

### Culture Overview

When we think of culture we often think of the national cultures reported in the international media. However, culture is much broader and encompasses the beliefs, attitudes and behaviors of diverse ethnic groups, clans, tribes, regional subcultures or even neighborhoods. Culture also differentiates people by religious or ideological persuasions, professions and educational backgrounds. Families also have cultures, as do the two largest cultural groups in the world, men and women. Companies, organizations and educational institutions also demonstrate unique cultures.

Culture is part of the fabric of every society, including our own. It shapes “the way things are done” and our understanding of why this should be so. This more comprehensive approach is proposed in the definition of culture adopted at the World Conference on Cultural Policies (Mexico, 1982) and used in ongoing discussions on culture and development:

*“Culture... is... the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or a social group. It includes not only arts and letters, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, traditions and beliefs.”*

## Understanding Socio-Cultural Norms

A common reason for cross-cultural misunderstandings is that we tend to interpret others' behaviors, values, and beliefs through the lens of our own culture. To overcome this tendency, it's essential to learn about the other party's culture. This means not only researching the customs and behaviors of different cultures but also understanding why people follow these customs and exhibit these behaviors in the first place.

In the field of international development and projects, you are challenged to adapt to unfamiliar places, people and cultures. If you have time, make the effort to research the socio-cultural norms embedded in your operating environment to get a basic feel of the local customs and context. Even with a basic understanding of the norms, you will be better positioned to identify potential cross-cultural issues and mitigate them.

### Some questions to research:

- What is the security and political climate?
- What projects have recently succeeded or failed here and how can we learn from them?
- What kind of culture and society do they have? (Are there gender norms that are different, societal structures you should know of?)
- Are there any language differences or socio-economic class considerations among the community?
- Are they an individualistic or a more group-oriented society?
- Does their culture encourage or discourage frank communication?
- Do they value independence or group harmony?
- How (what is the appropriate way) to express disagreement in this culture?

(source: <https://www.devex.com/news/trust-overlooked-and-undervalued-83828> )

#### **FSD Tip:**

The importance of promptness in deliberations, acceptance of interruptions, requirements for detailed introductions, eye contact, physical closeness and touching, and comfort with silence vary across different cultures and must be understood for effective communication. These are things that you can and should discuss with your supervisor and partner organization in order to carry out your project in the best manner.

## Addressing Sensitive Issues

*"My experience has shown that when you deal with culturally sensitive issues, you have no choice but to be as careful and as patient as possible. Every concern should be addressed properly. Otherwise, greater problems emerge at later times, when nothing can be done."* —Mrs. Farzaneh Davari, UNFPA National Project Director, Iran

In order to address culturally sensitive issues, you must first establish and work on:

1. Awareness of your own (and your counterparts') assumptions, values, and biases and how that affects beliefs and attitudes
2. Understanding your own worldview and that of the culturally different individual, including knowledge of socio-political influences
3. Developing appropriate strategies and techniques for communication and collaboration

Clarifying values and rules is a good principle for cross-cultural communication. Its prerequisite is that everyone is able to articulate what their expectations are, what those expectations are based on, and be willing to negotiate. Throughout the process of your research project, include members with cultural and gender expertise in the team.

## **Addressing Expectations of Different Partners**

When establishing a partnership or working relationship for CBPR projects, the expectations of potential and committed partners regarding their roles and the activities and benefits of being involved need to be addressed. Below are some examples of the motivations that may bring community partners and institutional partners to CBPR:

### **Community partners may be motivated by the potential to:**

- Access resources
- Advocate for policy change
- Build bridges across socio-cultural/political barriers
- Create jobs
- Demonstrate/address inequities and injustices
- Demonstrate a program's impact
- Ensure cultural survival
- Identify contexts affecting quality of life
- Identify gaps through comparison
- Improve services
- Solve a problem

### **Institutional partners may be motivated by the potential to:**

- Advance careers
- Build partnerships
- Demonstrate/address inequities and injustices
- Formulate policy
- Generate knowledge
- Link personal and professional goals and values
- Meet funding agency expectations
- Obtain institutional funding

The needs and expectations of all partners should be respected in CBPR projects and these will need to be negotiated. Institutional partners should pay heightened attention to the needs and expectations of community partners.

