



- Welcome all participants
- Thank them for joining YFU
- Introduce yourself
- Let them know the length of your training

## TRAINING ASSUMPTIONS

- This training follows Support Skill A and B
- Area Reps will continue with advanced trainings
- Area Reps will join monthly support calls
- Participants should attend in person trainings when possible

## REVIEW

- ✓ Support Skills A
  - the Area Rep role
  - lines of communication
  - student / host family support requirements
  - documentation and reporting requirements
  - basic problem solving
  - YFU Policies and Procedures

## REVIEW

- ✓ Support Skills B
  - build relationships with student and host family
  - use active listening skills
  - implement problem solving skills
  - provide effective reporting
  - Identify potential risks of poor support

## GOALS

This training will assist Area Reps in:

- Understanding the support process
- Seeing problems as opportunities for student growth and for learning from experience
- Understanding the critical role of the Area Rep in student support
- Discerning the importance of following established procedures
- Grasping the significance of documentation and reports to the Support Services Manager (SSM)

YFU

Intercultural Exchange Program

YFU SUPPORT

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✓ Things to note

- Familiarity with the Volunteer Code of Conduct
- Focus on Relationship Building



Volunteer Code of Conduct

- Found on page 4 of the Area Rep Training Manual
- Created to protect volunteers, students, host families, and staff
- ARs should be aware of the contents of the Code of Conduct and act accordingly at all times.

Developing Relationships

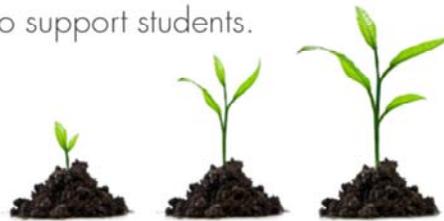
- Developing relationships with students and host families is integral to supporting students and host families

Growth through positive AND negative experiences.

- Our program participants are *adolescents*, young human beings in a phase of life that is most confusing and exhausting, both for themselves and for others in their environment. Considering the additional confusion and exhaustion of an exchange year, we work to create an environment for students that allows them to **learn from their mistakes and to grow through positive AND negative experience.**

✓ Support Philosophy

- Students grow through positive AND negative experiences.
- YFU support is a complex process.
- We must always consider circumstances.
- Each student should be able to remain on program.
- The goal of YFU is to support students.



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YFU support is a complex process

•It includes the student, the host family, host community, the YFU organization, and the natural family in the sending country.

Consider circumstances of the individual case.

•Student-related procedures must be approached with some flexibility, and with mature and reasoned judgment.

Each student should be able to remain on program.

•It is the intent of YFU USA, that each student who is selected, orientated and has arrived in the host country should be able to remain on program for the duration of his/her scheduled program.

The goal of YFU USA is to support students.

•The goal of YFU USA is to support students, in a timely manner, to overcome the inevitable obstacles of cross-cultural adjustment; despite all efforts, however, experience has shown that a percentage of students will return early.

- ✓ Problem Solving Strategies
  - Report to the SSM
  - Consult with the SSM
  - Reporting to the Partner Country

#### Report to the SSM

- Emerging problems **must** be reported to the SSM as soon as the AR becomes aware.

#### Reporting to the Partner Country

- Area Reps should consult with the SSM to develop strategies for working through an issue.
- The SSM reports the issues to the national office (NO) of the student's country, providing documentation.

#### Consultation with the SSM

- ✓ Establishing Relationships
  - Monthly contact is a minimum requirement.
  - Establish real relationships early
  - Plan an in-person meeting
  - The Area Rep should be an objective, informed observer.
  - Students and host families are the “fun part” of rep-ing.

Monthly contact is a minimum requirement.

Establish real relationships early

•To better support student and HF, establish a real relationship early in the exchange year; this helps with anticipation and problem-solving.

Plan an in-person meeting

•Plan an in-person meeting soon after arrival.

The AR should be an objective, informed observer

•The AR should be an objective, informed observer who can provide essential input to ensure the best support to both student and HF.

