

COMMUNICATING AND WORKING WITH FILIPINOS

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Background Information

- Philippines (P.I.) also known as:
 - “Pearl of the Orient”
 - “Crossroads of the Pacific”
 - “Only Christian nation in Far East”
- Composed of 7,107 islands
- Population 80 million
- 87 different dialects

Filipino Languages

- Pilipino: National language
- English remains instructional language in secondary and tertiary schools
- Small minority speak Spanish, Arabic, or Chinese

Filipino Regional Differences

Tagalog and Visayan—Spendthrift

Live in “rich” areas; land is fertile and does not require much tilling to make it productive.

Ilocano (Northern)—Ultra Thrifty

Live in places where soil is rough, barren, and rocky; needs backbreaking work; long hard hours.

Filipino Religions

- Islam introduced in 14th century; mainly in southern region
- Christianity introduced in 16th century by Ferdinand Magellan in 1521
- Protestantism followed in 1899: Presbyterian, Methodist, Episcopalian, and Baptist

Filipinos in Hawai'i

- Immigration began in 1906
- Third largest ethnic group (Japanese and Caucasian)
- 15% of total population (170,635)
- 36% foreign born (61,429)
- 4.03 average household size
- 10% speak and understand English very well
- 2% do not speak or understand English

Understanding Filipino Culture

Influenced by:

- **Chinese:** Manner of addressing grandparents (Lolo and Lola); obedience to parents
- **Asian Indian:** folk beliefs (e.g., sleeping with wet hair leads to insanity, dreaming of teeth falling out means a relative will die, etc.)
- **Spanish:** Christianity; names
- **American:** Protestant; state-side mentality; movies; television; magazines

Filipino Values

1. **Most Important:** Creating an alliance and extending bonds of neighborliness with mutual obligations.
2. **Second:** Establish a family; a family of which you can be proud. Family is the social system.
3. **Third:** Financial stability for the purpose of establishing a legacy.

Filipino Traits

1. **Bayanihan:** most important; creation of alliances with neighbors and helping attitude whenever one is in dire need.
2. **Uphold Close Familial Ties:** live near family for most of their lives, even as independent adults.
3. **Pakikisama (Harmony):** getting along with others to maintain harmonious relationships.

Filipino Traits (continued)

4. **Hiya (Shame):** Filipinos must live up to accepted behavior standards so they don't bring shame upon themselves or family

5. **Utang na Loob (Gratitude For A Favor):** A common saying is, "He who does not look back to the place he has been to will not get to where he is going."

Filipino Traits (continued)

6. **Amor Propio (“Self Love”)**: Spanish word; Concern for image, status conscious, and that things must be done properly.

7. **Bahala Na (“That’s Life”)**: Fatalistic attitude that whatever went wrong was out of one’s control. It was God’s fate. Sign of resignation and/or acceptance.

Filipino Traits (continued)

8. **Pagsasarili (Self-Reliance):** Desire to be on his own. Struggle to acquire a good education and earn a livelihood without neglecting family.
9. **Paggalang:** Giving respect to elders' wisdom during important family member deliberations; Age = wisdom + experience
10. **Pakikiramay:** Going out of one's way to assist without being asked.

Things to Consider When Communicating and Working with Filipinos

1. Be personal and express an interest in them. Do some stroking.
2. Don't grill when trying to get information.
3. Find out who is the proper person to talk with in their "alliance" or network.
4. Many families have several households living together or live in very large houses.

Things to Consider (continued)

5. Parents who are unable to give the personal support system that they have in the Philippines tend to over-indulge with material goods in Hawai'i.
6. Filipinos are accustomed to hierarchy; there is great respect for authority. You are experts; you have answers; you tell them.
7. If “face” is in danger of being lost, steps to save “face” must be taken as soon as possible.

Things to Consider (continued)

8. Respect family social roles. Father must be seen as the “boss” for initial family contact and decision-making request.
9. Helpful to know if family is local or recently migrated. If local, which migration wave and Philippine region.
10. An invitation must be followed up by a second and even third invitation and/or telephone call.

Things to Consider (continued)

11. Decision-making is always a dialogue. Older generation is viewed as wisdom and knowledge.
12. Because of “face” value, parents must be considered first when working out family problems, especially if problem is between adolescent and parents. Parents must not be made to look stupid in their children’s eyes.

Recommendations for Community and Client Participation

- Always consider beliefs, needs, and concerns of the individual.
- Explain your plans and ensure understanding of why participation is necessary.
- Establish rapport and trust. Filipinos have a tendency to relate to people rather than agencies.

Recommendations for Community and Client Participation (continued)

- Be visible: Take time to network with Filipino American community.
- Access community resources and social networks.
- Create a warm and friendly environment.

Recommendations for Community and Client Participation (continued)

- **Conduct Sessions in a Group Setting:** Gives opportunity to share their experiences and support one another through a “talk story” approach.
- **Offer Incentives:** Appreciation incentives such as lunches, gift certificates, etc. as compensation for their time and effort.

Basic Greetings

- Hello Mabuhay
- How Are You Kumusta Ka?
- Thank You Salamat (Dios ti Agngina)
- Goodbye Paalam (Dios ti Kumuyog)
- Good Morning Magandang Umaga (Naimbag a Bigat)
- Good Afternoon Magandang Hapon (Naimbag a Malem)
- Good Evening Magandang Gabi (Naimbag a Rabii)
- Older Person Manong (male) or Manang (female)
- Younger Person Ading