



Activity 1

Greetings Around the World (Icebreaker)

Objective:

- Highlight how culture adds layers of complexity in order to demonstrate stigma surrounding mental health in different cultures.

Materials:

- *Greetings Around the World Worksheet*: Cut strips of paper with the individual greetings and distribute one to each participant.

Steps:

1. Cut the *Greetings Around the World Worksheet* into separate strips of paper with the individual greetings and distribute one to each participant.
2. Ask them to read it and keep it to themselves.
3. Once people have read it, tell them they will be greeting each other according to the instructions on the piece of paper they received.
4. Participants are not allowed to say anything (including the country from which the greeting comes), except what is specifically on the piece of paper.
5. Provide an example with the English-language way of greeting (formally):
 - “Hi, how are you?”
 - Shake hands.
6. Ask participants to get up and greet each other according to their strip of paper.
7. Discuss:
 - What happened?
 - How did you feel?
 - How is this related to working with students from different cultures?
 - Can you see how these differences could be related to cultural stigma and misconceptions about mental health?



HANDOUT for Activity 1

Worksheet: *Greetings Around the World*

1. Tibetan monks stick out their tongues to greet people. They also press their hands together, placing them in front of their chest to show they “come in peace.”
2. In the Philippines, when respectfully greeting elders, people bow and lightly press knuckles in their forehead. This gesture is called *mano*.
3. In Japan, people greet each other with a bow. Depending on the person they are greeting, and their social status, bows differ in angle and duration.
4. In Malaysia, people stretch out their hands and touch the other person’s fingertips and then bring their hands to their hearts. It symbolizes that they are greeting you from their hearts.
5. In Thailand, people greet each other by pressing their hands together in a prayer fashion and slightly bowing their heads. This is known as the *wai*.
6. The Shona people from Southern Africa perform rhythmic clapping as a greeting.
7. On the Marshall Islands, people raise their eyebrows to acknowledge each other’s presence.
8. In Malaysia, people take the opposite person’s hands lightly in theirs, then release them and bring their own hands to their chest and nod slightly. This symbolizes goodwill and an open heart.
9. The Kanouri tribe in Niger greet each other by waving their fists up to their heads and saying, “Wooshay, wooshay!”
10. In Botswana, one should greet a friend with a handshake without gripping. They make momentary contact with palms and fingers and then ask each other, “How did you wake up?”
11. In Nigeria Benin, people snap fingers before shaking hands as greetings, and say, “Nde Ewo” (hello).
12. Rubbing the chin of a friend in greeting, or to welcome a visitor, is the traditional greeting of the Mende people in Sierra Leone.



CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS ACTIVITIES

13. In Greece, their greeting consists of slapping the back of another person and saying, “Yeia Sas” (formal greetings) or “Yeia Sou” (informal, especially to closest friend or relatives).
14. The Chinese way of greeting is to hold their own hands, left over right hand, raised at chest level, as a salutation to show respect, and say, “Ni Hao Ma” (hello).
15. In Spain and some Latin American countries, people greet each other with air kisses, one in each cheek.
16. In Brazil, women hold forearms instead of shaking hands.
17. In France and Canada, people greet with a gentle touch of the shoulder or forearm, kissing each cheek.