# Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Section</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Introducing the New AFS Host Family Intercultural Learning Journey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Contributors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>The AFS Methodology Statement for the Host Families Learning Journey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>AFS Learning Objectives for Host Families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>AFS Host Family Intercultural Learning Journey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Distribution of Learning Objectives Across the Host Family Learning Journey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>How to Use the Host Family Intercultural Learning Journey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>The Benefits of the AFS Hosting Experience on Families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>BEFORE the AFS Intercultural Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Promotion, Marketing &amp; Recruitment Messaging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Application &amp; Selection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Host Family Handbook &amp; Culture-Specific Materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Pre-Arrival Orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>DURING the AFS Intercultural Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Arrival Orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Post-Arrival Orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>Mid-Stay Orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>End-of-Stay Orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>Monthly Contacts &amp; Learning Reflections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69</td>
<td>Newsletters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77</td>
<td>AFTER the AFS Intercultural Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79</td>
<td>Post-Program Appreciation &amp; Debriefing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81</td>
<td>Volunteer Recruitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83</td>
<td>Appendix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84</td>
<td>What to Do When There is a Crisis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85</td>
<td>When is it Time to Involve the AFS Support Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86</td>
<td>D.I.V.E. - Describe, Interpret, Verify, Evaluate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87</td>
<td>HANDOUT 1: Starting Life As a Family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95</td>
<td>HANDOUT 2: Cultural and Family Heritage Discussion Guide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>96</td>
<td>HANDOUT 3: Values and Behavior Exercise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>99</td>
<td>HANDOUT 4: Nonverbal Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>HANDOUT 5: Communication Styles and The Concept of Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>103</td>
<td>References</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dear colleagues,

We are happy to launch the AFS Host Family Intercultural Learning Journey to support you in delivering high quality learning experiences to host families around the world. Through guidelines, recommended activities and materials, this program demonstrates AFS’s commitment to our hosting program as a unique, rewarding and life-changing intercultural experience for families. Supporting the intercultural learning journey of our host families with an educationally sound approach enables us to demonstrate that hosting with AFS:

- Provides an enjoyable, rewarding and transformative experience for the whole family,
- Helps host families share their culture and learn about new cultures,
- Allows host families to help young people achieve their global and personal ambitions,
- Helps family members and host students to experience personal growth—and growth as a family,
- Helps families join an organization and a community dedicated to creating a more just and peaceful and inclusive world.

The AFS Host Family Intercultural Learning Journey is a companion learning program to the AFS Student Learning Journey Curriculum published in February 2016 to support the learning journey of AFS students before, during and after their AFS exchange/study abroad experience. Both these learning programs...
are a result of the AFS Educational Methodology Review Project, which provided recommendations for transforming our existing practices to maximize our educational impact, calling for a change in the way we communicate and implement our programs at all levels of involvement.

Specifically, AFS rethought how families fit in the learning process and created a learning journey to engage families before, during and after their hosting experience. Using the AFS Host Family Learning Objectives as a foundation, this Intercultural Learning Journey helps families:

- **Explore and build their intercultural awareness and understanding** as individual global citizens and as a family and

- **Better support their hosted student’s integration into a new culture**, as well as her or his intercultural educational experience outlined in the AFS Student Learning Journey Curriculum mentioned above.

This Intercultural Learning Journey outlines that host families and their hosting experiences need to be supported and facilitated by trained AFS volunteers and staff members. Also, the program provides a framework, tools and strategies for focused and engaging orientation sessions, Monthly Contacts & Learning Reflections, activities with the host student and a newsletter written specifically to enhance the hosting experience.

We invite you to implement the new AFS Host Family Intercultural Learning Journey and help families experience their very own AFS program without leaving home. By using this framework to support host families during their intercultural discovery, we are also strengthening and expanding AFS’s educational expertise.

