

Introduction:

All of us used to be children. We all heard things from the adults in our lives – sayings, admonitions, guidance, etc. In this activity, participants will be challenged to consider the values they learned through sayings they heard as children and unpack how these values inform their lives as adults.

Facilitator Notes:**Objectives:**

As a result of this activity, participants will be able to:

1. Identify some of the cultural values they learned as children.
2. Reflect on the evolution of their cultural values over time.
3. Explore the differences and similarities between their own and others' cultural values.

Time:

1 hour.

Group Size:

Pairs.

Materials:

Childhood Saying Activity Handout (in [Downloads](#)).

Intercultural Development Continuum Stages:

- Denial
- Polarization
- Minimization
- Acceptance

AAC&U Intercultural Knowledge and Competence Goals:**Cultural Self-Awareness**

- To articulate insights into own cultural rules and biases (e.g., seeking complexity; aware of how their experiences have shaped these rules, and how to recognize and respond to cultural biases, resulting in a shift in self-description).

Verbal and Nonverbal Communication

- To articulate a complex understanding of cultural differences in verbal and nonverbal communication (e.g., demonstrates understanding of the degree to which people use physical contact while communicating in different cultures or use direct/indirect and explicit/implicit meanings).
- To skillfully negotiate a shared understanding based on these differences.

Curiosity

- To ask complex questions about other cultures.
- To seek out and articulate answers to these questions that reflect multiple cultural perspectives.

Other Skills:

Friendship; Teamwork.

Activity Instructions:

1. Share the Childhood Saying Activity Handout (in [Downloads](#)) with participants.
2. Invite participants to think back to their early years and see if they can remember one or more sayings or phrases that they often heard adults (e.g., parents, guardians, other family members, teachers, etc.) in their life speak out loud. Ask them to take about 10 minutes to write down any sayings or phrases that come to mind on the handout.
3. Once they have this brief list, ask participants to select one of these sayings and spend another 10 minutes thinking about what they learned from hearing this phrase as a child. Looking back, how would they describe the “message” behind this saying? Ask them to utilize the handout to write down the insights that come to mind.
4. Divide participants (or ask them to self-divide) into pairs or trios. In pairs (or trios), each participant should take 10 minutes to share the childhood saying that they selected. Remind participants to provide as much contextual information as possible (i.e., who do they remember speaking this phrase, in what setting do they recall this phrase being spoken?). Then, ask participants to share their reflections regarding the meaning behind the saying: are there particular values that they think they might have learned from hearing this saying from adults in their life? Do they think they still hold these same values now? Why or why not?
5. Once each participant has been able to share, encourage them to take another 10 minutes to discuss and write down the differences and similarities among the sayings: within their pairs/trios, did they hear different kinds of cultural messages growing up? How might these differences and similarities influence their communication with each other?