

ARAB/MUSLIM

Values, Beliefs and Life Ways:

- Male dominant – always the head of the family (Can depend on other factors)
- Modesty important, especially females
- Shame to be avoided at all times
- Don't like to admit they don't know something (personality)
- Honor and respect for families and friends needs to be protected and defended at all costs
- Believe in predestination/fate (note-by individuals' beliefs)
- Men protect women
- Women usually do not eat or socialize in the same room as men (differs between families and settings)
- Patriarchal/hierarchical society – age and wisdom honored
- Family is the key social unit – have large families
- Religion is central to all things
- Time is less rigid – slower and more relaxed than Anglo-American
- Woman does all caretaking and defers to father/husband before answering questions
- Avoid touching females if of the opposite sex – use same sex mediator when touching is involved
- Do not discuss sexual matters with someone of the opposite sex
- Child play is very hands on
- Males may put arm on each other

Communication Tips:

- Ask many questions to clarify that they understand
- Right hand is always used for clean activities
- A lot of hand gestures are perceived as obscene – ex: putting thumb & pointing finger together
- Observe distance between genders when there is no previous relationship
- Expect less eye contact from females if you are a male
- Avoid touching females if you are a male
- Always introduce yourself – do not talk to a woman until you've been introduced
- Do not shake a woman's hand unless she offers her hand first or if you're a woman yourself
- Do not ask an Arab about his wife or other female relatives
- Do not show soles of feet while sitting – this is considered rude
- Expect tardiness
- Greet in order of seniority
- Do not stare or maintain eye contact with a woman
- It is considered offensive to step or lean away
- Be respectful and ask questions to understand

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.