



Orientation	Midyear
Session Overview	This session is designed to energize and motivate the students for the orientation, make sure everyone knows each other's names, and set an upbeat tone for the day.
Participants	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Students <input type="checkbox"/> Host Parents <input type="checkbox"/> Natural Parents <input type="checkbox"/> Host Siblings
Format	<input type="checkbox"/> Highly Active / Interactive <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Discussion <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Some Activity / Interactivity <input type="checkbox"/> Independent
Duration	30 minutes
Group Size	Any size
Minimum Staffing	All volunteers present
Materials Needed	Flipchart and/or projector – Post agenda for the day Sign in sheet with students names pre-populated Ball for optional <i>Name Game</i>
Preparation	Post Agenda for the day on slide or flipchart Prepare sign-in sheet with students names prepopulated Attitude quote on a flipchart or slide For Icebreaker Option 2 – Print or write the questions for this activity on a piece of paper, cut into strips to put in hat.

INTRODUCTION (5 MINUTES)

1. Ensure that all attendees signed the attendance sheet and have nametags.
2. Welcome students and thank them for being at the orientation.
3. Share posted agenda, provide housekeeping information (location of bathrooms, plans for lunch, etc).
4. Do brief volunteer introductions.

Play optional Name Game if desired. (below)

5. Ask the students if they remember the 3-5-8: Choice concept (see the box below). Ask for any examples of how they have used this tool. This concept will be used in Activity # 1.

Optional Name Game – Toss the Ball

- Facilitator starts by saying his/her name then, throws the ball to another student.
 - Student who catches the ball has to say the name of the facilitator, then his/her name.
 - That student then throws the ball to a third student, who has to say the previous two names.
 - Continue tossing the ball and have students repeat names until every student has received the ball.
 - End with the first student who received the ball from the facilitator and have them repeat everyone's name.
- ★ Additional Option: Make it physical! As each person says their name, they do an action associated with their name. For example, a peace sign, a jumping-jack, or a "Rocket-style" kick. Encourage creativity!

Choice: 3-5-8

YFU uses 3-5-8: Choice to demonstrate that each participant can take responsibility for their exchange experience by being aware of how they feel and the importance of making good choices. In that context, 3-5-8: Choice serves as a measurement tool for a student's level of involvement and transition from visiting to belonging, with each choice hopefully improving the experience. Zero to three represents feeling a little low, or down; four-six represents feeling ok. This tool helps students think about what they can do to make good choices and feel good to great (7-8).

ACTIVITY: ICEBREAKERS CHOOSE OPTION 1 OR 2 (15 minutes)

OPTION 1 – Attitude Selfies

Facilitator Note: If desired, approach the situation as if you are asking students to turn off their cell phones but in actuality you are asking them to use their phones.

Instructions for students

1. Tell the students they will now demonstrate the 3-5-8 concept that they just reviewed. Ask the students to: "Take out your cell phone"
2. Ask students to make a face and take a 'selfie' of how they felt about coming to the orientation today. If students don't have a camera on their phone they can:
 - share cell phone cameras
 - draw on a 3x5 card, or
 - just make a face
3. Have students mentally assign a number (from 1-10) to their attitude about coming to the orientation today.
4. Then ask the students to line themselves up based on the selfie faces they just made in numerical order from lowest to highest number. **without words or talking**

YES/NO MUSICAL CHAIRS

On a handout at the end of this session is a list of 20 possible questions to use for this activity.

- Feel free to alter the questions or add your own. If you decide to add your own questions, try to create a mix of fun and more serious questions.
- Allow students to make up their own questions as well.
- Questions that will help you identify problem areas to cover later in the day might be especially helpful.

Have an orientation staff member or two observe how the students respond to each question and take notes about possible topics/questions to cover later in the day.

- If, for example, you see that no one thanked the person who drove them to the orientation, later on you may want to remind students about the importance of saying “thank you” to their host parents.
- Students will enjoy this activity without realizing that you are watching their responses in order to identify their problems and issues.

5. Continue to use this process of lining up silently using 3-5-8 for each question below. Make sure a second facilitator is noting some of the responses, especially any concerns that need to be addressed later during the orientation.

- How were the holidays?
- How do you feel about American food?
- How do you feel about school?
- How do you feel about making friends?
- How do you feel about your language ability?
- How did you feel when you arrived today?
- How do you feel now?

OPTION 2 – YES/No Musical Chairs

1. **Explain the rules:** The student standing in the middle of the circle of chairs will pull a question from the hat to ask the group.
2. Anyone who answers “yes” to this question must stand up and find a new seat.
3. The student who asked the question will also attempt to find a seat. The student who is left without a seat will draw the next question from the hat to ask of the group.
4. Ask students to form a circle with their chairs to begin the activity. *If you aren't able to put chairs in a circle, you can place a piece of paper on the floor to mark each participant's spot.*
5. Once all of the students are seated in a circle, ask one student to volunteer to stand in the center of the circle and read the first question.
6. Once this student is standing in the middle of the circle, remove the student's chair so that there is one fewer chair than there are students.

Debrief: Depending on the questions that are chosen, students may benefit from debriefing this activity.

- Ask students if they noticed anything or were surprised by anyone else's answers.
- Point out to students everyone goes through periods that are a lot of fun and enjoyable, and periods that are difficult and challenging.

WRAP-UP (10 minutes)

1. Thank the students for their input and validate their comments and concerns by telling them we will try to address these in our sessions but if not, we will address any remaining questions or concerns before the orientation is over. Read through the objectives below:

By the end of the orientation today, I will be able to:

- *Reflect on what's happened so far:* understand where I am in the adjustment process at this point in time and the role I have taken as a member of my host family and community.
- *Problem Solve:* Be aware of challenges I have faced and the tools needed to overcome current and future challenges. Be aware of how my behavior and actions affect my relationship with my host family and friends (both in a positive and negative way).
- *Have a Sense of Cultural Understanding:* Reflect on what I have learned and shared about my own culture and how it has affected my behavior and expectations. Reflect on what I have learned about American culture and how my individual cultural perceptions affect my relationships.
- *Use My Communication Skills:* Understand how to communicate and solve problems with my host family and friends in person and on social media.
- *Look forward:* Identify the goals I have achieved so far and my goals for the remaining time and how to overcome obstacles to achieve my goals.
- Be ready for a great remainder of the year and a fun Re-Entry in May!

2. Set the tone for the day by sharing all points below with the students:

- ✓ In order to get the most out of today's orientation we ask for your open and honest participation.
- ✓ Being an exchange student is not always easy.
- ✓ You are all exceptional and above average.
- ✓ Just the fact that you chose to do something different from your friends back home is a brave act.
- ✓ We want you to continue to personally challenge yourself to live up to your potential, set your goals high and strive to be the best you can be.

