##

## Advice on cross-cultural communication

* Introductory protocols are important. Be prepared to spend time sharing personal background information about yourself and the purpose of your activity.
* Be patient when asking questions. Look, listen and learn, as it may take time for some community people to become involved. Some people may work towards giving their opinions by initially talking about other issues or stories.
* Do not expect every Koorie person (including students in the school) to know about or want to talk publicly about Koorie cultures, families, histories or issues.
* Some Koorie people might not openly express an opinion. They may choose to talk indirectly about an issue if they do not agree with the previous speaker. Not all Koorie people will share the same opinions and feelings. All opinions should be acknowledged and valued.
* The use of silence should not be misunderstood…. It is important that this silence is respected and not interrupted unnecessarily.
* There are different types of knowledge – for example, spiritual knowledge and scientific knowledge – and these may conflict. One should be sensitive to these differences when talking to an Indigenous person about issues and experiences.
* Do not force a point of view.
* Use language that respects the integrity and beliefs of the person or group with whom you’re meeting.
* Be prepared to accept that some questions may remain unanswered.
* Family obligations and funerals affect many people in Koorie and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and may impact on previous obligations made to a school. Immediate and extended family obligations will always take first priority.
* Remember that different families have different values and cultural beliefs, even if they are from the same community. Consult with a variety of community people.

(Source: [Drama Australia](http://www.dramaaustralia.org.au/guidelines.html) (see *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Guidelines for Drama/Theatre Education* pp11-12))