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## **Inclusive Spaces: Cultural Diversity**

Inclusion and accessibility are key to offering a Warm Welcome to guests. Here are some top tips and helpful resources to help you offer a Warm Welcome to all. Remember these tips can be applied to guests and volunteers.

* **Be curious:** Get to know your local community. Learn if there are different religions, ethnicities, or cultures in your local area. Research the cultural practices of the communities around you, such as cultural or religious customs, religious holidays, dress codes, prayer needs or dietary restrictions.
	+ *If you don’t know, ask politely. Ask guests in advance about any cultural or religious needs (e.g. prayer spaces or dietary requirements).*
* **Respect Cultural Differences:** Planning for and being mindful of dietary requirements, religious holidays, prayer times, and dress codes make a big difference in helping people feel at home.
* **Remove Barriers:** Identify and remove barriers that people of different faiths might experience in coming to your space, for example having a separate space for the community meal during Ramadan.
	+ *Consider asking your guests for their feedback, advice and help on this.*
* **Use Inclusive Language:** Avoid phrases that assume everyone shares the same faith or background.
* **Train your team:** Include training on cultural sensitivity in your volunteering onboarding. Consider including information about common customs, communication preferences and what to expect in your volunteer training.
	+ *Why not invite guests from different cultures to teach your team or deliver training?*
* Learn from your mistakes: We all sometimes get things wrong, what matters is responding well. Here are some tips for responding if someone says they’ve been made to feel uncomfortable or excluded.
	+ **Have a clear feedback system** Ensure there’s a clear, simple way for volunteers or service users to raise concerns.
	+ **Listen and Learn:** Listen openly and respectfully. Be curious, polite and acknowledge their experience. Ask for feedback on how you could improve in future and make reasonable adjustments.
	+ **Reflect and Learn: Consider having a reflection session as a team, or providing a system for reflection and learning. Then review your approach** and update your guidelines or training so future activities are more inclusive.
	+ Remember to document your learnings to help future planning.

By embracing cultural diversity you can help to make people feel welcomed, respected and valued. It also gives you opportunities to find joy in trying new things, empower your community by inviting people to get more involved and strengthen your local community.

Resources:

* A calendar of religious festivals in the UK: [Festival Calendar - RE:ONLINE](https://www.reonline.org.uk/festival-calendar/?filters=%7B%22august%22%3A%7B%22term_id%22%3A%2256%22%2C%22taxonomy%22%3A%22months%22%7D%7D)
* Check out these resources to learn more about different faith communities, beliefs and and practices
	+ [Resources - RE:ONLINE](https://www.reonline.org.uk/teaching-resources/)
	+ [Faith Factsheets - Religion Media Centre](https://religionmediacentre.org.uk/factsheets/)
* Advice for Volunteering
	+ [Interfaith volunteering | JVN](https://www.jvn.org.uk/interfaith-volunteering-9613.php)
	+ [Core guidance: Voluntary charity and community organisations | EHRC](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/guidance/business/guidance-businesses/equality-law-voluntary-and-community/core-guidance-voluntary)
	+ [Time Well Spent Diversity and Volunteering| NCVO](http://ncvo-app-wagtail-mediaa721a567-uwkfinin077j.s3.amazonaws.comvolunteer)
	+ Check out our partner corner for more information on building bridges and relationships.