

Culture and the Unconscious: A Self-Assessment

A cultural norms live in our unconscious as a “write “way to be an behave. Our own coach on the alarms may be 180° different from another’s, which can potentially lead to misunderstandings, loss of productivity, misinterpretations, and exclusion.

In the first part of this exercise, you’ll have the opportunity to shine a flashlight on your own cultural norms and expectations. On the spectrum of each parameter below, think about where along the continuum you feel your norms are positioned.

Cultural Norm	Continuum of Values
Communication/ Language	Explicit ↔ Implicit
Work habits/practices	Task Oriented ↔ Relationship Oriented
Beliefs/Attitudes	Individual ↔ Group
Relationships	Nuclear ↔ Extended
Expression of feelings	Controlled ↔ Expressive
Personal Space	Distant ↔ Close
Eye Contact	Direct ↔ Indirect
Learning/teaching style	Auditory ↔ Visual
Decision-Making	Individual ↔ Group
Conflict	Avoid ↔ Engage
Time Orientation	Fixed ↔ Fluid

Now, for each of the cultural norms you've considered, think about what its like for you when someone you work with expresses that norm differently. For example, if you consider that you are mostly task oriented in getting assignments completed, how might you experience someone that might be more relationship oriented? What sort of friction or frustration may arise from this difference in the expression of cultural norms? What assumptions might you consciously or unconsciously make about this other person?

Cultural Norm	I might assume that people that don't share my values around this are:
Communication/ Language	
Work habits/practices	
Beliefs/Attitudes	
Relationships	
Expression of feelings	
Personal Space	
Eye Contact	
Learning/teaching style	
Decision-Making	
Conflict	
Time Orientation	