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| Culture: Personal Space |
| Humans unconsciously divide the space around themselves into intimate space, personal space and social space. The space closest to us is our intimate space. We only let very close friends, family and partners into this space. The next space is our personal space. This is the space we let people into for everyday conversation. Finally, there is our social space, the space around us that people occupy for more formal events.The size of a person’s intimate space and personal space varies both by individual and by culture. According to research, the space we reserve for those closest to us, our intimate space, goes anywhere from 0 to 0.5 metres. Our personal space, that we reserve for friends and every-day acquaintances, ranges from 0.5m to 1.2 m. Problems arise when an every-day acquaintance goes into our intimate space. This makes us uncomfortable and causes us to make a negative judgment about that person. |

*A. Find your intimate space. Work with a partner. Stand still while your partner slowly walks towards you. Tell them to stop when you start to feel uncomfortable. Have them back up until you feel comfortable again. Tell them to stop. Measure the distance between you and your partner. This is the outer limit of your intimate space. If someone comes any closer, they are moving into your intimate space—which makes you feel uncomfortable. Compare the outer limit of your intimate space with that of your partner.*

*B. What might the problem be in each of the scenarios below?*

1. You are having a conversation with someone from another culture. They keep backing away from you. You keep moving forward because you feel there is too much distance between you.

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2. You are having a conversation with someone from another culture. You keep backing away from them. You feel they are too close to you but they keep moving forward.

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