General Principles of Effective Cross Cultural Communication

- **High or Low-Context Cultures**
  - High-context cultures are more attuned to nonverbal cues and messages; fewer words are spoken.
    - Asian, Native American, Arab, Latino, African American.
  - Low-context cultures focus on precise, direct, logical, verbal communication.
    - Anglo American, Swiss, German, Scandinavian.

- **Nonverbal Communication**
  - Eye Contact & Facial Expressions.
  - Tone of voice.
  - Proximity & Touching.
  - Gestures.

- **Focus on understanding**
  - Ask open-ended questions.
  - Be nonjudgmental.
  - Do not express disagreement immediately.

- **Be aware that what is initially presented may not actually be the case**
  - Listen to others and give them time to tell their story in their own way and own words.
  - Others may need to develop a sense of trust before they are willing to share their vulnerabilities.
  - Trust is earned.
Acknowledge and respect cultural differences rather than minimize them
- Inquire about and acknowledge any cultural/ethnic/racial differences.
- Ask the family if there is anything about their cultural/ethnic/racial background which family feels you need to know.
- Ask the family if there is anything in general they would like to know about your culture to better understand your viewpoint.
- Inform the family that you do not want to assume you understand the family if they are of different background.

Focus on similarities
- Work.
- Families.
- Leisure.

Treat all people with dignity and respect
- Keep an open mind.
- Keep it simple.
- Speak in a polite manner.
- Avoid making judgments and assumptions.