

AFRICAN

Values, Beliefs and Life Ways:

- Strong kinship bonds
- Strong work orientation within communities
- Strong religious orientation (African Mythical, Muslim, Christians)
- Elderly educate younger
- Adaptable family roles (12 years old)
- Use informal support network – church or community
- Distrust/fear of government & social services
- Children who are born in the U.S. are assimilated to the Anglo-American culture
- Take care of their own
- Don't like to admit they need help – strong sense of pride
- Lack of knowledge about available services and how the system works
- Natural remedies may have been used in Africa, but like American medicine
- Seniors are highly respected – aging represents respect, authority and wisdom
- Tend to keep things hidden within the family system – fear being disgraced or family being disgraced
- Time is loose

Communication Tips:

- Familiar with Anglo-American communication patterns
- Show respect at all times – history of racism and sense of powerlessness impacts interactions
- Prolonged eye contact may be perceived as staring – interpreted as confrontational/aggressive
- Use community and/or religious leaders if assistance is needed
- Education can be interrupted because of war, but is valued
- Decision-maker is usually the eldest adult child
- Do not like to be asked questions about finances and past relationships, whether married or not
- Be respectful and ask questions to understand
- Being ignored is a sign of disrespect and can be perceived as offensive
- Pointing at someone during a disagreement can be rude
- Biting pointer finger can indicate you want to fight
- Expect tardiness
- Face-to-face conferences

Cultural norms are the standards we live by. They are the shared expectations and rules that guide behavior of people within social groups. These are generalizations and not meant to define individuals because they belong to a particular group.