Students and host families are the “fun part” of rep-ing.

•As an added bonus, getting to know students and HFs is really the “fun part” of repping.

YFU  
Intercultural Exchange Program

STAGES OF SUPPORT

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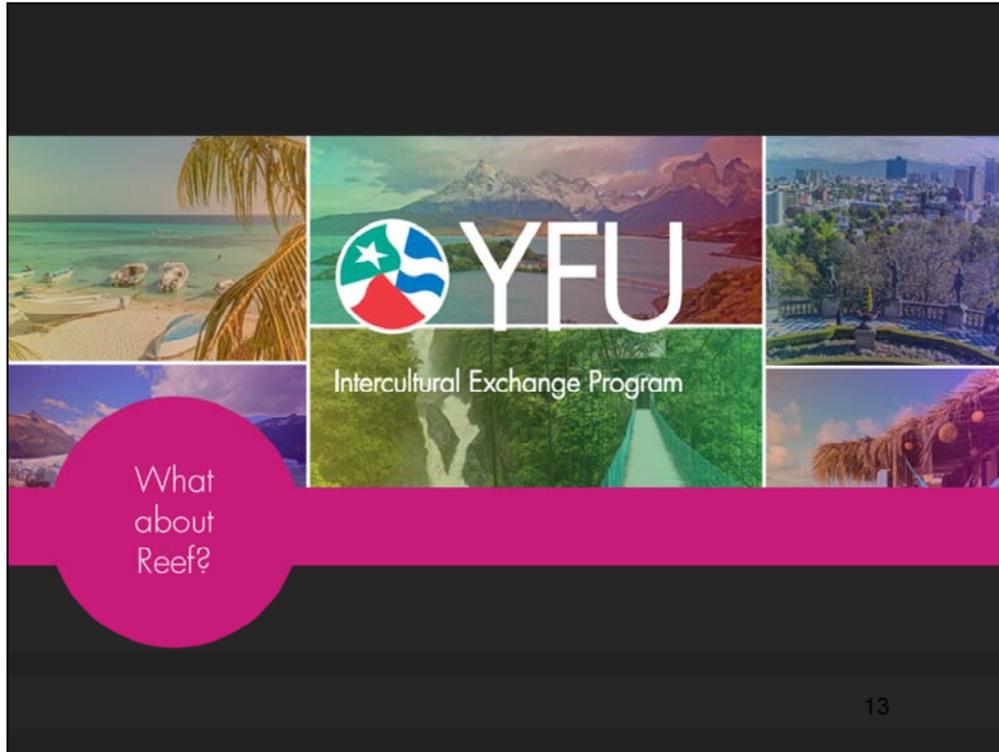
## STAGES OF SUPPORT

- ✓ There are 6 stages of support
  1. Host Family and Student Talk
  2. Host Family, Student and Area Rep Talk
  3. Replacement Decision
  4. Warning Letter
  5. Probation
  6. Early return



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Student and host family issues are dealt with in stages:



We will use this scenario to illustrate points and for discussion during this training

#### READ THE SCENARIO

Reef is a 17-year-old, male student from Atlantis. He is permanently placed with the Joneses who live on the West Coast. The host father is a salesman and the host mother is a teacher. They have a son who is 17 and a daughter who is 14. They are a conservative family with well-mannered, compliant children who excel in school. Reef's English is excellent, and he is carrying a full course load at West Coast High School.

**Emerging Problem:** Reef frequently wants to go out late to have fun, but the host family has curfews that Reef neither understands nor accepts; he does not have curfews at home where he is free to come and go as he likes, because his natural parents trust him. This was not apparent in his application documents.

STAGES OF SUPPORT

Stage 1

HOST FAMILY & STUDENT TALK

- Most desirable resolution.
- Empowers participants
- Report to the SSM
- Support behind the scenes
- Be ready to participate

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Most desirable

- This is the first, and most desirable, way to resolve issues.

Empowers participants

- Resolving issues on their own gives both host family and student a sense of empowerment.

