



Cultural Awareness Guidance for Surgeons
 Written and produced by Dr Margaret Murphy

MODULE 1: LANGUAGE

Cultural Awareness of Consultant

Trainee’s inability to say ‘no’	
<p><i>The Consultant is aware that this trainee who comes from another culture cannot say ‘no’ to her, due to status differences and loss of face. She addresses this by demonstrating the following positive behaviour. She:</i></p>	<p>By.....</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes trainee feel as ease 	<p><i>-Smiling, standing next to him at same level,</i></p> <p><i>-Using indirect and non-confrontational language,</i></p> <p><i>-Using expressions of interest about trainee’s own world and</i></p> <p><i>-Minimal direct questions</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skilfully uses right amount of eye-contact at right times 	<p><i>-Using too much eye-contact would cause discomfort</i></p> <p><i>-Using too little would highlight status differences between them</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draws on her own cultural knowledge 	<p><i>-Volunteering her vulnerable areas e.g. MRCS preparation time,</i></p> <p><i>-Trying to fit in with his wishes</i></p> <p><i>-Second guesses what is on his mind</i></p> <p><i>-Tries to assess the situation from the trainee’s point of view</i></p>

Trainee's inability to admit lack of knowledge

The Consultant is aware that this trainee who comes from another culture may not be able to admit his lack of knowledge because of loss of face. She addresses this by demonstrating the following positive behaviour. She:

By.....

- Lets him know she understands the difficulties in doing procedures

-showing empathy and sympathy eg 'it must be hard for a beginner trainee'

- Admits her own vulnerabilities

-saying to trainee 'I know, I've been there myself'

- Tries to help trainee

-saying 'Do you have any texts which explain this procedure?'

- Offers concrete assistance

-saying 'I could go through the steps and explain things beforehand'

- Seeks his approval

-saying '...would that be OK?'

Trainee's inability to say what's on his mind

The Consultant is aware that this trainee who comes from another culture may not be able to say what is on his mind due to a reluctance to admit any vulnerability. She addresses this by demonstrating the following positive behaviour. She:

By.....

- Equalises status differences between them

-Being friendly and approachable

-Smiling

-Standing next to trainee

- Tells the trainee about her own vulnerabilities

-saying 'it took ages for me to revise for my MRCS!'

- Avoids direct questions

-saying 'How do you feel about assisting me with these as well?'

- Admits to needing help herself

-saying 'I'll give you some good sites that I use myself'

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Jokes with trainee to reduce tension	<i>-saying 'I practically needed a whole six months!'</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensures she is willingly accessible to trainee	<i>-saying 'meet me in my office at 8am on Wed'</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reinforces success	<i>-saying 'I'd like you to do well in your exams' and 'good luck'</i>