

Offering a Pressure-free Invitation

Getting Together with Your Refugee Friends



Many cultures, due to their desire to honor you and your friendship will feel obligated to say yes to whatever your request or invitation may be. That can be intimidating to know how to invite someone, can't it?

Don't let this knowledge of their culture prevent you from learning a new way to communicate.

Here are a few suggested steps:

1. Ask your refugee friend indirectly to test their comfort level before directly extending an invitation with logistics like a date/time/location.
Ex. *"How do you feel about meeting up with others right now? Would you feel comfortable meeting some friends at a park?"*
2. You might use a translator or ensure that you are communicating with a member of the family that speaks English well, so that they can communicate the nuances of this invitation.
3. Ask more than once. This is not to pressure your friends, but to give them time to process and think about it. Did you know that in some cultures it is customary to ask three times before you will get an accurate answer?
The reality of intercultural communication is we show love to our neighbors by allowing them time to process and respond in timing that makes sense to them.
4. Give choices when asking.
Ex. *"Would you prefer to get together outside or meet over zoom?"*
5. Explain each option in a positive way
Ex. *"A virtual hang-out could be fun, I could drop-off food, and then we could call each other on WhatsApp. Or would you rather make your own meal and we could have a virtual dinner together?"*