Report to the SSM

- Area Rep should be aware from contacts that there are issues, and should report them to the SSM.

Support behind the scenes

- Sometimes students are not comfortable raising issues with their host families on their own.

Be ready to participate

- Sometimes, discussion between student and host family are insufficient to resolve the situations and HF and student will need the help of an objective third party.

**Continuing the scenario - The situation escalates: Reef has missed curfew on several occasions and has left the house without asking his host family's permission. The host family has talked with him about this, but the behaviors continue. Further, Reef is not completing homework, and believes that school is unimportant during this exchange year. The host family has asked for the Area Rep's help.**

STAGES OF SUPPORT

Stage 2  
HOST FAMILY,  
STUDENT &  
REP TALK

- Host family and/or student request your participation
- SSM should be informed.
- Participants should resolve the issues.
- Follow the 4 steps of problem-solving:

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This can occur when the HF and student have not been able to work things out by themselves, or when a family member feels the family cannot work this out on their own.

SSM should be informed in writing of an impending meeting with AR, HF, and student

SSM ***must*** be informed in writing of what transpired, the plan of action, and the timeline. SSM may contact AR by phone to gather additional information before reporting to the sending country.

AR's strategy should be focused on assisting the participants to resolve issues themselves.

The AR should follow these steps during a problem-solving meeting:

## STAGES OF SUPPORT

### ✓ Stage 2

- Step 1: Information gathering
- Step 2: Clarification of the issues
- Step 3: Development of solutions
- Step 4: Resolution

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Step 1: Information gathering - Meet privately with HF and student to allow each to give their perspective on the issue(s).

Step 2: Clarification of the issues - Bring HF and student together to give their perspectives aloud to the others.

Step 3: Development of alternatives - Summarize and clearly describe each area of difficulty so that all parties agree that the problem is correctly identified. Ask participants to suggest solutions/alternatives.

Step 4: Resolution - HF and student decide on a plan of action to which everyone agrees.

Always try for consensus, win/win rather than win/loss.

Agree on a time to contact all parties for a progress report.

It is quite possible that this kind of simple intervention may be insufficient. AR may need additional advice from SSM, or mediation may be recommended. (Separate training for mediation.)

STAGES OF SUPPORT

Stage 3  
REPLACEMENT  
DECISION

- Not the first solution
- Possible acceptable reasons for replacement:
  - “No fault” move
  - Change in host family situation
  - Host family dynamics
  - Poor behavior on part of student
  - NB

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Replacement is not the first solution to a problem unless student safety is an issue. **For example, if Reef simply decides he wants a new HF where there are no rules, that is not a reason to move him.**

Possible acceptable reasons for replacement:

“No fault” move: no bonding; not a good match

Change in HF situation: money; job; change in residence; change in marital status

HF dynamics: siblings cannot get along; dysfunctional HF

Poor behavior on part of student

NB: Often poor behavior disappears when a student is moved to a new HF.

STAGES OF SUPPORT

✓ Stage 4

- Selecting a replacement strategy
- Immediate move
- Getting to the heart of the problem
- Perfect timing?
- Moving a student

What about Reef?

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Most often the SSM will assist the AR with strategy selection and implementation.

Immediate move: student safety; allegations of abuse; HF demands removal of student.

Looking further into the issues to get to the heart of the problem may be helpful.

There is no set time to wait; each case is different; we try neither to wait too long (causing an eruption) nor to move too quickly (not giving everyone a chance.)

Actual moves have a whole host of requirements. Watch for a monthly support forum that addresses this.

The Area Rep Training Manual is helpful.

Be sure to follow the Replacement Checklist. (See handout.)

Always keep the SSM informed in writing.

**Although Reef and his HF have been butting heads, the Joneses really do like him – and he really likes them. The problem is that Reef doesn't like their rules, studying, or school. Neither party wishes for a move, so we will not seek a replacement host family.**

**We do not replace students simply because a student does not like the rules. If the Joneses were to say, "We have had enough," we would have to find Reef a new host family.**

STAGES OF SUPPORT

Stage 4  
WARNING LETTER

BEFORE a warning letter is written:

- Host family, student and Area Rep have met
- The student has not made changes
- No extenuating circumstances
- Behaviors are not trivial

What about Reef?