## Trust

The most productive people are the most trusting people. Trust is one of the most essential qualities of human relationships. Zand (1972) reported that “apparently in low trust groups, interpersonal relationships interfere with and distort perceptions of the problem. Energy and creativity are diverted from finding comprehensive, realistic solutions, and members use the problem as an instrument to minimize their vulnerability. In contrast, in high trust groups there is less socially generated uncertainty and problems are solved more effectively.” In another study, Boss (1977) concluded that “under conditions of high trust, problem solving tends to be creative and productive. Under conditions of low trust, problem solving tends to be degenerative and ineffective.”

### **Exercise: What Hinders Trust in CBPR relationships?**

In small groups or individually, ask community-based participants to list 3 reasons they or their organizations might not trust a researcher or research institution. Similarly, ask institution-based participants to list 3 reasons why potential community partners might not trust them. List on flip chart and discuss with the full group the reasons listed by the participants and begin conversation on how to address these concerns.

#### **Some factors may be:**

- Community members are intimidated by researchers
- Community may be suspicious of the research agenda
- Communities may feel over-searched (especially if they are of vulnerable populations, ie., people living with diseases)
- Researchers are new to a community and have no pre-existing relationship

## **Building Trust**

Mutual trust is one of the top issues that cross-cultural relationships face. In many cultures, trust is like an insurance policy. You have to invest in it upfront, before the need arises. Effective cross-cultural collaboration is mandatory for implementing any successful international development project. When there are language barriers, and when people from entirely different cultural, social and economic backgrounds come together, it is easy to mistrust and treat each other as outsiders or as aliens. It is easy for misunderstandings to arise, and miscommunication to create uneasy and uncomfortable situations. It is easy for one to feel slighted or disrespected, and even become hostile and shut the outsider out of their lives. It is obvious why, without trust, it is hard to achieve productivity and successful partnerships.

### **How do you build trust for cross-cultural projects and relationships?**

Different cultures build trust in different ways. For instance, in the United States, many people define trust as “demonstrated performance over time,” which means that you can gain the trust of your colleagues, superiors, or your community by coming through and delivering one’s commitments on time. However, this doesn’t stand true in other parts of the world. In many other parts of the world, building relationships is a prerequisite for any sort of professional interactions. Often, building trust in these countries involves lengthy conversations on non-professional topics such as sports, family, etc. and conversations over shared meals. Your counterpart must become comfortable with you as a person before you can take the relationship any further (like interviewing them on sensitive topics). In some cases, it may take multiple repeated interactions over a course of extended time to establish trust. Be prepared, and be patient.

#### **Key Pointers to Follow**

All participating members should keep these in mind when interacting with one another:

- Be open and honest
- Be able to listen well
- Use appropriate humor to add levity and build group cohesion
- Be able to directly address and speak frankly about contentious but important issues, such as power differentials, racism, and financial decisions

### **Make time to build relationships**

Once you’re at your site, in the field and among the community, make the time to understand everything and everyone around you. Everyone, including you, carries a set of expectations regarding how relationships should form and function. This means that when these expectations are violated, it’s not unusual for people to label this as a character deficits rather than cultural differences. It doesn’t matter how valid your efforts to push an agenda may be; if your counterparts are not on the same page as you, your project will not be able to gain traction within the community nor make its true full impact. Therefore, however tight your timeline, it is essential to set aside time to invest in relationship building. The relationship-building can simply begin with casual meet and greet type events, sharing a meal together, spending time in public spaces and gaining exposure to the community, letting the community get used to your presence, having personal conversations and simply get to know individuals better, and then gradually moving towards more facilitated situations where community members can share ideas, perspectives and experiences. This stepping-stone approach will allow individuals to

feel comfortable around one another (and with you) and build an environment where all opinions and perspectives are respected and valued.

### **Be a Model**

Let the community share their values with you, and you can do the same. Try to model a prioritization of healthy, functional, respectful relationships and your counterparts will come to understand its values. Over time, people will begin to be more proactive about cultivating relationships and identifying interpersonal or intercultural issues. This will set up a foundation for more intimate conversations or discussions about things that may become relevant to your research objective and plan.

