

INTRODUCTION (5 MINUTES)

1. If you are experiencing a low, or are not feeling so good, who do you go to for help? (*Possible answers: host parents or Area Rep*)
2. Who has YFU provided to help you? (*Area REP!!*)

During this activity, the Facilitator will read some student responses. Some students might react sensitively to their response being read out loud. The facilitator or another volunteer needs to observe students; body language and behavior while the responses are being read. If a student shows discomfort around a certain topics, inform the Area Rep to follow up with the student.

ACTIVITY PROBLEM SOLVING (50 MINUTES)

Option # 1: Writing to Area Representative to Problem Solve

Email to Area Rep (10 minutes)

1. Now tell the students: *We want you to spend about 10 minutes writing an email about any problems or concerns you might have that you would like advice or help to improve your situation.*
2. Inform the students that their emails are anonymous, so they should not include their names.
3. Encourage students to write about any and all topics, large or small that are bothering them. Let students know that these will be read aloud, so please do not include any names on the “email.”
4. If students don’t currently have any problems, they can write about a situation they have overcome and how they handled it.
5. Handout 3x5 cards or lined paper and pens to all students
6. Give students approximately 10 minutes to write their emails.
7. After 10 minutes, collect the emails and mix them up so they are anonymous.
8. Go to *****Small Group Discussion Activity** where these “emails” will be passed out to groups for discussion.

Facilitator Note:

The emails should provide a good springboard for an open discussion about any questions or issues that the students would like to raise. Some of these issues might include: Curfews, parties, boredom, language, translation mistakes, being misunderstood, host family issues, school, grades, friendships, church attendance, drugs & drinking, troubles that they are having at school, struggles with learning English, homesickness; trouble making friends, etc.

Option # 2: Using Pre Written Scenarios to Problem Solve

1. Break students up into small groups up of 3, 4, or 5 students.

2. Hand a scenario strip out to each student and begin Small Group Discussion Activity.

For Option 1 and Option 2 groups!

*****Small Group Discussion Activity (20 minutes)**

1. Instruct the students to read their scenario (or email) to their small group and discuss possible solutions based on the following **problem solving questions** (see the last page of this document for the questions be displayed on a PowerPoint slide or written on a flipchart):

- What are some ways to improve this situation/issue?
 - Who is someone that you could talk to in this situation?
 - Has anyone experienced this problem and figured out a solution?
 - What are some things that you wouldn't want to do in this situation?
3. As facilitators circulate the room, they may encourage groups to come up with as many suggestions as possible for how best to deal with the situation or question.
 4. Have the students write a response on the back of the email or strip.
 5. Give students 15-20 minutes to discuss all the emails in their group.
 6. After 15-20 minutes, tell the students that they need to start wrapping up the problem solving and be ready to share with the entire group.

Large Group Problem Solving Discussion (20 minutes)

Each student reads the scenario email aloud and gives the group's suggested solutions.

Have other groups give feedback or additional ideas on how to deal with the situation presented.

Make sure ALL student emails are addressed.

WRAP UP (5 MINUTES)

To end this session, post and handout the YFU Lines of Communication visual and discuss the points below with the students:

- ✓ Remind students that if they have a problem, they should talk to someone about it.
- ✓ If it is an issue that they do not feel comfortable sharing with their host parents, they should talk to a YFU Area Representative.
- ✓ It is very important to communicate to students that if they are very unhappy for some reason, that there is someone who can help.

DEAR AREA REP SCENARIOS – OPTION TWO

Host Family Concerns

1. Dear Area Rep,

My YFU kid does everything I ask of him, which is really nice, but he never helps out otherwise. I wish he would just KNOW to empty the garbage every day, and to bring in groceries when I get home from shopping. There is vacuuming, and dishes, even clearing the table. I am tired after working all day, and I don't like having to ask all the time for him to help with the housework. How can I make him see how much help I need? – *From tired host mom*

2. Dear Area Rep,

I have hosted many times before and my YFU child is great! My frustration is that she doesn't want to do the activities I suggested for after school. I know who the nice kids are, and they were so nice to my German daughter last year. How can I convince her to try to be friends with these families? – *From host dad who wants to help*

3. Dear Area Rep:

My Thai YFU son is bored with sandwiches for school lunch, or maybe he just doesn't like them. We are on a budget, so I can't give him lunch money. What can I do to make us both happy? – *From concerned Mom*

4. Dear Area Rep,

My YFU kid got a huge box of food from the home country, and she put it in her bedroom. I don't want any food in the bedrooms, and I'm sad she won't share with us. How do I talk to her about this? – *From wanting to share in that food Host Mom*

5. Dear Area Rep,

My YFU student never talks about her country, mother, or father. Should I be concerned? How could this be? – *From worried host mom*

6. Dear Area Rep, My YFU daughter is so nice, but a little lazy. She won't do any after school activities and just wants to hang around or sleep after school. What should I do? - *From frustrated host*

7. Dear Area Rep, My YFU student is not making any friends. How can I help him to do that?
- *From worried host dad*

8. Dear Area Rep,

My YFU daughter likes to dye her hair. She looks great, but my bathroom rug and counter are getting stained by the dye. I wish she would clean it up better and buy me a new bathmat, but she just leaves the stain on the counter. What do I do?