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The Area Rep should have met with student and host family.

The Student has been told clearly what YFU's expectations are but has made no change.

In consultation with SSM, AR has ruled out extenuating circumstances, i.e., unrealistic expectations, pre-existing problems, etc.

AR determines that behaviors are serious enough to lead to further consequences if not contained.

**Reef has apparently not benefited from either the discussion with the HF or the meeting with the AR. His behavior is causing tension and stress in the HF, negatively affecting the host siblings who are upset. Reef is not doing any homework and his grades are dropping quickly.**

## STAGES OF SUPPORT

### ✓ Stage 4

- Sent by the SSM
- Explains issues
- States expectations
- Provides documentation

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Is written and sent by the SSM to the student, HF, AR, and sending country

Offers a way in which issues can be explained and expectations clearly stated

Provides necessary documentation should the case become more serious with an early return recommendation

See sample warning letter in handouts.

STAGES OF SUPPORT

Stage 5  
PROBATION

Students may be placed on probation when:

- A warning letter has been issued
- At risk of involuntarily early return
- SSM is recommending a second chance
- Violation of a major YFU policy

What about Reef?

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Probationary status is given to students who are at risk of being involuntarily early returned.

Students may be placed on probation when:

A warning letter has been issued, but, even with reasonable time for change, progress is unsatisfactory.

There are serious problems but the FD/SSM is recommending a “second chance.”

Student has violated a major YFU policy but DO is not recommending early return, or the President of YFU is not accepting an early return request.

**In addition to his disregard of his HF curfews, Reef is now failing two of his classes and seems not to have learned from the advice of his AR and HF. No “growth” on Reef’s part is apparent. Reef will be put on probationary status and will receive a letter of probation. See sample probation letter.**

**family.**

STAGES OF SUPPORT

Stage 6  
EARLY RETURN

- Voluntary Early Return (VER) - occurs when the student makes the decision to return home before the scheduled end of program.
- Involuntary Early Return (IER) - occurs when YFU makes the decision to end a student's program.

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#### Reflection on YFU Support Philosophy

- It is the intent of YFU USA that each student who is selected, orientated, and has arrived in the US should be able to remain on program for the duration of his/her scheduled program.
- The goal is to support students in a timely manner to overcome the inevitable obstacles of cross-cultural adjustment.

Despite all efforts, however, experience has shown that a percentage of students will return early.

An IER requires extensive corroboration, explanations, and approvals not needed for a VER.

## STAGES OF SUPPORT

- ✓ Involuntary Early Returns may occur due to:
  - YFU policy violations
  - Serious, unresolved emotional issues
  - Serious and chronic behavior problems
  - Lack of motivation

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Involuntary Early Returns may occur due to:

YFU policy violations

Serious, unresolved emotional issues

Serious and chronic behavior problems that make the student unsuited for the family-living and/or school-based program

Lack of motivation

STAGES OF SUPPORT

- ✓ Involuntary Early Returns:
  - Last resort
  - Documentation must exist
  - Procedures must have been followed
  - Sending country must be aware
  - Final decision is made by President of YFU USA

What about Reef?

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IERs are a last resort

•YFU must demonstrate that everything possible has been done to help the student learn, grow, and change behavior.

Documentation must show that the student has had appropriate support and an appropriate HF.

All procedures must have been followed.

Sending country must have been informed all along and be aware that an IER may be requested.

Final approval for an IER is given (or denied) by the president of YFU USA.

