

Cultural Conduct & Respect Standards

A Community Framework Honoring Our Elders

Preamble: Honoring Elders

Elders are the builders of community and memory of a people. They carry language, custom, restraint, wisdom, and continuity. A healthy culture does not leave behind its elders or force them to adapt to misbehavior and public disorder. Instead, **public standards rise to meet the honor and respect of those who came before us.**

This framework affirms conduct that allows elders to move through society with comfort, safety, and respect, and rejects behaviors that erode shared civility.

YES VS. NO

I. Language as a Measure of Respect

How we speak reflects who we honor.

ACCEPTABLE — Language Elders Can Stand Behind

- Referring to women as *lady*, *ma'am*, or by their proper name
- Referring to men as *gentleman*, *sir*, or by their proper name
- Speaking in a tone suitable for mixed generations
- Expressing disagreement without humiliation
- Choosing words that preserve dignity

UNACCEPTABLE — Language That Degrades the Social Fabric

- Derogatory or demeaning labels for women or men
- Racial or ethnic slurs toward any group
- Profanity used as dominance or intimidation
- Speech that elders would be forced to avert their eyes or ears from
- Mockery disguised as humor

II. Greetings & Presence

How we meet one another shows what kind of society we are.

ACCEPTABLE — Time-Honored Forms of Courtesy

- Respectful handshakes
- Polite verbal greetings
- Calm eye contact
- Allowing elders space and time
- Standing, yielding, or pausing out of courtesy

UNACCEPTABLE — Conduct That Signals Breakdown

- Aggressive posturing
- Disrespectful gestures
- Mocking or dismissive behavior
- Unwanted physical contact
- Public humiliation

III. Public Behavior & Decorum

Public spaces belong to children, families, and elders alike.

ACCEPTABLE — Conduct Fit for All Generations

- Singing hymns or traditional songs in appropriate settings
- Modest dress suitable to shared environments
- Joy expressed with restraint and consideration
- Calm celebration that does not overwhelm others
- Behavior that elders would feel comfortable witnessing

UNACCEPTABLE — Conduct That Forces Withdrawal

- Sexually explicit dancing in public or family spaces
- Disruptive attention-seeking
- Filming others without consent
- Shock-based behavior

- Treating public space as a stage rather than a commons

IV. Cultural Expression

Culture is something we pass forward, not weaponize.

ACCEPTABLE — Expression That Honors Continuity

- Celebrating one's heritage without degrading others
- Learning local customs when entering a community
- Respecting host-country norms in civic spaces
- Sharing traditions with humility
- Adapting with courtesy

UNACCEPTABLE — Expression That Breaks Trust

- Using culture to insult or dominate
- Mocking traditions rooted in history
- Importing hostility into shared spaces
- Excusing disrespect as “just culture”
- Erasing or sidelining elder norms
- Racist/Sexist group dynamics, staring aggressively

V. Conflict & Disagreement

Even disagreement should leave dignity intact.

ACCEPTABLE — Elder-Honoring Resolution

- Civil debate
- Listening before responding
- Agreeing to disagree
- Lawful and orderly resolution
- Protecting reputation and face

UNACCEPTABLE — Escalation and Spectacle

- Name-calling
- Threats or intimidation
- Mob behavior
- Public shaming
- Conflict as entertainment

Closing Standard

A culture that honors its elders preserves its future.

Freedom of expression is strongest when paired with responsibility, restraint, and respect for those who laid the foundations we now stand upon.