### **Recognize Differences and Learn from the Community**

Be frank and honest about your presence. It is better to “know nothing” and be willing to learn, than to “know everything” and be presumptuous and close-minded. Take the opportunity to learn and understand differences. At first, simply be a student. Let the community teach you about their culture, customs, environment, issues, perspectives and what they think, feel, and know. This shows that you are not there to demand changes, to delegate and officiate, or to hand down “help.” By opening yourself up to learning from the community, you will be able to build a rapport of mutual respect and understanding with members of the organization and the community, which will be vital in you carrying out any sort of project.

### **Establish Mutual Goals and Responsibilities**

In order to build a foundation of trust, it is also important to establish your purpose in the community. Depending on the culture, individuals may have different ideas and expectations on job roles, responsibilities and how to best achieve goals. In order to account for this, at the outset of your project, mutually agree on and outline what you are trying to accomplish as a team. Give your counterparts a clear idea of your research objective or direction, and work together on building a collaborative process through which the community can freely give input and feedback. By establishing a mutually agreed on framework and goals, as well as division of responsibilities and roles, you will be able to become a successful facilitator of community-driven action and research.

## Making Decisions and Communicating Effectively

### **Exercise: Learning Exchanges**

Learning Exchanges are a valuable means of allowing partners opportunities to get to know each other in CBPR partnerships. This exercise was used by a Toronto CBPR project (O'Brien & Travers) as a process by which team members could get to know and understand the different worlds they come from.

The Learning Exchanges are structured so that the first half of every team meeting is a presentation by one of the community partner agencies outlining

- Who their community is
- What challenges face the community broadly
- What challenges face the community in relation to the existing project concerns held by the community about research (steep learning curves, past experiences, etc.)
- Some initial discussion about how the community representative saw this project benefiting them (balanced by a follow-up question of "highest hope and worst fear")
- Thoughts about the directions the project should take - i.e., given the broad research goals or objectives already agreed upon, what are the most important related issues/questions for that community
- Questions and answers from other team members

The researchers also take part in the Learning Exchange by talking about:

- Their backgrounds and what drew them to CBPR
- Their commitment to social justice in research
- Their commitment to CBPR and particularly collaboration
- Some reflection on how they currently view research as a community-development and advocacy tool
- Some reflection on why they think the current research topic is timely



## Collaborative Strategies to Decision-Making<sup>1</sup>

**Consensus:** The consensus process allows the entire group to be heard and to participate in decisionmaking. The goal of consensus decision-making is to find common ground, probing issues until everyone's opinions are voiced and understood by the group. Discussions leading to consensus aim to bring the group to mutual agreement by addressing all concerns. Consensus does not require unanimity. Rather, everyone must agree they can "live with" the decision. Though it can take longer than other decision-making methods, consensus fosters creativity, cooperation and commitment to final decisions. There are no "winners" and "losers" in this process, as discussion continues until consensus is achieved. Discussion is closed by restating agreements made and "next steps" in implementing decisions made.

**Democratic:** Options are discussed fully so that members are informed as to the decision's consequences. The important ground rule here is that the "losing" side agrees to support the decision, even though it was not their choice. Decisions are made by majority vote.

**Straw Polling:** Straw polling entails asking for a show of hands (e.g., thumbs up or down) to see how the group feels about a particular issue. It is a quick check that can save a great deal of time. Silent hand signals can be an invaluable source of feedback for a facilitator working with a large group.

**Voting:** Voting is a decision-making method that seems best suited to large groups. To avoid alienating large minorities, you might decide a motion will only succeed with a two-thirds (or more) majority. Some partnerships limit voting to people who have come to three or more consecutive meetings to prevent stacked meetings and to encourage familiarity with the issues being decided. Alternatively, voting can be combined with consensus. Some groups institute time limits on discussion and move to voting if consensus cannot be reached.

**Delegation:** The partnership may agree to delegate certain decisions to small groups, committees, or an individual. A small group may have the specialized knowledge, skills, or resources required to make certain decisions. When delegating decision-making, the group must clarify any constraints on the authority to act, and institute mechanisms for reporting back to the large group.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Center for Collaborative Planning, [www.connectccp.org](http://www.connectccp.org)

## Vulnerable Populations

However, because outreach relies on members of the community to affirmatively participate in outreach activities, some segments of the population are less likely to participate than others. In particular, **those who lack access to information, have limited mobility, face physical or linguistic barriers, or are socially isolated may choose not to participate, fear they cannot participate, be unable to participate if they want to, or may not even be aware of the opportunity.** Any population which is “at elevated risk of suffering harm as the result of one or more” factors which may include age, gender, race, ethnicity, education, or poverty, among others, can be considered vulnerable to some extent. Consequently, those who do not attend community meetings or participate in focus groups are also more likely to be members of the vulnerable populations whose interests most need protection.