**Reef has been placed on probation, but nothing about his behavior has improved; neither, however, does he wish to return home early. The AR and SSM have implemented all possible strategies to assist him to be successful. All AR contacts have been made and all efforts have been documented. Atlantis has been informed of each step of the support process.**

**The SSM has prepared a lengthy and comprehensive document, thoroughly explaining everything that has been done. Because Reef's parents have not agreed to a VER, and because Reef himself does not wish to go off program, the SSM has requested an IER from the president of YFU USA. Now the SSM and all parties involved await the decision from YFU USA.**

**Had Reef and his parents agreed to the return, this would have been a VER, and no permission from the president of YFU would have been required.**

## SUMMARY

- ✓ Happily the Vast Majority of Students:
  - Complete a successful exchange year with YFU.
  - Learn and grow as they mature on program, and most problems can be resolved.
  - Successfully complete their scheduled programs, with the support of their host family and Area Rep.
  - The Area Rep is the critical link for student success.

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Only a very small percentage of students (Reef being an example) are given an Involuntary Early Return.

## SUMMARY

### ✓ Take-Away Points

- The Area Rep is the critical link between the student, Host Family and YFU
- The Area Rep must follow all protocols
- Developing a relationship with the student and host family is paramount
- YFU depends upon the AR to provide guidance
- The Area Rep does not operate in a vacuum
- The Area Rep can not issue warnings letters, probationary status, or threats of early return
- The AR's objective input is, however, invaluable to the decision-making process.

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The Area Rep is the critical link between the student, Host Family and YFU

The Area Rep must follow all protocols

•including information gathering, informing the SSM in writing, timely contacts, and follow-ups

•If procedures are not followed, the SSM and YFU USA may be limited as to how they can respond.

Developing a relationship with the student and HF is paramount

•in order to ensure best support.

YFU depends upon the AR to provide guidance

•Because it is YFU's intent that all IS complete their programs, YFU depends upon the AR to provide guidance as students negotiate through cross-cultural adjustment and personal growth.

The AR does not operate in a vacuum

•but rather should depend upon the YFU support staff for guidance and direction

•The role of the SSM, as paid staff, is to assist the volunteer AR as necessary to develop strategies and to provide guidance during their implementation.

The AR does not have the authority to issue warnings or probations, nor to threaten a student with an early return; all these fall under the purview of the SSM and other paid staff.

The AR's objective input is, however, invaluable to the decision-making process.

## SUMMARY

- ✓ Take-Aways, con'd
  - The role of the SSM, as paid staff, is to assist the volunteer AR as necessary to develop strategies and to provide guidance during their implementation.
  - The AR does not have the authority to issue warnings or probations, nor to threaten a student with an early return; all these fall under the purview of the SSM and other paid staff.
  - The AR's objective input is, however, invaluable to the decision-making process.

## ADDITIONAL TRAINING

### Mandatory for all volunteers

- ✓ Introduction to YFU
- ✓ New Volunteer Training
- ✓ Department of State Certification



### Mandatory for Area Representatives

- ✓ Support Skills A
- ✓ Support Skills B
- ✓ Support Skills C

### Sample of Other Training Topics

- Mediation
- Problem Solving
- Developing a Dual Perspective
- Keeping Your Students Safe

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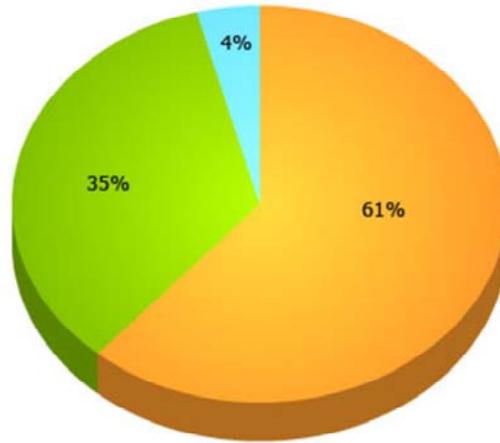
You probably are starting to recognize this logo. Please take a moment to click on it from the front of [my.yfu.org](http://my.yfu.org) in order to stay current with YFU volunteer training materials.

QUESTIONS



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## EVALUATION



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- Once I end this training, an evaluation will appear on your screen.
- Please let us know what you thought of this Skill Building A volunteer training!