✓ Remember to approach difficult situations with a flexible and positive attitude.

3. Finish by reading this quote to the students:

“Attitude is a little thing that makes a big difference.” Winston Churchill

YES/NO MUSICAL CHAIRS

(Cut questions into individual strips and put in a hat or basket)

1. Do you speak English? (everyone should move to a different seat)
2. Did you make your bed this morning?
3. Did you thank the person who drove you here today?
4. Do you spend more than two hours on the computer a day?
5. Do you like root beer?
6. Have you have felt homesick since arriving?
7. Do you have an older host brother or sister?
8. Do you live in a city that is smaller than the one in which you grew up
9. Have you felt bored since you have arrived?
10. Have you joined a club or a sports team at school?
11. Do you watch movies in English?
12. Have you made an American friend?
13. Have you had a disagreement with your host family?
14. Do you speak with your other exchange students in English?
15. Have you had problems adjusting to your new school?
16. Have you ridden on a roller coaster in the United States?
17. Is your host family bigger than your family?
18. Is your host family smaller than your family?
19. Does your host family have a pet?
20. Create your own yes/no question...

Session 1 - Attitude quote

“Attitude is a little thing that makes a big difference.”

Winston Churchill



Orientation	Midyear
Session Overview	Take the students through a brief “time travel” journey to help them reflect, discuss and share where they are in their adjustment process in the exchange experience. Have students fill out their own adjustment curve from the start of their exchange until today.
Participants	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Students <input type="checkbox"/> Host Parents <input type="checkbox"/> Natural Parents <input type="checkbox"/> Host Siblings
Format	<input type="checkbox"/> Highly Active / Interactive <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Discussion <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Some Activity / Interactivity <input type="checkbox"/> Independent
Duration	35 minutes
Group Size	Any size
Minimum Staffing	All volunteers present
Materials Needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handouts: Adjustment curve for all students • Flipchart to record anonymous HIGHS & LOWS of students’ adjustment curves to share with parents • Flipchart with blank curve drawn and to plot several students curves to show how the curves can vary Visuals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Example of adjustment curve • Flipchart or slide of <i>Charles Swindoll attitude quote</i> written at end of session
Preparation	Make copies of adjustment curve handout for all students Prepare High & Lows flipcharts Create Example Adjustment curve on White board, flip chart or slide. Create flipchart or slide of quote.

INTRODUCTION (2 minutes)

Share objectives written below with students:

In this session, we will:

- Share how the experience has been so far,
- Realize that everyone’s year is unique with its’ own set of highs and lows,
- Discuss how everyone’s reaction to experiences is different and seen through their own cultural perspective.

ACTIVITY # 1- TIME TRAVEL (5 MINUTES)

This next activity is a visualization activity, created to help the students take time for self-reflection and hopefully become more in tune with their feelings and memories of their exchange experience so far. As the facilitator, you will set the tone and then read through the questions below and encourage students to re-experience some of the moments they have had in their exchange thus far.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Some students could become emotional or cry during this activity if they are having a difficult time.

Directions to tell the students (word for word)

6. Get comfortable in your seats.
7. Close your eyes and take a deep breath.
8. Listen to the questions I am reading without responding.
9. For the next few minutes, try and think about how you feel or connect to each question. Visualize this and try to put yourself back in time to the moment described.

Slowly, read the questions below to the students:

- *Think about when you first met your host family...*
What was it like to see your family for the first time?
Did they look like their pictures?
- *Think about your first day of school...*
Did somebody show you around the school?
Did you get lost a lot?
- *Think about your first weekend...*
How was it different from your home country?
Did you go out and experience some new things?
- *Think about your first time you felt sad...*
Do you still have a lot of contact with your home country?
- *And now let's think about all the holidays....Halloween, Thanksgiving, December holidays.....*

And now you are here at the Midyear Orientation. Come back to the present and open your eyes!

10. Explain to the students: We hope this activity has helped sharpen your memories about the first part of your exchange. We will do a bit more work thinking about the first part of our exchange and then we will talk about what has been particularly great or difficult.

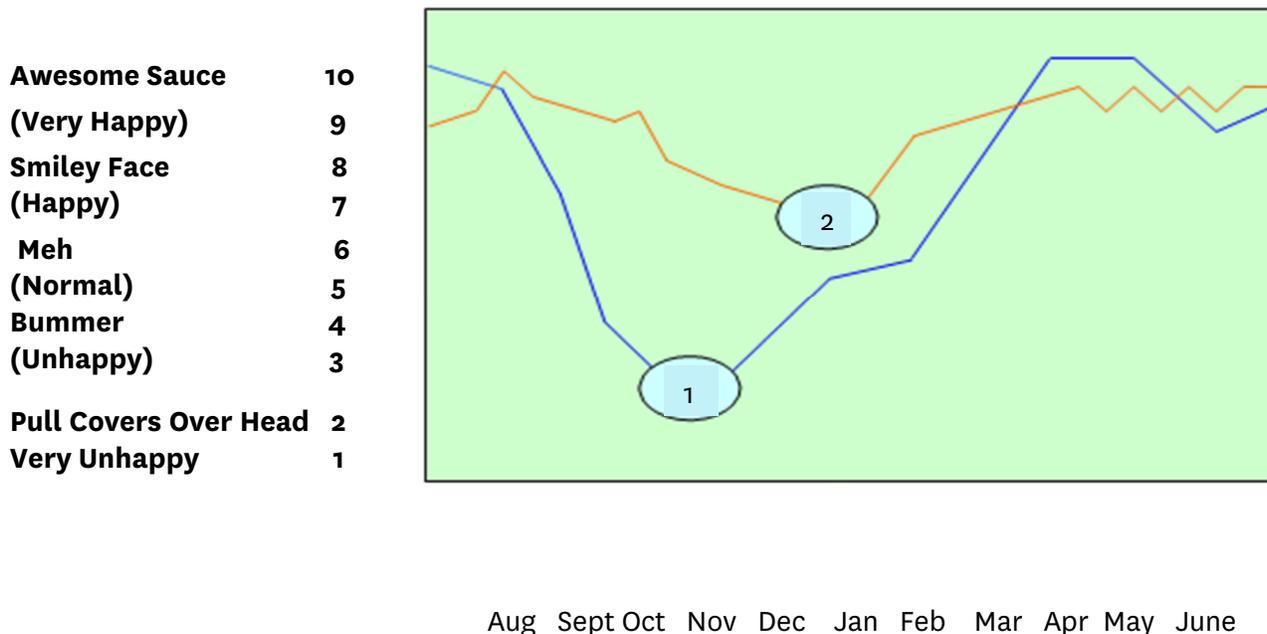
ACTIVITY # 2 - FROM VISITING TO BELONGING: ADJUSTMENT CURVE (20 minutes)