In order to have a process which accurately portrays the challenges and opportunities faced by the community, the engagement process must be representative of the community as a whole, which means including vulnerable populations. Thus, in designing the engagement process for a research project, practitioners must identify which populations are most vulnerable and most likely to be overlooked in the target community. Once these populations are known, practitioners must work to design inclusive forms of engagement which make it possible for vulnerable populations to participate.

1. Which populations may be overlooked by common methods of community engagement?
  
2. What novel strategies can practitioners use to increase participation from vulnerable groups, particularly given the constraints of deadlines and tight budgets?

**FSD Tip:**

Look for ways to make participation accessible and incorporate it into things that people are already doing, such as community events that they may be attending, or reaching out to organizations that people might already be involved in. Don't forget to use your partner organization as an asset to find out how best to do this!

## Gender

USAID defines gender as “a social construct that refers to relations between and among the sexes, based on their relative roles. It encompasses the economic, political, and socio-cultural attributes, constraints, and opportunities associated with being male or female. As a social construct, gender varies across cultures, is dynamic and open to change over time.”

Gender relations and roles are context-specific and cannot be assumed; they need to be investigated. Gender roles are embedded in legal (both statutory and customary), social, religious, and cultural institutions and traditions. Gender also intersects with other social relations, such as class, ethnicity/race or indigenous group status, religion, and age.

Challenges to existing gender inequalities can be strongly resisted, as they are often deeply rooted in institutions and tradition. However, they are not immutable. Gender relations and roles can and do change over time—sometimes slowly and almost imperceptibly, sometimes rapidly—depending on changing political and socioeconomic conditions or in times of disasters and crises.

**Gender Equality** is a broad concept and a development goal. It is achieved when men and women have equal rights, freedoms, conditions, and opportunities for realizing their full potential and for contributing to and benefiting from economic, social, cultural and political development. Equality does not mean that women and men become the same but that women’s and men’s rights, responsibilities, and opportunities do not depend on whether they are born male or female. It means society values men and women equally for their similarities and differences and the diverse roles they play. Gender equality is not a “women’s issue”; rather it should concern and fully engage men as well as women. It involves working with men and women, boys and girls to bring about changes in attitudes, behaviors, roles and responsibilities – at home, in the workplace and in the community. Genuine equality means more than parity in numbers or laws on the books; it means laws enacted that provide an enabling environment for equality and accountability to ensure they’re implemented in that way. It is a fundamental part of human rights and social equity, and provides an essential building block to sustainable development.

**Gender Equity** is the process of being fair to women and men. To ensure fairness, measures must often be available to compensate for historical and social disadvantages that prevent women and men from otherwise operating on an equitable basis, or a “level



*Identify gender equity strategies to address constraints and achieve program results*

1. Are separate approaches to women and men necessary? What would these look like?

2. What are the risks? How are expectations or conflicting interests going to be managed?

3. What messages need to be communicated? How will the messages reach different groups of women and men? How will you communicate with women and men who are non-literate?

*Implement a gender-integrated program*

1. Will the activities be experienced or accessed differently by a woman or man, and will differences be affected by ethnicity, age, disability, socioeconomic status, religion, or sexual orientation? What arrangements are in place for those who may be excluded?

2. Are women equally involved in implementation (e.g., partner staff levels, women in decision-making, management committees?) How do you ensure this?