Respectfully submitted,

Melissa Liles
Chief Education Officer, AFS Intercultural Programs
August 2016
Contributors

Our special thanks and acknowledgment for contributing the *AFS Host Family Intercultural Learning Journey* go to the following members of the Project Group for Recommendation #5, “Rethink how families fit in the learning process” and the involved AFS International staff:

- Anais Moyson (BFL)
- Carolyn Rehn (USA)
- Diana Maratea (ITA)
- Domingo Barriga Mendez (CHI)
- Eva Maria Jonas (GER)
- Jane Neugebauer (GER)
- Kathleen Broad (CAN)
- Lucas Welter (INT)
- Marcela Lapertosa (INT)
- Mariam Faye (EGY)
- Melissa Liles (INT)
- Milena Miladinovic (INT)
- Mirella Simeonova (GER)
- Miriam Bammer (AUT)
- Philipp Wagner (INT)
- Roberto Ruffino (ITA)
- Sheryl Tucker (INT)
- Thomas Wong (HKG)

Additional thanks go to the members of the AFS International Education & Intercultural Learning Team, the AFS Marketing & Communications Team and to our colleagues from around the AFS world who contributed to the AFS Educational Methodology Review Project.
The AFS Methodology Statement for the Host Families Learning Journey

*Real life experiential learning, supported by structured reflection, is the core of our programs.*
—AFS Vision 2020

AFS helps students, families, volunteers, staff and all people it touches develop the 21st century intercultural skills, knowledge and understanding needed to become active global citizens and create positive change for a more just and peaceful world.

THE AFS LEARNING APPROACH FOR HOST FAMILIES

LEARNING AS A JOURNEY OF CHANGE

AFS believes that intercultural challenges and learning moments are inevitable parts of our everyday lives. Our Host Family Intercultural Learning Journey prepares family members to engage effectively across cultural and other differences, both at home with the host student and in the world at large. Through our programs and other offerings, we help family members:

- Learn firsthand about the impact of culture on values and the decisions they make
- Gain the ability to better see themselves through the eyes of others
- Challenge assumptions
- Broaden their views on cultural stereotypes and global issues
- Begin to understand how to shift perspectives effectively, appropriately and authentically

OUR APPROACH: A GOALS-BASED CURRICULUM AND METHODS

The AFS Methodology team considered the practical application of the AFS Educational Goals and used this insight to develop the *AFS Host Family Learning Objectives*. These *Learning Objectives* are designed to help host family members become more interculturally competent, responsible global citizens and agents of positive social change. Developing these new skills and understanding prepares families to live, work, volunteer and collaborate in culturally diverse and different environments.
AFS Host Family Learning Objectives serve as the backbone of the AFS Host Family Intercultural Learning Journey that shapes the families’ AFS experience. The Journey focuses on different aspects of:

- Self-awareness
- Communication Skills and Empathy
- Intercultural Competence
- Global Concern

The Journey includes carefully chosen activities, facilitated conversations and other exercises that are directly tied to the Learning Objectives. This Learning Journey has evolved out of AFS’s commitment to leverage experience, research and best practices in the area of intercultural development since the AFS Exchange Program was launched in 1946.

OUR APPROACH: COMBINING IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCES WITH STRUCTURED LEARNING

Host families play a double role in AFS programs—they are both learners and co-facilitators of intercultural learning for hosted AFS students. However, no matter how important the immersion experience is, simply hosting a student is not enough to develop the practical and highly coveted intercultural skills and understanding needed to become active global citizens and support their hosted student’s integration and learning experience.

That’s why AFS host families receive the necessary support, encouragement and skills training to make their experiences meaningful intercultural learning opportunities—for themselves and the students.

Research demonstrates that the Learning Objectives are much more likely to be achieved when host families receive state-of-the-art pedagogically designed guidance before, during and after the program from specially trained AFS support volunteers and staff. As a result, the Host Family Learning Journey includes engaging (but much shorter) orientation sessions with other host families, monthly contacts and discussions, activities with the host student, and newsletters written specifically to enhance the hosting experience.
OUR APPROACH: A NON-FORMAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

The AFS Host Family Intercultural Learning Journey enhances the exchange experience through a rigorous non-formal education program that is goal-based, developmentally designed and uses specially trained AFS volunteers and staff members to facilitate.

These facilitators support progressive learning activities and discussions that encourage host families to continually examine their own world views, explore alternative outlooks and adjust their perspectives, mindset and behaviors accordingly. AFS support volunteers and staff view themselves not only as guidance providers, but also as co-learners alongside the host families in the AFS experience.

