

Handout 4: Non-Verbal Communication

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:

1. First, the student shares with the host family what specific non-verbal behaviors have caught their attention over the past months. Then members of the host family explain each one of those non-verbal behaviors to the student.
2. Next, the host family teaches some typical gestures from the host culture and what they mean.
3. Finally, the student shares some typical gestures from their home culture and their meaning.
4. Please use the following questions to guide your conversation:

- What are the main differences and similarities regarding non-verbal communication?
- What is the ideal physical distance in the host and home culture?
- How do you think culture influences these aspects of communication and interaction?