Continuum of Gender Approaches<sup>2</sup>

← EXPLOITATIVE	ACCOMMODATING	TRANSFORMATIVE →
<p><b>Definition:</b> Gender exploitative approaches take advantage of rigid gender norms and existing imbalances in power to achieve program objectives. May seem expeditious in the short run, it is unlikely to be sustainable and can, in the long run, result in harmful consequences and undermine the program's intended objective. It is an unacceptable approach for integrating gender.</p> <p><b>Example:</b> A Cash for Work program paid men to build a road for market access. Women from the community provided food for the men and the supervising staff, but were not paid. The women were "volunteers"—the community contribution to the project.</p> <p><b>Outcome:</b> The project was deemed a success as the road was completed and provided increased access to markets. However, in gender equality terms, gender stereotypes were reinforced as women's work was devalued. In addition, there were negative outcomes as women had less time for HH food production, risking increased food insecurity. Special measures were not considered to ensure that the new (men's) income would support the HH economy, and reports were received of increasing HH tensions and a rise in the incidence and severity of domestic violence.</p>	<p><b>Definition:</b> Gender accommodating approaches acknowledge the role of gender norms and inequities and seek to develop actions that adjust to and often compensate for them. Such projects do not actively seek to change the norms and inequities, but they strive to limit any harmful impact on gender relations. May be considered a missed opportunity because it does not address underlying structures and norms that perpetuate gender inequities. However, in situations where gender inequities are deeply entrenched and pervasive in a society, these approaches often provide a sensible first step to gender integration. As unequal power dynamics and rigid gender norms are recognized and addressed through programs, a gradual shift towards challenging such inequities may take place.</p> <p><b>Example:</b> Women anti-FGM activists in Somaliland and Puntland encountered much resistance from men who saw FGM as essential to ensure the sexual purity of their daughters before marriage. The activists changed strategy and turned to traditional male leaders. Explaining the devastating effect it had on girls and women's health, activists encouraged debate as to whether the practice was cultural or religious.</p> <p><b>Outcome:</b> The men appreciated that their authority was recognized, whereas previously they had felt insulted and aggrieved. Through the debates, a number of religious leaders concluded that FGM was not required by Islam and began to counsel against it in the mosques. The subordination of women to men continued, but the objective was achieved: the number of girls undergoing severe FGM was reduced.</p>	<p><b>Definition:</b> Gender transformative approaches actively strive to examine, question, and change rigid gender norms and imbalance of power as a means of reaching development objectives. Gender transformative approaches encourage critical awareness among men and women of gender roles and norms; promote the position of women; challenge the distribution of resources and allocation of duties between men and women; and/or address the power relationships between women and others in the community.</p> <p><b>Example:</b> A civil society component supporting food security focused on achieving land use rights for women farmers in a context where women traditionally and legally had no right to co-ownership with husbands.</p> <p><b>Outcome:</b> The project was deemed a success because reform of the land law resulted in the joint ownership of land use certificates, with both wife's and husband's name registered. Women were now able to access credit using land as collateral. Without the fear of losing their land due to divorce or inheritance practices, women had greater incentive to invest in agricultural production on their land, thus ensuring increased food security.</p>

<sup>2</sup> Source: [usaid.gov](http://usaid.gov)

## Strategies

In many cases, women's attendance rates at technical trainings pales in comparison to that of men because of constraints that are specific to women. The list below outlines ways these constraints can be addressed, so that they can attend and participate to their full extent.

- Trainings that involve women should be held during the day at times that are convenient for women (usually when children are at school), in locations close to their homes and that are cognizant of seasonal activities.
- Encourage women participants to attend trainings regardless of whether they will be bringing a child with them. During the training, create a welcoming environment for women with their children and encourage them to actively participate.
- Emphasizing that women will not be penalized for missing a session due to childcare commitments and that opportunities to learn missed information can be accommodated later are recommended to help create a friendly, welcoming environment.
- Interact with male members of households (fathers, brothers, husbands) and negotiate their approval for their wife's/daughter's/sister's participation in an activity.
- Approach local male religious and/or traditional leaders to negotiate women's involvement in an activity and when appropriate, enlist their support to build community acceptance and support of women's participation in an activity.
- Speak with men who allow female members of their family to participate in activities and ask them to speak with other men in the community regarding the benefits of this involvement.

## **Resolving Conflicts**

Conflict is virtually inevitable in a collaborative endeavor. Disagreements are bound to happen when a diverse collection of voices and perspectives gathers. However, conflict does not always have to be negative. When handled appropriately, conflict can provide an opportunity for constructive change.