OUR APPROACH: EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING = ENHANCED LEARNING

AFS believes in the strength of experiential learning. Host families are taught how to learn from and ‘make meaning’ of their new experiences during the AFS program, using tools to help them reflect and analyze their experiences in a structured way. They are then encouraged to experiment and adjust their behaviors based on insights gained, continuing the cycle of learning.

OUR APPROACH: LEARNING FOR LIFE AND LIFELONG LEARNING

Finally, the AFS Host Family Intercultural Learning Journey is a lifelong experience with a defined starting point and regular milestones, but no true end date. Host families are constantly learning, beginning with their first contact with the organization and continuing long after finishing their official program involvement.

Many host families continue their development by becoming active volunteers for the organization, and/or participants in other AFS programs. In all of these situations, we also offer learning journeys to deepen and strengthen insights and skills.
AFS OFFERS A TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING JOURNEY

This Illustration demonstrates how individuals perceive and think about the world and how this perception evolves over time as they go through the different phases of an intercultural learning experience. Family members start the journey with a specific set of values and beliefs (BEFORE) which expand as they face a new culture with its own particular set of values (DURING). The world views of host parents and siblings keep transforming when their students return home (AFTER) and they begin integrating what they’ve learned with what they already believed. This final process helps members develop a more complex and critical way of thinking and perceiving the world.

INTEGRATING THE AFS HOST FAMILY INTERCULTURAL LEARNING JOURNEY INTO THE AFS EXPERIENCE

There are four components of the AFS host family intercultural learning methodology: orientation, support, tools and resources. Together, they support the AFS Host Family Intercultural Learning Journey, helping families work through the AFS Host Family Learning Objectives in a progressive, developmentally designed manner. This learning journey uses a variety of proven learning formats and resources to engage families as a whole and as individuals. These range from educational newsletters and role-playing activities to recommended social impact projects, all designed to help families process their growth, and learn from their reactions to new, and sometimes difficult, situations.
The AFS intercultural learning experience is not confined to the time spent hosting a student. As mentioned earlier, the AFS Host Family Intercultural Learning Journey starts before students arrive in the host country. From the moment they apply to an AFS program, host families are asked to reflect on who they are, what strengths they bring to the experience and what challenges they might face when hosting a student from another country. Once they complete the hosting program, AFS provides further opportunities for reflection and development through post-program appreciation and debriefing sessions and materials, as well as an invitation to become involved in the organization as volunteers—including participation in the AFS Intercultural Link Learning Program, our well-established adult training program for personal, professional and overall intercultural competence development.

Scheduled group orientation sessions before, during and after the AFS experience provide families with the knowledge, coping strategies and skills needed to have a meaningful intercultural experience. Guidelines for these orientations are included in this AFS Host Family Intercultural Learning Journey document. These guidelines are designed for use throughout the global AFS Network to ensure the quality and consistency of AFS exchange and hosting programs that is delivered by multiple volunteers and staff around the world. At the same time, AFS organizations are encouraged to adapt relevant portions of the Host Family Learning Journey to best suit their local realities.

Host families also receive individualized support with discussions and activities outlined in this document. At least once a month, trained volunteers will engage families to discuss their experience with the goals of developing a deeper appreciation of cultural differences, the most effective and appropriate ways to deal with them, and methods to apply this learning in other parts of their personal, professional and volunteer life.

By linking our ‘learning to live together’ philosophy to the defining global issues facing humanity, the new AFS Host Family Intercultural Learning Journey will continue to empower an inclusive community of global citizens determined to build bridges among cultures and tackle the worlds interconnected problems.
AFS Learning Objectives for Host Families

Self-Awareness

1. To better understand themselves as individuals, as a family and the influence of their own cultural backgrounds(s)
2. To become more aware of the influence of cultural backgrounds on perception, behavior, values and attitudes
3. To accept and appreciate the changes the family experience when hosting a student, and to view such changes as learning opportunities

Communication Skills and Empathy

4. To learn how to become thoughtful active listeners and respond with respect for the other person
5. To be aware, able to recognize and interpret non-verbal communication signals
6. To listen, be mindful of the needs of other people and consider different perspectives when approaching problems and everyday situations
7. To develop a deeper concern for and sensitivity to others
8. To expand the capacity and willingness of all family members to perceive and respond to the values, feelings, and realities of others