- *From clean Freak Mom*

9. Dear Area Rep,

My kids are younger than my YFU son, and they want to play games with him, but he likes watching you tube videos and texting online with his friends, so they just run around making noise, and that makes my student upset. I hosted him because I thought my kids would like having a new brother to play with, but instead my kids are sad. What can I do to bring us together? - *From host mom of energetic boys*

10. Dear Area Rep,

My YFU son started out with such great grades! The school was really impressed. I knew he was a good student, so I never asked him about his schoolwork. But now, at the end of the second quarter, the school called! Today he has a 65 in English, which is barely passing. I was very surprised because I thought all that time on the computer every night was when he was doing his homework. Now I don't know if I should be checking in on his academic progress or just leaving him to continue failing. To make matters worse he is signed up for a YFU trip, and he will be missing more school soon. What should I do? - *From Confused Host Dad*

DEAR AREA REP SCENARIOS – OPTION TWO

Student Concerns

11. Dear Area Rep,

I really need your help right now. I just got in a lot of trouble with my host family because I'm not allow to have much contact to my family in Germany using my phone, but my natural parents always tell me that I should talk to them often. I really don't know what to do now: either way somebody will be mad at me. Can you please help me? – *From Confused German guy*

12. Dear Area Rep,

I have just been told that someone I love back home is very ill and in the hospital. I don't know what to do as I want to go home and at the same time be here. I am really form and it affects my everyday life. - *From Not Sure What To Do*

13. Dear Area Rep,

I have an issue with getting around in my city. I live a little bit further out of the city and whenever I wasn't to do something with my friends, my host parents have to drive me around. Sometimes I feel very bad about that I a sometimes also consider not to do something with my friends because of this issue. – *From Country Guy*

14. Dear Area Rep,

I have a problem, my host brother is mean to me. He eats my food and stuff like that.
--*From Not Wanting to Share*

15. Dear Area Rep,

I've met and know a lot of people during my exchange. I've met many other foreign people and spent time with them. But, I've had a hard time to get "real" friends and hang out with them. Is that normal? – *From Wanting American Friends*

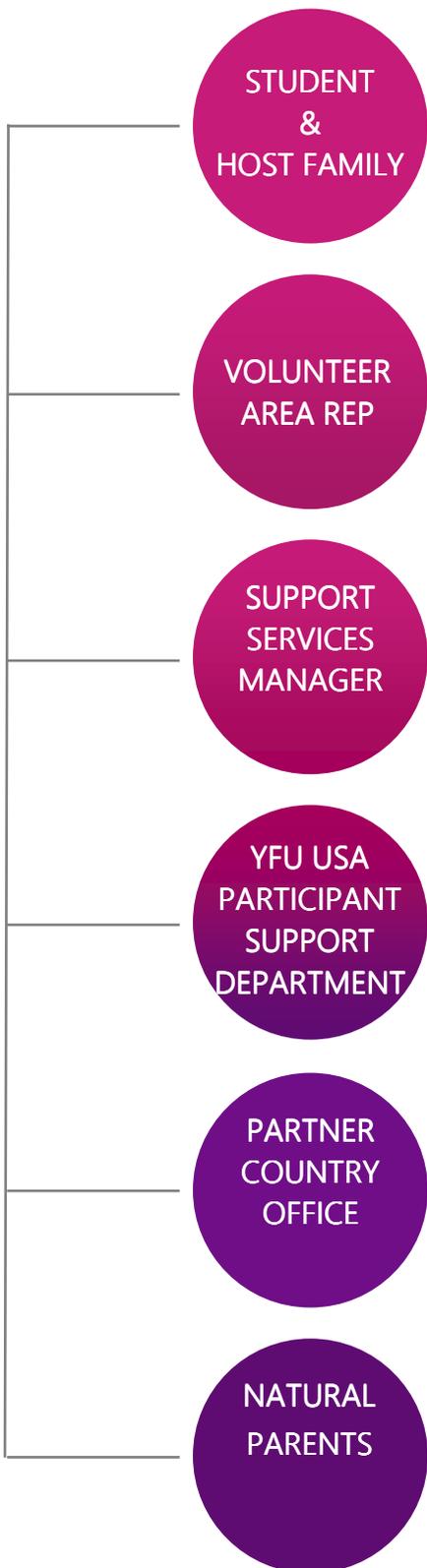
PROBLEM SOLVING QUESTIONS FOR DEAR AREA REP EMAIL ACTIVITY

- What are some ways to improve this situation/issue?
- Who is someone that you could talk to in this situation?
- Has anyone experienced this problem and figured out a solution?
- What are some things that you wouldn't want to do in this situation?



LINES OF COMMUNICATION FOR SUPPORT IN THE U.S.

When students and host families require support, contacting those who are best equipped to help allows the YFU support structure to work most effectively.



Volunteer Area Representative (Area Rep)

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Some areas also have a volunteer area coordinator who supports the area representatives.

Support Services Manager (SSM)

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

YFU USA Participant Support Department

Emergency Support: 800.424.3691

Non-Support Matters

The YFU office provides help related to orientations, activities, and other non-support topics.

YFU Office: 1.866.493.8872