### **What topics are likely to produce conflict in CBPR partnerships?**

- Discriminatory “isms” such as racism, sexism, ageism, etc.
- Contrasting goals, values, or priorities
- Conflicts between different members of the partnership
- Communication breakdowns
- Power imbalances
- Commitment imbalances or unequal work loads
- Clashing organizational cultures
- Financial or budgetary losses or conflict about resource allocation

### **When conflict arises, consider the following:**

- Always assume there is a legitimate reason. Do not seek out a “trouble-maker” or lay blame.
- If serious conflict occurs, take the time to resolve it. If conflicts are ignored or buried by the group, they are bound to grow larger and resurface again.
- If you are unsure about the cause of group conflict, ask other thoughtful group members outside of the group setting. It may be helpful to use an outside consultant or party to help facilitate discussion of conflicts and contentious issues. In making difficult decisions such as eliminating a program or position or working through a sticky political situation, it can be difficult to have someone from within the partnership facilitate this conversation. If an outsider is used, it is important to carefully consider who the appropriate candidate is and ensure that they do their homework to know the partnership and have a clear sense of what the partnership wants to get out of their assistance.
- Conflict evokes emotion. When the group members are hurt by conflict, it must be addressed or they will not feel safe. This could stop the group from making any further significant decisions.
- Open, clear communication is the best prevention to avoiding unnecessary conflicts and can help resolve misunderstandings before they become full-blown arguments. Be very open and deliberate about all decision-making processes.



### Identify the probable cause of the conflict:

- Are differences of opinion caused by lack of information?
- Is there a power struggle or competition? Are two individuals trying for leadership or control? Are institutional interests at stake?
- Is there a “personality conflict”? That is, are individuals personalizing differences of style, communication, or approach?
- Is the group tired? Feeling hopeless, discouraged, or unsuccessful?
- Is the group confused about its task?
- Are differences of power related to race or culture causing conflict?

### Five conflict styles

1. In **avoidance** the conflict is simply dodged. This demonstrates a low concern for self, because your own needs are not being addressed let alone met, and a low concern for other because you're backing away. In avoiding the conflict, it cannot really be resolved.

2. A person using a **competing or dominating** style seeks to have his or her own way, regardless of the impact or cost on the other person. This represents a high concern for self and low concern for other. One's own interests are protected and fought for while the other's interests are essentially steamrolled. Communication behaviors here include tactics of aggressiveness, defensiveness, control and domination.

3. An **accommodating or obliging** style demonstrates a low concern for self and high concern for other. Your own needs aren't being addressed while the other person's are accepted in full. This can be useful in situations where the relationship is valued over the conflict.

4. In **compromising**, both parties gain something but both parties lose something as well. Neither gets all she or he wants. This style represents a medium concern for self and a medium concern for other. Common tactics are appeals to fairness, trade-offs, and other quick short-term fixes.

5. An **integrative or collaborative** conflict style reflects a high concern for self and a high concern for other. Solutions which satisfy everyone's goals are sought. Nonevaluative descriptive messages, qualifying statements and hedges, and statements that demonstrate mutual interest are common in collaborating.

The resolution of cross-cultural conflict begins with identifying whether cultural issues are involved. There are three ways of cross-cultural conflict resolution<sup>3</sup>.

### **1. Probing for the cultural dimension**

The resolution process should start from the parties' acknowledgment that their conflict contains a cultural dimension. Next, there should be willingness on all sides to deal with all conflict dimensions including the cultural one. Third, systematic phased work on the conflict is needed. Williams identified four phases: (1) the parties describe what they find offensive in each other's behavior; (2) they get an understanding of the other party's cultural perceptions; (3) they learn how the problem would be handled in the culture of the opponent; (4) they develop conflict solutions. Resolution of the conflict is particularly complicated if the conflict arose not just out of misunderstanding of the other's behavior, but because of incompatible values.

### **2. Learning about other cultures**

People can prevent cross-cultural conflicts by learning about cultures that they come in contact with. This knowledge can be obtained through training programs, general reading, talking to people from different cultures, and learning from past experiences. Important aspects of cultural education are understanding your own culture and developing cultural awareness by acquiring a broad knowledge of values and beliefs of other cultures, rather than looking at them through the prism of cultural stereotypes.

### **3. Altering organizational practices and procedures**

Often the organizational structure reflects the norms of just one culture and inherits the cultural conflict. In such cases, structural change becomes necessary to make the system more sensitive to cultural norms of other people.

### **4. Negotiate solutions using a problem-solving approach**

You may consider asking a mediator or other neutral third party to facilitate. Hear both sides and focus on shared interests. What does each party want? Where is the common ground? What solution(s) would be most fair?

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<sup>3</sup> Adapted from the Center for Collaborative Planning, [www.connectccp.org](http://www.connectccp.org)