

GESTURES USED BY ITALIAN CALD ELDERLY

The OK gesture Acceptable to Italians which means „perfect“. In Brazil, Germany and the former USSR it is an obscene gesture. In France it means zero whilst in Japan it means coins or money.

Waving It means “No” to most Europeans. They raise the arm and bob the hand up and down as if shooing away.

Beckoning Italians and Asians raise the arm with the palm facing down and make a scratching motion with fingers. However in Australia and Indonesia, curling the index finger is used for beckoning animals.

Direct eye contact Italians maintain eye contact but African American, Native Americans, Asians, Puerto Ricans and West Indians find it disrespectful, intimidating and/or rude. It may also indicate sexual overtones.

Handshake Acceptable to Italians and generally adopted around the world, Southeast Asians press hands together; Middle Easterners and many Asians favour a gentle grip while the Japanese bow.

Nodding and shaking head Usually means what it expresses for Italians but has the opposite meaning in Bengal, Bulgaria, parts of Greece, Turkey, Iran and Yugoslavia.

Thumbs up Not generally used by Italians. Is a rude gesture in Nigeria, means hitch-hiking in America and obscene in Australia if pumped up and down. In Germany and Japan it is the signal for one”.

V for victory Not generally used by Italians. In England, palm facing inward towards the face is an obscene gesture.

Scraping fingers under the chin is used by Italians often and implies a lack of concern.

Whistling Throughout Europe whistling at public events is a signal for disapproval, even derision.



The simplest solutions are often the cleverest. They are also usually wrong! What appears obvious may not always be the case.

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Are you interviewing an Italian CALD* Client?

* CALD
(Culturally and Linguistically Diverse)



Communication is the single most important factor in determining whether the client's needs are being met in the best possible way. All it requires is patience, empathy, good articulation and knowledge of how cultural behaviors influence interactions. With practice and knowledge of the many cultural cues, communication becomes easier.

For more information please contact the CPP Officer at Co.As.It.



Does this gesture invite you to listen or is it disturbing?

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION WITH ITALIAN CALD ELDERLY

Choose the right moment and the right place. Don't interview the client out of their home if you need to know how they manage at home alone.

- Be clear about the purpose of the interaction. Some elderly might find officialdom frightening.
- Recognize that the person may be illiterate or semi literate and have little education even in their own language.
- Speak slowly, without raising your voice. Turning up the volume does not aid understanding.
- Keep sentences short, do not mumble, use big words or jargon, do not use baby talk or incorrect English.
- Do not cover or hide your mouth because in many cases lip movements aid listeners to figure out what you are saying.
- Keep a good attitude and be friendly. Italian elderly love to talk, impatience will inhibit your ability to communicate and can alienate your client.

Italian elderly like to maintain eye contact. If asked to repeat something, repeat it as you said it the first time. It could be that they simply didn't hear you. If your client still doesn't understand, however, change a few key words in the sentence.

- As much as possible, avoid using filler and colloquial words ('um...', 'like...', 'Yeah, totally.')
- If you are a young interviewer < the Italian elderly person may feel uncomfortable discussing needs of a private nature with you.
- Take time to talk to the person and their family members (if appropriate) about routine daily practices that have a positive influence on their well being.
- If unsure whether you have picked up the correct cues, ask for clarifications.
- Give the person your undivided attention and use active listening. You will be able to gauge how much of your message is getting through and whether it is being received correctly or misinterpreted.
- If using an interpreter do not address your questions to the interpreter, speak directly to the client. Check if a dialect is spoken before booking the translator.
- Watch verbal and non verbal cues in the communication process.
- Be aware that some cultural practices may be confronting for you, eg. keeping chickens - to eat.



Use facial expressions consciously. Avoid negative facial expressions, such as frowns or raised eyebrows. What is, or isn't negative is dependent on the context, including cultural context, so be guided by your situation.