1. Review the [YFU: From Visiting to Belonging](#) tool with students by asking them about the visual and what it signifies.
 - “As you may remember from the Post Arrival orientation, we introduced a concept to you called “From Visiting to belonging”.
2. Ask the student “What do the letters Y – F – U mean to you? (they will probably say Youth For Understanding)
 - **Y** = YOU: The first level of understanding is You - Yourself. This whole experience started because YOU wanted to challenge yourself.
 - **F** = FAMILY: Within the larger journey encompassing from visiting to belonging, lies a smaller journey, from Y (you) to F (family), of immersing yourself into your host family and school.
 - **U** = UNDERSTANDING: By now, the midpoint of your exchange experience, you should be well on your way to being a full-fledged member of your host family, with all of the benefits and responsibilities. You are now ready to move toward U (understanding). This is a journey toward belonging not only in a new family, but in a global society. Your American experience will be shaped by your own willingness to understand and engage in new experiences.
3. Ask the students to remember the 3-5-8 chart from the Post-Arrival Orientation and from Session 1, (review if you did not use the session in Post-Arrival). Explain that this will help them with the next activity: creating their own adjustment curve.
4. Tell the students to think about the times they remembered as highs and lows during the time travel exercise.

Instructions for Adjustment Curve

1. Introduce the activity by explaining that they will use the tools discussed (From Visiting to Belonging and 3-5-8 Choice) to develop their own Adjustment Curve. Tell the students to think about their YFU journey thus far.
2. Distribute the adjustment curve handout and ask students to write their name on the handout. Then provide the following instructions:
 - We would like you to create your own adjustment curve now.
 - Describe your own experience, by plotting a line on the chart to display your own adjustment from the time of your arrival in the U.S. to today.
 - Plot 5-10 points in your curve and label them with how you were feeling at the time.
 - You will have 10 minutes to complete your curve.

3. Give the students an example by sharing the example on next page to illustrate typical highs and lows so far.



Example of an Adjustment Curve

- ✓ For line 1, the student arrives and is excited to be in the US. Everything is new and fun, but then the student begins to miss friends and family. Mastering English seems like an impossible task, school is harder than the student thought and making friends isn't easy. But then things begin to turn around as the student feels more comfortable with English and makes friends. The student is sad to leave and has a drop at the end.
- ✓ For line 2, the student has a similar experience but experiences a midwinter drop as it gets cold and the student can't go outside. Near the end of the exchange, the student is excited to return home, but sad to leave at the same time.

DISCUSSION (10 MINUTES)

1. After giving the students about 10 minutes to create their own adjustment curve, ask them to share their adjustment curves and a few of the high and low points. Encourage 3 or 4 students to volunteer to plot their curve on a common flip chart page to show how they can vary. Have a volunteer record examples of highs and lows on a flip chart (without names attached) to share with the parents.
2. Start up the discussion by saying:
 - Every exchange experience is unique and equally valuable.
 - “Highs and lows are a normal part of life and are experiences by everyone; this is especially true for exchange students who are living in a new place and experiencing so many new things—both good and bad.”

3. Ask a few students to give an example of highs and lows that they have experienced. Use these questions below to help spark the discussion:
 - Can someone tell me the most exciting thing that they have done so far?
 - What is the moment that you were the happiest?
 - How about a moment that was really low?
 - What about an experience that was especially difficult?
4. Finish the discussion up by asking the students: “What can you do to make your ‘3’ day a ‘5’ day and improve your experience?” (Best answer: Change your attitude!)

Facilitator Note: Collect adjustment curves and save them for Re-Entry orientation when they will be returned to students.

WRAP UP (5 minutes)

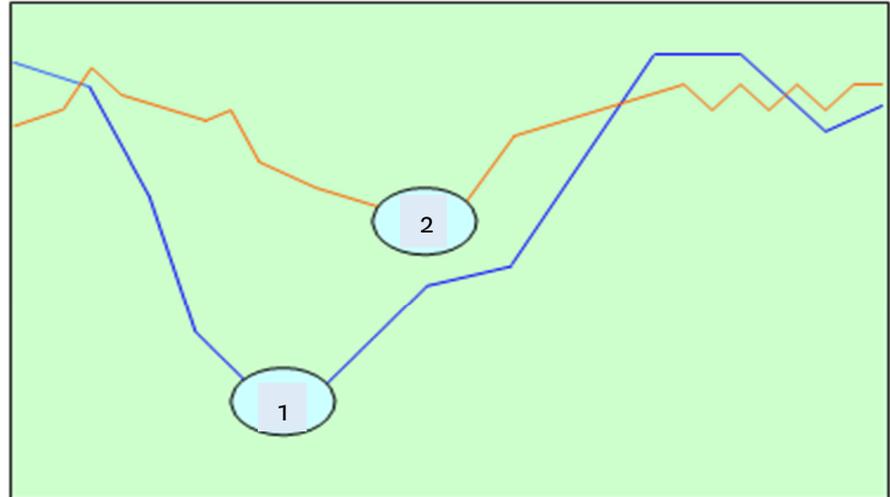
1. Wrap up the discussion by making sure to hit these three points:
 - ✓ Each exchange experience is unique and equally valuable.
 - ✓ Students need to understand where they fit emotionally in the adjustment process at this point.
 - ✓ Students should understand the importance of their own attitudes towards the exchange experience.
2. Finish the session by reading the quote below:

“The remarkable thing is we have a choice every day regarding the attitude we will embrace for that day (show 3-5-8 visual). We cannot change the past... we cannot change the fact that people act a certain way. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the one string we have, and that is our attitude...”

- Charles Swindoll

Adjustment Curve Visual

Awesome Sauce 10
(Very Happy) 9
Smiley Face 8
(Happy) 7
Meh 6
(Normal) 5
Bummer 4
(Unhappy) 3
Pull Covers Over Head 2
Very Unhappy



Aug Sept Oct Nov Dec Jan Feb Mar Apr May June

Example of an Adjustment Curve

- For line 1, the student arrives and is excited to be in the US. Everything is new and fun, but then the student begins to miss friends and family. Mastering English seems like an impossible task, school is harder than the student thought and making friends isn't easy. But then things begin to turn around as the student feels more comfortable with English and makes friends. The student is sad to leave and has a drop at the end.
- For line 2, the student has a similar experience but experiences a midwinter drop as it gets cold and the student can't go outside. Near the end of the exchange, the student is excited to return home, but sad to leave at the same time.