Intercultural Competence

9. To appreciate diversity and to engage, display respect for and accept people with diverse backgrounds, attitudes, opinions, lifestyles and values
10. To overcome ethnocentric worldviews when interacting with new people, social situations and cultural norms
11. To develop strategies for coping with cultural differences
12. To understand that strong and lasting relationships, friendships and family bonds are strengthened when all individuals embrace cultural differences, as well as similarities

Global Concern

13. To become interested and concerned about global affairs and aware of the impact our choices have on other people
14. To become a volunteer committed to making positive change in local, national and/or global communities
AFS Host Family Intercultural Learning Journey

HOSTING PARTNER

BEFORE
- Marketing & Recruitment Messaging
- Application & Selection Process
- Host Family Handbook & Culture Specific Materials
- Pre-Arrival Orientation

DURING
- Arrival Orientation
- Monthly Learning Reflection
- Newsletter
- Monthly Learning Reflection
- Post-Arrival Orientation
- Monthly Learning Reflections
- Newsletter
- Monthly Learning Reflection
- Newsletter
- Mid-Stay Orientation
- Monthly Learning Reflection
- Newsletter
- Monthly Learning Reflection
- End-Of-Stay Orientation
- Monthly Learning Reflection

AFTER
- Post-program Appreciation & Debriefing
- Volunteer Recruitment
### Distribution of Learning Objectives Across the Host Family Learning Journey

#### SELF-AWARENESS

- **1.** To better understand themselves as individuals, as a family and the influence of their own cultural background(s)
- **2.** To become more aware of the influence of cultural backgrounds on perception, behavior, values and attitudes
- **3.** To accept and appreciate the changes the family experiences when hosting a student, and to view such changes as learning opportunities

#### COMMUNICATION SKILLS & EMPATHY

- **4.** To learn how to become thoughtful active listeners and respond with respect for the other person
- **5.** To be aware, able to recognize and interpret non-verbal communication signals
- **6.** To listen, be mindful of the needs of other people and consider different perspectives when approaching problems and everyday situations
- **7.** To develop a deeper concern for and sensitivity to others
- **8.** To expand the capacity and willingness of all family members to perceive and respond to the values, feelings, and realities of others

#### INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE

- **9.** To appreciate diversity and to engage, display respect for and accept people with diverse backgrounds, attitudes, opinions, lifestyles and values
- **10.** To overcome ethnocentric world views when interacting with new people, social situations and cultural norms
- **11.** To develop strategies for coping with cultural differences
- **12.** To understand that strong and lasting relationships, friendships and family bonds are strengthened when individuals embrace cultural differences, as well similarities

#### GLOBAL CONCERN

- **13.** To become interested and concerned about global affairs and aware of the impact our choices have on other people
- **14.** To become a volunteer committed to making positive change in local, national and/or global communities
How to Use the Host Family Intercultural Learning Journey

PART OF THE AFS EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

The AFS Host Family Intercultural Learning Journey is designed to help host families develop greater intercultural effectiveness.

Our goal is to provide an interesting, inspiring, rewarding and enjoyable process for the AFS host family, volunteers and staff taking part in our program. To help do this, this Journey document outlines AFS Partner responsibilities and recommends activities and content for each key learning moment before, during and after the experience.

GLOBAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LOCAL ADAPTATION

The Journey suggests approaches and activities that can be used to help families work through the AFS Host Family Learning Objectives; however, it is ultimately up to each AFS organization to decide on the final shape that orientations and other touch points will take. While always following the Learning Objectives outlined for each learning moment, you can and should adapt the activities to your local needs and realities, and combine approaches to address more than one goal at a time. It is also not mandatory that all approaches suggested here be used at each touch point—your organization is free to create learning session outlines based on the approaches suggested in the AFS Host Family Intercultural Learning Journey with your particular adaptations in mind. While the activities are adaptable, please bear in mind that the Learning Objectives for each touch point are not.

All the activities, handouts and newsletters should be provided in the local language(s).

