

Your character is Irena

About Irena

Irena is 34 years old. She is a sport teacher; she has grown up with the value of gender equality rather than equity. She believes that gender roles are framed and boxed by the society and individuals shall challenge and break these boxes. She is pro gender queer rather than binary.

She believes that rules are meant to be changed and individuals cannot develop if they do not challenge these rules. She believes that traditions were meant for past issues and that we shall modernize our traditions to fit to our current issues.

She loves her work as a teacher for 6th and 7th grade students. She always tries to challenge them to face their fears and get out from their comfort zone.

In her communication style, Irena is more linear-active based on the Lewis model for cultural behaviour patterns. This means that she tends to focus on facts and arguing by reasons far from emotions. This makes some people who do not know the values behind her communication patterns to think that she might be arrogant and careless.

Irena in conflict:

The summer is coming, Irena wants to take her students to the pool. One of her Students is Sara. Sara left her country because of the war few months ago and she is wearing hijab. Irena has approached Sara and asked her if she has a swimming suit to go to the class in the pool next week. Sara has answered no, so Irena next day arranged a swimming suit for her and gave it to her to take it home. When Sara arrived home, her father saw the swimming suit and he was annoyed.

In the same day, Irena was on her way to leave from school to home. Abu Sara arrived. He was very emotional, sweating and asking to meet Irena. He asked Irena if she thinks because he is a refugee then he has no right to keep his tradition and identity and she has the right to force him in letting his daughter wearing a swimming suit in a mixed pool?

Focusing on her argument, Irena ignored the emotional part and she said "Boys and girls are equal and your daughter has to participate with the other students" Abo Sara reacted very emotionally to this statement. He said "This is horrible, this is really hurting me! you are saying that we are retarded and we torture our daughters" This made Irena step back and feel that Abu Sara is aggressive so she decided to leave until next time maybe he can speak normally as she defines normal. She just left him and walked away.

Put yourself in the shoes of Sara:

1. Irena is following which intercultural conflict style based on the intercultural conflict style inventory by Hammer?
2. What are the values and its prioritization beyond the behavioural patterns of Irena in the situation above?

The four styles are as below:

1. **Direct:** People with direct style tend to be direct with their arguments and the reasons behind their disagreement. In the other hand they are restrained with their emotions. People with this style tend to clearly and verbally discuss their disagreements and arguments. They are more likely to be judged

by others who do not know about the other conflict styles. They are misunderstood as arrogant, emotionless and careless.

2. **Engagement:** People with this intercultural conflict style are open to express their emotions and argument. They use strong body expressions and they involve emotions while expressing why and how they got upset. They do not express only the reason behind their disagreement but also the negative emotions they are experiencing. They are more likely to be judged by others who do not know about the other conflict styles as rude and aggressive.

3. **Dynamic:** People with this conflict style are more open to express their feelings and disagreement through emotional body language expressions and dramatic reactions. They do so without the confrontation about the disagreement and the reason behind it. They are not comfortable with direct discussions about the disagreement. They use implicit hidden messages to deliver their dissatisfaction. They expect from others to be sensitive and to get the reasons behind their emotional expressions and implicit actions. They might be misjudged as unreasonable and confused.

4. **Accommodation:** This people tend to hide their emotions and disagreements. They believe that confrontation might threaten the group harmony. Accommodation style to them keeps their face and the face of others. They rather hide their disturbance and keep it to themselves while they are annoyed. This affects their proactivity but still they would avoid discussions. This makes others perceive them as being not honest and tricky.