ADJUSTMENT CURVE

NAME: _____

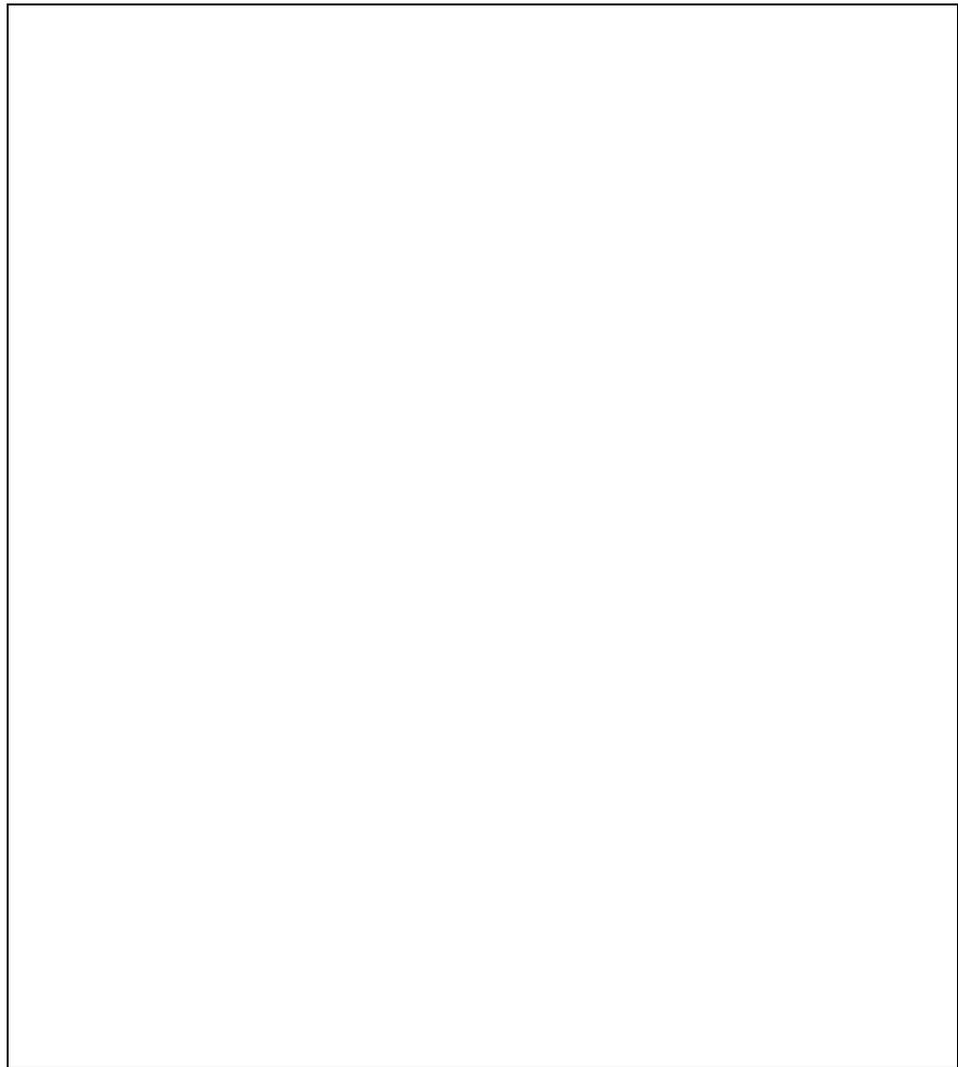
Awesome Sauce
(Very Happy)

Smiley Face
(Happy)

Meh
(Normal)

Bummer
(Unhappy)

**Pull Covers Over
Head**
Very Unhappy



Aug -
Sept.

Oct - Nov

Dec - Jan

Feb - Mar

April - May

2- Adjustment Process quote

“The remarkable thing is we have a choice every day regarding the attitude we will embrace for that day (show 3-5-8 visual). We cannot change the past... we cannot change the fact that people act a certain way. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the one string we have, and that is our attitude...”

-Charles Swindoll

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 allowed to have much contact with 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 homesick 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 want to do something with my friends, my host parents have to drive me around. Sometimes I feel very bad about that and I 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*

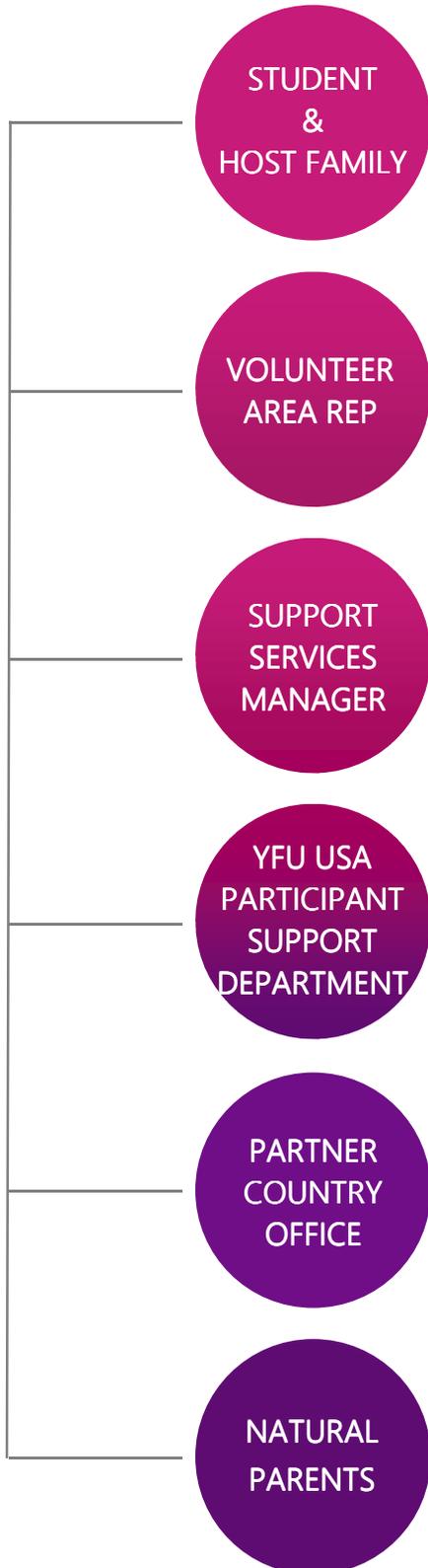
PROBLEM SOLVING QUESTIONS FOR DEAR AREA REP EMAIL ACTIVITY

- 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



Orientation	Mid-Year
Session Overview	This session looks at stereotypes, the dangers of stereotypes and how NOT to stereotype. Students will also think more about their home culture and will understand that their home culture impacts how they understand a new culture.
Participants	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Students <input type="checkbox"/> Host Parents <input type="checkbox"/> Natural Parents <input type="checkbox"/> Host Siblings
Format	<input type="checkbox"/> Highly Active / Interactive <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Discussion <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Some Activity / Interactivity <input type="checkbox"/> Independent
Duration	50 minutes, pending the number of cultural presentations.
Group Size	Any size
Minimum Staffing	1 leader
Materials Needed	Flip chart Poster supplies for cultural presentation activity
Preparation	Flip charts: 1- prepared T-chart to make comparisons: <u>My Home Culture</u> <u>American Culture</u> 2- During the session discussion on culture, note students' responses to share later with host parents.

