's attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. Young people may

It is important, however, not to make assumptions about the young person's needs solely on their cultural background. Ask questions about what the young person needs rather than acting on the basis of what you think they need. Ask questions about what has happened to the young person rather than what is wrong with them. Remember that it is more important to make the young person feel comfortable, respected, and cared for than to do all the right things

find it difficult to talk to an adult from a culture or community different from their own.

If you are assisting a young person with a cultural background different from your own, there can be additional challenges in communication. In some

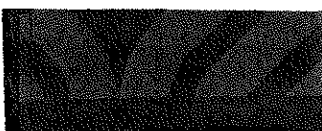
and follow all the rules.

Cultural Safety

A culturally safe environment is "an environment

using physical terms rather than emotional terms (e.g., complaints about stomach aches and headaches rather than anxiety or fearfulness). You may find it to be more effective to first establish a warm and

which is safe for people; where there is no assault, challenge or denial of who they are, and what they need. It is about shared respect, shared meaning, shared knowledge and experience, of learning



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government, or separation from a family member who moved to the United States to prepare for the arrival of the rest of the family.⁸⁴ Young people in immigrant or refugee families may also experience the same barriers as other cultural groups:

- **Racism and discrimination** that may inhibit a young person from interacting with people

never received. Some young people might be entirely disengaged and distrustful of adults and refuse to talk. Others will seek attachment and affection from every adult they meet, resulting in inappropriate physical intimacy, which can be difficult to cope with.

If you are assisting a young person with this kind of history, be predictable and consistent in your