

## Handout 5: Communication Styles and the Concept of Time

### WHO IS IT FOR?

All family members living in the host home and the AFS student should participate in this activity.

Developing relationships with people from different cultures is not easy. The unspoken rules of a society especially may be a challenge for you and your student. Nonverbal behavior cues can vary widely from culture to culture and can create some misunderstandings. This exercise might help you to understand each other better.

### INSTRUCTIONS:

Similar to the Values and Behavior exercise, using this handout, mark your answers to the following questions. It is possible to give more than one answer. The AFS student should respond as if they were in their home culture. Then, for every question, compare your answers and explain to each other why you selected the one(s) you did. The questions and ideas in italics might help you!

#### 1. What would you be most likely to conclude if a person is not talkative?

- A. They are shy.
- B. They find it hard to know appropriate topics to talk about.
- C. They don't know the language well.
- D. They don't like you.
- E. They are unhappy.
- F. Nothing special.

**Host family:**

**Student:**

*Do you feel uncomfortable if a person is not talkative? Why or why not? How do you behave in these situations? How do you know what the quiet person is thinking?*

#### 2. What do you think if people are talking loudly, if you don't understand the language?

- A. They are fighting.
- B. They are disturbing others.
- C. Nothing special, people always talk loudly.
- D. What they are saying is important, they want to emphasize it.
- E. They should speak softer. Everybody can hear what they are talking about.

**Host family:**

**Student:**

*Is your normal speaking voice loud or soft? Do you have to strain or move more closely to hear your AFS participant when they speak? Does it feel that your host family is shouting at you? (or vice versa) Under what situations might you talk more loudly than you do now? When might you speak more softly?*

**3. You are invited for dinner at 8 p.m. What time do you arrive?**

- A. At half past seven, to help set the table.
- B. At five to eight, just in time.
- C. At quarter past eight, so that people have enough time to have everything ready.
- D. Between half past eight and ten – at some point in the evening.

**Host family:**

**Student:**

*When do you normally eat dinner? Is this the major meal of the day or a lighter one? In your own culture, how flexible or punctual do you need to be in this context? How is this determined?*

**4. How late can you arrive for a party?**

- A. 5 minutes.
- B. 15 minutes.
- C. 1 hour.
- D. It doesn't matter.

**Host family:**

**Student:**

*What is the etiquette when going to a party? In your own culture, how flexible or punctual do you need to be in this context? How is this determined?*

**5. How many minutes would be acceptable before you start thinking a bus/train is officially delayed?**

- A. 10 minutes.
- B. 1 minute.
- C. 4 minutes.
- D. 15 minutes.

**Host family:**

**Student:**

*How does the public transport schedule work in both cultures? What are the possible issues affecting regular schedules in both cultures? What should the student do to make sure they catch the transport in time to meet their commitments?*

**6. How far in the future is your most distant planned private event?**

**Host family:**

**Student:**

*Is there any difference between family and other events? What are the factors that influence how much in advance we plan?.*