The introduction activity needs to be well thought out and **debriefed with purpose**. The stereotypes below are offensive and the facilitator must make sure that students understand the dangers in making generalizations and using stereotypes. Stereotypes can lead to xenophobia, racism, sexism, and behavior that is disrespectful to others. It is important to include in the debrief WHY and HOW stereotypes and generalizations do **not** promote cultural understanding and peace building. Make connections to why students went on exchange and YFU's mission statement:

YFU ADVANCES INTERCULTURAL UNDERSTANDING, MUTUAL RESPECT AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY THROUGH EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGES FOR YOUTH, FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES.

INTRODUCTION: Stereotypes (10 MINUTES)

1. Shock the students by starting this session stating some common and possibly offensive stereotypes.
 - Germans are so rude.
 - Japanese people are so shy.
 - Mexicans are lazy and get into America illegally.
 - Arabs and Muslims are terrorists.
 - Italians and the French are the best lovers.
 - Asians are good at math, like to eat rice and drive badly.
 - Americans are fat, lazy, and stupid.
2. Discussion- Ask the students for their reaction to the statements that were just made (*possible answers are in parenthesis; do not read answers to students*). Please review the box above about the importance of this discussion.
 - What do you think of these statements? (shocking, offensive, untrue)
 - Are any of these statements correct? (No, these are stereotypes and generalizations and do not represent all people or a culture.)
 - Have you ever felt "stereotyped", tell us about that, what happened and how did you feel?
 - How could you react to statements like these? (Be reasonable, separate yourself personally, don't argue, ask clarifying questions.)
 - What do these statements tell us about culture? (It's easy to generalize, make incorrect assumptions.)
 - Have you ever felt "stereotyped", tell us about that, what happened and how did you feel? (answers will vary)
 - Why are stereotypes and generalizations dangerous? (They prevent one from really learning and understanding a person; stereotypes are not always true and they can lead to misconceptions about a group; etc.)
 - How do stereotypes prevent people from understanding different cultures? What are the bigger, global impacts of stereotyping? (Answers will vary)
 - What can you do to prevent stereotyping? (Answers will vary, but encourage students to "claim and individualize" their experiences in the US.
3. Close the discussion by highlighting the importance of individualizing their experiences when talking about their home country and when talking about the US. Remind the students that their experience is their own and it does not define the USA as a whole, or their home country as a whole. When talking about culture, always start with "in my experience". Provide key terms such as: In my experiences; In my school; In my community; etc.

ACTIVITY – Culture Presentations (20- 30 MINUTES depending on group size)

1. Tell the students that: “Now that we have talked about stereotypes, let’s look a little deeper into culture.” Instruct the students that they are going to have five minutes to create a short presentation (no more than 2 minutes) that represents the culture of **their home country** and educates everyone about their home culture.

Instructions

- Divide the students into country groups (ideally 2-3 students per country group), with no more than 4 students per group.*
- Tell the students they can create a poster, do a skit, write a song, do a mock news report, or use whatever method they want to prepare their presentation. Everyone in the group must contribute to the presentation. **The presentation should highlight important aspects of their home culture in addition to cultural observations about their home country that they have learned since they arrived in America.**

*For counties with more than four students, ask a second or third group to form. Ask these groups to create a skit or presentation that summarizes American culture. Tell them to be careful of stereotypes and to develop the presentation based on their unique experiences in their specific community in the US.

- Tell the students they have five minutes to create their presentation. Then say: “Go!” Make sure you have markers and poster board available if people want to be artistic.
2. After five minutes bring all the students back together and begin the short presentations. Keep a close eye on time and limit the presentations to 2-3 minutes per group.

DISCUSSION (10 MINUTES)

3. After all groups have presented, thank them for their presentations. Then, have a discussion using these questions. Write responses using the T-chart to compare American culture and other cultures to share with parents in the Wrap Up, for example-

<u>My Home Culture</u>	<u>American Culture</u>
<i>Ex. Warm meal is middle of the day Everyone uses public transportation</i>	<i>Warm meal is in the evening Most people get around by driving</i>

- What have you learned about your home culture that has surprised you?
- What is your favorite thing about your home culture?
- What are some characteristics of American culture that have surprised you?
 - Or is the US everything that you expected, how so?
- What part of American culture has challenged you since you arrived?
- What part of American culture have you enjoyed since you arrived?
- How does your culture affect how you see American culture?

WRAP UP (2-3 MINUTES)

Use the bullet points below to wrap up the session:

- When talking about American culture, always start with “in my experience”.
- Be careful of the image you present to family and friends here and also back home when sharing your culture and America’s culture.
- Remember that your cultural “lens” affects your exchange experience.
- If you haven’t yet shared your culture, hopefully you now have some ideas on how to do this.



SESSION # 5 BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

Orientation	Mid-Year
Session Overview	This session gets students to think about how their cultural background, communication style, and use of social media has affected their exchange experience. This session is also a good time to review how overuse of social media can prevent them from building relationships here in the US.
Participants	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Students <input type="checkbox"/> Host Parents <input type="checkbox"/> Natural Parents <input type="checkbox"/> Host Siblings
Format	<input type="checkbox"/> Highly Active / Interactive <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Discussion <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Some Activity / Interactivity <input type="checkbox"/> Independent
Duration	85 Minutes
Group Size	Any size
Minimum Staffing	1 leader plus 1 or 2 assistants for larger groups
Materials Needed	Flip chart or white board Pens or pencils for interview activity Interview questions printed – one copy for each student Communication Rules – one rule/strip per student
Preparation	Create flipchart (or prep whiteboard) of poll questions Print Communication Rules and cut into strips Handouts- Interview questions- one per student

Facilitator Background Info:

During an exchange experience, it is very likely that both students and host families have begun to change their communication style. Students have continuously or subconsciously been observing what is culturally acceptable and understood in American's style of communication. It is valuable for students and host families to understand how they are adapting and where there might still be misunderstandings based on cultural filters.

