Improving Cultural Approaches to Pediatric Palliative Care in Central Massachusetts

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Communication Style
Brazilians provide many details when offering information. They are always very courteous and will stop the conversation to summarize it for those who cannot keep up. They are comfortable with verbal confrontation, although confrontation does not happen between a younger and an older person. It is considered impolite to say ‘no’ directly to a health care provider; clinicians should not assume patients have necessarily concurred. Brazilians greet everyone with a hug. If the newcomer is a family member, friend, or acquaintance, a kiss on each cheek is included. Handshakes are appropriate when strangers are introduced or in formal situations, both for greetings and good-byes. If two men are well acquainted, a slap on the shoulder or stomach, or a sustained pat on the back, may accompany the handshake and last into the conversation.

Religious Beliefs
A word of caution must regularly be expressed when one is trying to speak absolutes about any religion. Within each denomination or belief system there are always variations. Geographic locations, generation gaps, gender differences, or cultural diversity may impact these convictions.