WORKING WITH LEARNERS OF DIFFERENT AGES

Please bear in mind that most host families contain both host parents (adults) and host siblings (who can vary in age). When working with host families, make age-appropriate adjustments, as much as possible, to address both age groups as learners.

HOST FAMILIES AND HOST STUDENTS LEARN TOGETHER

This AFS Host Family Intercultural Learning Journey is complementary to the AFS Student Learning Journey Curriculum and should be used jointly. While there are separate documents for the two target groups, you will find one set of activities in both: handouts to be given to both the students and the host families that they can work through on their own time together. While this is a tool of self-dependent learning, make sure to refer to them and check on their successes during your support meetings.
NATIONAL OR LOCAL IMPLEMENTATION?
For practical reasons, AFS organizations should decide which touch points will be done on the national, regional or local level. This will depend on resources and structures available in each organization. We also recommend that, when appropriate, the timing and place for organizing orientations for host families be coordinated with the events for hosted AFS students. Finally, if the particular individual circumstances allow, the topics and content of host family and student orientations and monthly learning reflections can also be coordinated in order to maximize the learning outcomes for all parties.

ADJUSTING FOR PROGRAM LENGTH
This Learning Journey was developed to support the AFS core traditional programs, which are usually 10 months. Until more specific versions are developed for shorter programs, this version can be adapted to support these programs as well. For year programs, use the full version of this document. In the case of semester programs, the Learning Journey can be cut by taking out the mid-stay orientation and adapting the topics and timing of other touch points.

For trimester programs, several issues need to be borne in mind: there might be a tendency not to focus on language learning so much from the side of the students who know that they are not staying long. The host family has a crucial role in fostering language learning in these shorter programs. Also because of the short program length, there may be a tendency for host families not to face issues with the host student. From a learning perspective, it should be done, and thus conflict and resolution methods should be used earlier than advised for the year program.

In the case of shorter programs (4-6 weeks), the Learning Journey may only cover two orientation touch points: an extended or delayed arrival and an end-of-stay orientation, with an awareness of the different impact shorter programs may have on participants.

One of the most important adjustments of this learning journey for shorter programs will be in the times, content and number of Monthly Contacts & Learning Reflections during the exchange. We recommend that Partners keep facilitating monthly contacts and discussions once a month, each month, no matter the duration of the program, while making sure to use the appropriate content for discussion.

TRAINING NEEDED TO BRING THIS LEARNING JOURNEY TO LIFE
The implementation of this learning journey also depends on AFS volunteers and staff being properly trained to take on the different roles (to support different touch points) required throughout the program. To be effective facilitators of intercultural learning for host families, AFSers must be familiar
with the AFS Educational Goals for students and the AFS Host Family Learning Objectives and able to clearly explain the educational benefits of the AFS experience. That’s why partner organizations are strongly encouraged to offer training opportunities for volunteers and staff to develop their skills in properly supporting the learning journey of host families.

The AFS Intercultural Link Learning Program with all its levels is one of the strongest and best-established ways for volunteers and staff to become more interculturally sensitive and to develop the abilities needed to facilitate learning in others. As a part of this, the fundamental intercultural learning training, What Every AFSer Should Know About Intercultural Learning 2.0, is the basis for all volunteers and staff around the AFS network in our educational efforts.

Other trainings—both from the Learning Program and otherwise—aimed at volunteer development offered at local, national or international level in AFS are also essential for developing competences volunteers need to maximize the use of this Learning Journey.

**SUGGESTIONS RATHER THAN INSTRUCTIONS**

This Learning Journey suggests recommended approaches for each of the touch points to help families address the Learning Objectives—it does not prescribe or mandate any particular activities. Implementation depends on a number of factors, such as experience of volunteers, cultural aspects or group size, to name a few.

In some cases, the learning journey recommends specific content, always pointing out where to look for resources to cover it. Taking into account the need for local adaptation, the goal of facilitators not to be too repetitive in their methods, and the vast knowledge that exists within the AFS network, a space for sharing activities that fit this learning journey has been set up on the AFS World Café (see community.afsworldcafe.org). Be sure that support volunteers, facilitators and trainers all have full access to that space, to look for guidance, inspiration and tools.