As a facilitator it is important for you to understand a bit of the complexity of cross cultural communication and the American communication style. "A person's culture influences how that person sends and receives messages. A cultural filter is how a message is sent and received between two parties. When a message leaves the sender's cultural filter, the meaning interpreted by the receiver's filter sometimes differs from the intended message. **Misinterpretations can happen to a small or large degree but are rarely deliberate.** [...] The characteristics of any culture's communication style are typically shaped by what that culture regards as the purpose of communication. These characteristics then define the cultural "norms" for communication." Quote cited from <http://www.directutor.com/content/american-communication-style> also listed below.

Check out information about American communication styles:

<http://www.directutor.com/content/american-communication-style>

<http://www.worldbusinessculture.com/American-Business-Communication-Style.html>

<http://southeast schnitzel.wordpress.com/2012/08/08/9-tips-on-how-to-better-communicate-with-us-americans/>

INTRODUCTION (2 MINUTES)

Introduce the session using the following bullet points as a guide.

- Learning to speak a language fluently involves more than just remembering words.
- How each culture uses their words, gestures and tone of voice conveys many different meanings.
- Certain words and sayings have historical and cultural meanings that a new speaker may not understand.
- Let's take a look at how our own cultural background and stereotypes affect our relationships.

ACTIVITY # 1 - COMMUNICATION SURVEY (15 MINUTES)

1. Tell students you are going to ask them some questions about how they communicate.
2. Ask them to close their eyes and listen to the questions. Have students raise their hands to answer either yes or no.
 - Do you always say please and thank you? Y/N
 - Do you always make eye contact when speaking with someone? Y/N
 - Do you talk loudly when discussing issues to make a point? Y/N
 - Do you avoid conversation with someone who is angry? Y/N
 - Can you think of a time that you had a disagreement caused by a miscommunication? Y/N

- Did your stereotypes about Americans affect how you talked to people in the beginning of your exchange? Y/N
- Are you careful with what you share on social media? Y/N
- Do you feel comfortable hanging out and talking with American teens? Y/N

DEBRIEF (10 MINUTES)

1. Ask the students to open their eyes so you can debrief the poll activity. Go through each question and this time, ask students to stand when their response is YES. From those students who stand ask a follow up question, such as:
 - tell us more about this;
 - how did this go for you;
 - what happened;
 - does this make you uncomfortable, why?
 - is this “communication rule” connected to culture, how so?
2. Emphasize that often times cultural norms, or cultural rules impact how we behave and this is also true for communication. Maybe some of the examples above are rooted in American culture.
3. Ask the students if there are other *American communication rules* that they have noticed?
4. Use the questions below to spark a discussion with the students to think about how their use of social media and cultural background are impacting their exchange experience.
 - Has the way you talk to people changed since you’ve arrived? If yes, in what way? If no, do you think it should?
 - How has social media affected your relationships? (Both the positive and the negative)
 - Give an example of how your stereotypes or culture affect the way you talk to people or understand a situation.
 - Have you experienced a funny cultural or communication misunderstanding you want to share with the group?

ACTIVITY # 2- COMMUNICATION CHALLENGE (35 MINUTES)

1. Set the tone by introducing the activity using the points below as a guide:

- We’ve been talking about how each of us has our own cultural background and way of communicating. We are now going to play a game to see how well you can pick up on different communication rules when having a conversation.
2. Give the instructions below to the students:
 - You will be given a list of interview questions to ask one another in order to have a short conversation about a topic.
 - You will also be given a *communication rule* that you each must follow when asking or answering questions. You cannot break your communication rule, you must follow it.
 - Do not share your communication rule with anyone. If you need help understanding your communication rule, please ask a volunteer for help.

- While having the conversation, you must follow the communication rule you've been given. The goal is that your conversation partner will pick up on your rule and also follow your rule. You then need to determine if the person understood the rule. To show them that they did understand your rule, you put a smiley face on their paper. If they did not understand your rule, put a sad face on their paper.

*An example of a communication rule is- Nodding one's head during a conversation indicates to you that the person is listening. When asking your question, nod your head to show that you are engaging in the conversation. If your conversation partner is **not** nodding their head while you are talking, give him or her a sad face.*

- You will have 1 minute to answer each other's questions and have a conversation about the topic.
 - When the minute is up, you will place a smiley face on the other person's paper if the other person followed your communication rule or a sad face if the other person broke your communication rule.
 - Have a conversation with a different person for each topic and set of questions.
 - See if you can figure out the other person's communication rule.
3. Hand out the conversation questions sheet and one communication rule to each student.
 4. Give students a moment to read their rule and topics.
 5. When they are ready to start – say “Go!”
 6. Time each minute, and ring a bell, clap your hands or say “Stop”. Then they need to give the other person either a smiley face or a sad face to determine if their partner followed the rule. Then they move onto the next person to have a conversation.

Hint- If necessary, ask the students to form two parallel lines facing one another (line A and line B). People in line A will be assigned a topic number will then talk to the person standing across from them. After one minute, the people in line A go to the next number on their list and people in line B shift down a person and have a conversation about the next topic with the next person. This structure will help the facilitator keep control of the activity and keep the students focused on the task at hand.

LINE A: _____ SUSIE (TOPIC 1) _____ JON (TOPIC 2) _____ SVEN (TOPIC 3) _____ GRETA (TOPIC 4) _____ OLGA (TOPIC 5)

LINE B: _____ KRISTIE  _____ BILL  _____ VICTOR  _____ JILLIAN  _____ ROBERT

DEBRIEF ACTIVITY (10 MINUTES)

Debrief the activity by discussing the following points:

- There are several different communication rules and as we share the rules, please raise your hand if this was your rule. Everyone should look around at this time and make note of who held which rules. This should help explain why you got a sad or happy face on your paper.

Facilitator: Start with Rule # 1, read the rule and ask those who were assigned Rule 1 to raise their hand.

Then, ask the students what they thought about the interview process (*interesting, boring, fun, learned something, lots of good ideas*).

Then have a conversation with the students about how it felt to do this activity (*frustrating, happy, challenged, comfortable, annoyed to try to figure out what the other person's rule was*).

- What did it feel like to give someone a sad face? What about when you received one?
- Was it easy or hard to discover what someone else's nonverbal rules were?

- How does this relate to your exchange experience and your ability to build relationships and make American friends?

