

Cultural Considerations and Do's and Don'ts

- DO NOT be alone with the family unless it is necessary.
- ***DO NOT be alone with a child or member of the opposite sex.***
- ***DO NOT take family members on unscheduled excursions.***
- DO coordinate all visits and trips with the head of household and the case worker.
- DO use the contact information for Welcome Team leaders if you have questions.
- DO refer the family to the Welcome Team leaders or the case worker if they have questions that you cannot answer.
- ***DO take off your shoes! It is customary in Afghan culture to take your shoes off when entering the home.***
- ***DO dress modestly at ALL times. Even in the summer, everyone should dress modestly with arms and legs covered at all times.***
- DO remember the family has dietary restrictions based on religion, tradition, etc. – talk with the family before sharing a meal or groceries.
- ***DO make sure the family ALWAYS understands where they are going if you are driving them somewhere.***
- DO take cues about physical touch. The head of household is glad to shake hands. Others may be more reserved, especially with members of the opposite sex.
- ***DO be prepared for delays. Afghans have a different concept of time. Do not be surprised or offended if family members are late sometimes or insist on having tea before leaving home.***
- DO remember an invitation often is considered as an obligation (consider if you entered a new country and didn't know anyone except agency staff and your Welcome Team).

- DO be careful family members understand our help and friendship is not conditional upon their attendance at religious or other events.
- DO ask CRIS for help if there is not a shared language
- DO avoid using idioms and sarcasm (e.g. “feeling under the weather,” “at the drop of a hat,” etc.)
- DO simplify grammar, unless you are speaking with someone whose English skills are strong.
- DO speak directly to the individual, even when using an interpreter (“Are you hungry?” versus “Can you ask them if they are hungry?”)
- ***DO use resources to help communicate (pictures, Google Translate app, etc.)***
- ***DO track your time and expenses, even if you don’t want reimbursement.***
- DO prepare for the unexpected – This truly is an exercise in faith.