**LOGISTICS AND SAFETY STILL MATTER**

Finally, this Learning Journey provides you with information on how to achieve the AFS Host Family Learning Objectives—but don’t forget to also address logistics, safety and other important information with host families as appropriate. The existing practices and manuals in your organization should complement the materials offered in this Learning Journey.
The Benefits of the AFS Hosting Experience on Families

There are numerous benefits for host families taking on the exciting opportunity and rewarding challenge of the AFS experience. Our programs make an impact on the knowledge, skills and attitudes, or global competences, of the families who get involved in our programs.

The first thing families learn in their engagement with AFS falls in the area of self-awareness: host families are inspired to reflect on who they are as individuals and as a family unit. Members of host families usually expect to learn more about other cultures, and they certainly do so with the programs; they also get to learn more about themselves and their own culture(s). While explaining various elements of the host culture to the students, including artifacts, values and norms of their family, community and other cultural sub-groups that they are a part of, host family members also become more aware of how they define these and how their host culture has impacted their lives so far. All this also leads to developing effective coping strategies, with the help of AFS.

One of the skills host families often improve most significantly, thanks to their AFS experience, is communication. As better and more effective communicators after the program, AFS host families expand their own comfort zone to work with people different from themselves in a non-threatening way: hosting can allow families to learn more about verbal and non-verbal communication styles and prepare them to engage effectively in different cultural settings. For those families who also send their own children on an AFS experience, hosting can provide insight on the other side of the relationship, including an improved ability to express empathy towards others.

Finally, AFS host families often further develop an already existing attitude of appreciation for diversity and an interest and active engagement in voluntary work on issues of global significance. With increased intercultural sensitivity, host families can become better prepared to interpret and act more appropriately and effectively when engaging with people who have many different values and beliefs. Being positive role models is likely to raise the general wellbeing of the family, the student and the community at large.
BEFORE
the AFS Intercultural Experience

Recruiting and Preparing Host Families to Begin Their Intercultural Learning Journey

This section contains activities to address AFS Learning Objectives for:

- Marketing & Recruitment Messaging
- Application & Selection
- Host Family Handbook & Culture-Specific Materials
- Pre-Arrival Orientation
RECRUITING AND PREPARING HOST FAMILIES TO BEGIN THEIR INTERCULTURAL LEARNING JOURNEY

BEFORE the AFS Intercultural Experience provides specific guidelines for volunteers and staff members to support host families in the first phase of their intercultural learning journey, starting with recruitment and continuing through the pre-arrival orientation.

Under this new approach, the AFS Host Family Intercultural Learning Journey begins during the recruitment process. Right from the start, we should encourage host families to join AFS for an intercultural learning experience, both as learners and co-facilitators for the learning of students. Our recruitment marketing messages should position hosting as a full-scale AFS program, complete with its own intercultural learning journey and support from the organization. You should emphasize key benefits that the families experience from hosting AFS students and be prepared to offer compelling responses to families questions and concerns.

The application and selection processes provide opportunities for future AFS host families to reflect about who they are, what’s motivating them to participate in this program, and what they know and think about their own culture, as well as global issues. This should be encouraged in the host family handbook and the culture-specific materials (about their students culture), and reinforced during the discussions and sessions at the pre-arrival orientation.

In addition to providing logistical and safety information to the families, this is also the time to introduce them to the AFS Host Family Intercultural Learning Journey and encourage them to reflect on their expectations, plans and effective coping strategies during their AFS experience.
Marketing & Recruitment Messaging

WHEN

Recruitment should happen throughout the year, most intensively in the three months before the students arrive, and until all students are placed in permanent host families.

THE BENEFITS OF HOSTING

AFS marketing messages for recruiting families to host should be appealing, clear and engaging. Hosting with AFS should be presented as a full-scale program, complete with its own Host Family Intercultural Learning Journey and support provided by AFS volunteers and staff. In your marketing communications, be sure to emphasize key benefits families experience from hosting AFS students in a clear, consistent, compelling and credible manner. Prepare and encourage your volunteers, staff, former host families and all other stakeholders involved in host family recruitment to offer compelling responses to families hesitant to host a student.