WRAP UP (3 MINUTES)

Take a few minutes to wrap up the discussion using the following points as a guide:

- ✓ Each of us carries our cultural background and sunglasses with us into our relationships and communication styles.
- ✓ Since we can't take off our sunglasses, the best we can do is be aware of our and others cultural baggage.
- ✓ Be careful and be aware of the non-verbal messages you may be sending.
- ✓ Social media can be a very useful communication tool but make sure you are using it wisely and spending more time in the real world than the virtual world.
- ✓ Effective communication is a crucial part of building strong relationships while on exchange.

Nonverbal Rules for “Appropriate” Communication

(print and cut into strips)

1. When you speak, you always look people directly in the eyes. Direct eye contact means you are listening to someone. If someone you are talking to does not look into your eyes, give him or her a sad face.
2. You like to know that people are listening when you speak and you expect that people show they are listening by nodding their heads. You nod your head when others speak. When you are speaking, if listeners are not nodding their heads, give him or her a sad face.
3. Smiling during a conversation indicates to you that the person is listening. If your conversation partner is not smiling while you are talking, give him or her a sad face.
4. You find people standing closer than arm’s length to you as offensive. Stand at least an arm’s length away from the person you are interviewing and give him or her a sad face if they come too close to you.
5. You use your hands and body when you speak, even touching the other person on the arm to make your point. You indicate agreement to the conversation with thumbs up signals and other gestures, and feel everyone should do the same. If they stand too still and don’t use their hands to communicate with you, give him or her a sad face.
6. You like when people get their ideas out quickly in conversations and you are easily distracted by sounds such as “um,” “ah,” and “er.” If people do not speak quickly enough or if the person you are talking to uses sounds like “um,” “ah,” and “er”, give him or her a sad face.
7. You like to get to the point in communicating. It is okay to share a little information if it is helpful information and directly relates to the conversation. Direct communication is very important. If your conversation partner gets off topic, give him or her a sad face.
8. When speaking, you like to engage with the other person. You listen but sometimes add to the person’s story by interrupting them and sharing your experience. Conversation is meant to share information back and forth. If the person gets annoyed when you interrupt and share your story, give him or her a sad face.
9. Before starting a conversation with someone, you always greet them saying “Hi, How are you?” And you always answer this question by saying, “I am good” or “I am okay.” If someone does not say “Hi” or answers your question of “how they are doing”, give him or her a sad face.
10. When someone approaches you to begin a conversation, stare at your phone, begin texting and don’t look up.



Interview Questions



Directions: Talk with several people about the different topics below. Use the questions to have a conversation about the topic. Be sure to follow your rule and try to figure out and then follow the other person's rule. At the conclusion of the conversation time, ask your conversation partner if you did or did not follow their rule. They will communicate this by either drawing a smiley face to indicate yes, or a sad face to indicate no, you did not follow the rule.

1. **After school activities:** Are you in any after school activities? Did they help you make friends? Tell me about what you do after school

Did I follow your rule? : _____

2. **At school:** Do you feel like you fit in at school? Have you made friends at school? What do you like best at school?

Did I follow your rule? : _____

3. **American friends:** What have you done so far with American friends? What do you do with your friends on the weekends?

Did I follow your rule? : _____

4. **Transportation:** How do you get around your community? How do you get rides or get to activities? Do you like traveling this way, why or why not?

Did I follow your rule? : _____

5. **Life in the US:** What is something you tried in the US that you didn't expect to like? What is your favorite thing about the US? What is your least favorite thing about the US?

Did I follow your rule? : _____

6. **Social Media:** How do you use social media? How often are you on social media with friends or family back home? What are some of the negatives of using social media?

Did I follow your rule? : _____

7. **Host Family:** What nice things do you do for your host family? What are some nice things that your host family does for you? What is your favorite thing about your host family?

Did I follow your rule? : _____

8. **Thanking people:** How do you thank people (friends, teachers, Area Rep) who have helped you? What is the nicest thing that anyone in the US has done for you, how did you thank them?

Did I follow your rule? : _____



Orientation	Mid-year
Session Overview	The purpose of this session is to help students think forward and create some goals for what they would like to accomplish by the end of their exchange year.
Participants	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Students <input type="checkbox"/> Host Parents <input type="checkbox"/> Natural Parents <input type="checkbox"/> Host Siblings
Format	<input type="checkbox"/> Highly Active / Interactive <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Discussion <input type="checkbox"/> Some Activity / Interactivity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Independent
Duration	20 Minutes + 10-15 minutes more if optional activity is used
Group Size	Any size
Minimum Staffing	1 group leader, 1 assistant (depending on size of group)
Materials Needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goal envelopes - if completed at Post Arrival • 3x5 card or a piece of paper, and pens • <i>Optional:</i> A few copies of the Goal Setting Chart
Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make a plan for how to return student goal envelopes at the Re-Entry orientation.

Facilitator Background Info:

By this point during this orientation, students have already explored many ideas that will apply to the remainder of their exchange, including strategies for how to deal with a range of problems. This session will allow students the time to think about the upcoming months and imagine what they would like to accomplish by the end of their exchange year.

Try to get students to think beyond “fun” goals such as visiting New York City, or going skiing. Instead, they should consider the ways in which they can get the most long-term impact out of their experience; encourage them to consider how to take personal risks, challenge themselves, and learn new skills. As much as possible, try to get students to think of concrete steps they can take to promote continued personal and relationship growth, and sustained language improvement.

Students should leave this session feeling confident, positive and invigorated about the remaining months of exchange.

INTRODUCTION (0-3 MINUTES)

1. If you have goal cards that students filled out during the Post-Arrival wrap-up – please distribute these to students now.
2. Tell the students to read over what they wrote at the Post Arrival and think about whether they’ve accomplished their goals or if they still have the same concerns. Then share the points below:
 - We spent the morning looking back at the first part of your exchange experience.
 - First, we looked at how far you’ve come and how you have adapted.
 - Next, we talked about your struggles and did some problem solving.
 - Then, we took a deeper look at what you have learned about your home culture and American culture.
 - Next, we worked on communication and how it affects our relationships.
 - Now, it’s time to use the tools and strategies we learned today to look forward and plan the rest of your exchange experience.

ACTIVITY GOAL SETTING (10 MINUTES + 10 MORE IF OPTIONAL ACTIVITY IS USED)

1. Explain that now, they will do an activity to set their own personal goals for the remainder of their exchange. Emphasize that:
 - The exchange experience is already half over.
 - Students should try and experience as much as possible in the remaining months. Setting clear goals will help them do this.

OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TO PREPARE FOR MAIN ACTIVITY: *Share the Goal Setting Chart on a flipchart, slide or whiteboard, prior to handing out the notecards. Ask students to complete this to help them articulate their plan. We encourage students to work independently on this, however, if needed, they can partner up to talk about specific plans and complete this worksheet. Explain the chart is only a tool, students don’t have to have a goal in every category of the chart.*

GOAL SETTING ACTIVITY DIRECTIONS

1. Give each student a 3x5 card, a pen, and an envelope.
2. Encourage students to take time to think about what they personally want to accomplish during the remaining months of their exchange. Ask them to create three concrete goals.

Personal Goal	Step-by-Step Plan –How will I do this?	Obstacles- What will be difficult?	Support Needed- Who can help me?
School Goal:			
Language Goal:			
Friendship Goal:			
Host Family Goal:			
Personal Goal:			

3. Have students write a specific goal on one side of the 3x5 card and a concern they may have on the

other side of the card.

4. Let students know what they write is personal and won't be shared with anyone else – it is for their eyes only.
5. Give students 5-10 minutes to write their goals.
6. Ask students to insert goal card into envelope, seal it and write their name on the outside of the envelope. Hand envelope to facilitator. The envelope will be returned to student at the Re-Entry for review and reflection.
7. Ask if any of the students want to share one of their goals. Tell them that they do not have to but, if they would like to share, their peers may have some good advice on how to accomplish the goal.
8. Allow for a few minutes of sharing. If students are excited to share their goals, and you are out of time, encourage the students to share these during the next session.

WRAP UP (0-3MINUTES)

This is the last session before the students come together with host families. Therefore, try to make sure the feeling in the room is positive, uplifting, and students seem eager to finish their year strong.

- ✓ Everyone has made such giant strides since arriving today and will continue to do so in the coming months.
- ✓ Sometimes it is hard to see one's own progress – but you will eventually.
- ✓ By setting goals today, hopefully students are ready to return to their host family motivated to make their dreams come to life.
- ✓ See you in the spring for the Re-entry. We look forward to hearing about all the experiences you have said “YES” to!

Just before the group is dismissed, read the quote below:

“Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things you didn't do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the wind in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover.” ~Mark Twain

GOAL SETTING CHART

THIS IS A TOOL TO HELP YOU SET YOUR GOALS.

Personal Goal	Step by Step Plan - How will I do this?	Obstacles- What will make this difficult?	Support Needed- Who can help me?
<i>School Goal:</i>			
<i>Language Goal:</i>			
<i>Friendship Goal:</i>			
<i>Host Family Goal:</i>			
<i>Personal Goal:</i>			

**“Twenty years from now you will be more
disappointed by the things you didn't do
than by the ones you did do.
So throw off the bowlines.
Sail away from the safe harbor.
Catch the wind in your sails.
Explore. Dream. Discover.”**

~Mark Twain



Orientation	Midyear
Session Overview	This session may be facilitated jointly with the students and host parents, or may be done separately.
Participants	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Students <input type="checkbox"/> Natural Parents <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Host Parents <input type="checkbox"/> Host Siblings
Format	<input type="checkbox"/> Highly Active / Interactive <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Some Activity / Interactivity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Discussion <input type="checkbox"/> Independent
Duration	20 minutes
Group Size	All host parents and students
Minimum Staffing	All volunteers
Materials Needed	Flipcharts with highs and lows feedback from student and host parent sessions
Preparation	Select spokespeople from student and host parent groups to share.

Facilitator Note: The facilitator asks the spokesperson from the host family group to share the “high and lows” flipcharts that were created during the session. This is followed by the exchange students’ group report-out using the flipchart where they recorded their highs and lows in Session # 2 - Adjustment Process.

ACTIVITY: SHARING (10-15 MINUTES)

- Welcome everyone. Explain that during the different sessions we had the opportunity to discuss both our joys (highs) and some of the difficulties (lows) that we have encountered so far in our exchange experience.
- Tell the group that now, we will wrap up this orientation by hearing from both students and host parents so that we can all benefit from our discussions today.
- Ask representatives from each group (host families, and then students) to share the flip charts they created during this orientation that looked at their “highs” and “lows.”
- After reviewing these, ask the participants all together if they see any similarities. Ask addition follow up questions to have a meaningful discussion about the highs and lows:
 - What were some of the best “highs?” Why were these so meaningful?
 - Are there any similarities with the lows? Any thoughts on why we felt low at certain times?
 - How did we grow from the “lows”, did anyone learn anything from their challenges?
- Close the discussion by thanking everyone and reviewing some of the “highs” of the orientation. Ask the participants, what were some of their “highs” that occurred during the orientation.

WRAP UP (0-3 minutes)

Wrap up the orientation using the bullet points below:

- ✓ Thank you so much for giving us some of your time today.
- ✓ The initial glamour of the experience has worn off. As life together has become more routine, many families are pleased that they have reached a level of familiarity they hoped for.
- ✓ Within other families, however, feelings of impatience, boredom or dissatisfaction may be brewing.

In conclusion—read the following poem to the entire group.

THE COOKIES

**At an airport one night
With several long hours
Before her flight
She hunted for a book
In an airport shop,
Bought a bag of cookies
And found a place to drop.**

**She was engrossed in her book
But happened to see,
That the man sitting beside her
As bold as could be,
Grabbed a cookie or two
From the bag in between,
Which she tried to ignore
To avoid a scene.**

**So she munched the cookies
And watched the clock,
As the gutsy cookie thief
Diminished her stock.
She was getting more irritated
As the minutes ticked by,
Thinking, "If I wasn't so nice,
I would blacken his eye."**

**With each cookie she took,
He took one too,
And when only one was left,**

**She wondered what he would do.
With a smile on his face,
And a nervous laugh,
He took the last cookie
And broke it in half.**

**He offered her half,
As he ate the other,
She snatched it from him
And thought....ooh, brother!
This guy had some nerve
And he's also rude,
Why he didn't even show
Any gratitude!**

**She had never known
When she been so galled,
And sighed with relief
When her flight was called.**

**She gathered her belongings
And headed to the gate,
Refusing to look back
At the thieving ingrate.**

**She boarded the plane,
And sank in her seat,
Then she sought her book,
Which was almost complete.**

**As she reached in her baggage,
She gasped with surprise,
There was her bag of cookies,
In front of her eyes**

If mine are here,

**She moaned in despair,
The others were his,
And he tried to share.**

**Too late to apologize,
She realized with grief,
That she was the rude one,
The ingrate, the thief!**

Then conclude the orientation by asking the question below:

Conclude by saying: How many times have we absolutely known that something was a certain way, only to discover later that what we believed to be true...was not?

Always keep an open mind and an open heart, because.....
you just never know... You might be eating someone else's cookies