Five benefits that families experience from hosting AFS students:

1. Being an AFS host family provides an enjoyable, rewarding and transformative experience for the whole family
2. AFS host families share cultures/learn about new cultures
3. AFS host families help young people achieve their global and personal ambitions
4. Hosting helps family members and host students experience personal ambitions
5. When you host with AFS, you join an organization and a community dedicated to creating a more just, peaceful and inclusive world

See the #AFSeffect Marketing Communications Plan & Campaign to Recruit Host Families (available in the Brand Center on the AFS World Café at woca.afs.org/brandcenter) for more details about how to plan and execute your marketing efforts.
AFS LEARNING OBJECTIVES & ACTIVITIES:

Self-Awareness

- To better understand themselves as individuals, as a family and the influence of their own cultural background(s)

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PARTNERS

› Using the five benefits outlined in the #AFSeffect Marketing Communications Plan & Campaign to Recruit Host Families, create messages that will clearly communicate the positive effects of hosting on the family’s growth. Based on research of previous host family experiences, this experience helps hosts to:
  - Become more self-confident and flexible
  - Learn how to turn challenging situations into valuable opportunities for personal growth
  - Develop more effective communication skills and better articulate personal and cultural values
  - Learn another language or strengthen language skills
  - Improve understanding and become more tolerant of different cultures, ethnicities, religions, etc.
  - Cope better with ambiguity and differences in future situations
  - Realize that there is so much to learn and become
  - Become more interested in and concerned about world affairs
  - Understand the importance of being culturally sensitive while working on challenging issues involving other cultures and countries
  - Practice being a moderator and collaborating across differences

› Find out more information about the #AFSeffect Marketing Communications Plan & Campaign to Recruit Host Families in the Brand Center on the AFS World Café

Intercultural Competence

- To appreciate diversity and to engage, display respect for and accept people with diverse backgrounds, attitudes, opinions, lifestyles and values
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PARTNERS

› Work with former host families, students and volunteers to create video testimonials in which they explain how hosting with AFS helped them develop and improve their intercultural competence.

› Organize presentations in local schools or create Online quizzes to show how AFS intercultural experiences help people learn how to respect and support diversity.

› Encourage volunteers and exchange students to participate in local cultural events (such as parades, festivals, etc.) to promote AFS and demonstrate support for diversity and diverse communities.

Global Concern

15 To become interested and concerned about global affairs and aware of the impact our choices have on other people

16 To become a volunteer committed to making positive change in local, national and/or global communities

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PARTNERS

› Create messages that explain necessary global competences to live, work, collaborate, volunteer and/or lead in a globally connected world and how the AFS host programs helps family members develop these skills. Refer to the benefits outlined in the #AFSeffect Marketing Communications Plan & Campaign to Recruit Host Families to help you develop these messages (available in the AFS Brand Center on the AFS World Café woca.afs.org/brandcenter)

› Organize information sessions and produce written materials that address the AFS mission, programs and AFS Educational Goals for both exchange students and host families in an interesting and engaging way. This can be done using quizzes, trivia, etc.
Application & Selection

WHEN
Host families can apply for an AFS experience at any time during the year. The most intense application, screening and selection period is in the three months before the exchange students arrive.

FOCUS
The application and selection period provides an ideal opportunity to stress the educational and cultural aspects of the host family experience. Use this time to inspire family members to reflect on their cultural background, awareness and concern for global issues, and expectations from the hosting. Setting realistic expectations, while making sure families are fully aware of the AFS support and facilitation systems available during the program, is key for a successful hosting experience.

AFS volunteers and staff working on host family applications, screening and selections must be fully aware, informed and trained on the AFS Standards, Policies and Procedures (see the Library on AFS Global at library.afsglobal.org) and any local, legal and other regulations that apply.

For the application and selection of families to be a smooth and successful process, AFS volunteers and staff must try to respond to interests and leads in a timely manner. We recommend following up on inquiries within 24 hours.

AFS LEARNING OBJECTIVES & ACTIVITIES

Self-Awareness

1. To become more aware of the influence of cultural backgrounds on perception, behavior, values and attitudes

2. To accept and appreciate the changes the family experiences when hosting a student, and to view such changes as learning opportunities

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PARTNERS

› Make sure that the host family application, interviews and other application and selection tools offer enough space for families to reflect on their identity, culture and structure.

› When talking with the host family, make sure all members understand that their daily routine may have to change to adapt to the student’s culture (and not only the other way around). Share real-life examples and testimonials to exemplify these changes and help families plan and prepare for them.
Intercultural Competence

- To overcome ethnocentric worldviews when interacting with new people, social situations and cultural norms
- To understand that strong and lasting relationships, friendships and family bonds are strengthened when all individuals embrace cultural differences, as well as similarities.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PARTNERS

- The application and selection process should inspire awareness and curiosity to know more about the cultural differences between the family and the student, and not to simply accept that differences exist. Ask self-reflective questions and provide opportunities for families to discuss these issues with AFS volunteers and staff during the application and selection process.
- Make sure that the application form and selection volunteers and staff emphasize that everyone—family members and their student—plays a key role in communicating effectively. Check how families present themselves in the application form and help them understand and reflect on the need for mindfulness in two-way communication.

Global Concern

- To become interested and concerned about global affairs and aware of the impact our choices have on other people
- To become a volunteer committed to making positive change in local, national and/or global communities

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PARTNERS

- Find clear and interesting ways to help families understand their double role in the intercultural exchange program, as both learners and co-facilitators of the learning of the students they host. Refer to the benefits outlined in the #AFSeffect Marketing Communications Plan & Campaign to Recruit Host Families to help you with these messages (available in the Brand Center on the AFS World Café).
- Make sure that the application and selection volunteers and staff emphasize that hosting with AFS also allows families to join an organization and a community dedicated to creating a more just, peaceful and inclusive world.
Focus

Host family handbooks and culture-specific materials should be short, engaging and easy-to-understand documents. These important resources help prepare families for the exciting intercultural experiences to come and explain the main elements of the hosting program, intercultural learning and the AFS support system.

Don’t forget to include information about the AFS mission, both the AFS Host Family and the AFS Student Educational Goals, emergency contact information and procedures in case the family requires AFS support.

AFS Learning Objectives & Activities

Self-Awareness

1. To better understand themselves as individuals, as a family and the influence of their own cultural background(s)
2. To become more aware of the influence of cultural backgrounds on perception, behavior, values and attitudes

Recommendations for Partners

- The host family handbook should include key elements of successful hosting, such as active listening, patience and tips for integrating the exchange student in the family life. For example:
  - Include materials about active listening such as the 7 Rules of the Art of Listening (available in the ICL Digital Library at iclibrary.afs.org in the article “Why Humour Matters in Active Listening?” by Marianella Sclavi)
- The handbook should also enable families to self-reflect. Provide space for family members to:
  - Describe their own family structure, daily life and organization of their household
  - Write down their expectations of the program and about the impact of the student’s arrival on the family structure
  - To reflect on their personal values and habits

When

The host family handbook should be shared with the family as soon as their participation in the program is confirmed. Key information from the manual should also be reviewed with the families during the in-person pre-arrival orientation. We recommend sharing culture specific materials with the families once they are assigned a student.

While the host family handbook is designed by the hosting partner with information about local structure, rules and guidelines, the culture specific materials can be developed in collaboration between hosting and sending partners.
Intercultural Competence

- To develop strategies for coping with cultural differences
- To overcome ethnocentric worldviews when interacting with new people, social situations and cultural norms

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PARTNERS

› Introduce host families to the basic intercultural concepts and the cultural adaptation process using a combination of theory, practical examples and real-life case studies. For example:

  - Refer the families to the ICL for AFS & Friends series of documents (available at iclibrary.afs.org) to help them understand the basics of intercultural learning. Pay special attention to the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS), Cultural Adaptation Models, and Concepts and Theories of Culture.

  - Introduce the D.I.V.E. model in the handbook, as it will be an essential tool for families to use during the Monthly Contacts & Learning Reflections, throughout the hosting program and in other intercultural encounters. (see Appendix)

WHAT IS THE D.I.V.E. MODEL?

This four-step exercise helps you make sense of situations that are unfamiliar to you:

**DESCRIBE:** Write down or say what you see in an objective, factual way

**INTERPRET:** Add your opinion about what you have described

**VERIFY:** Ask others or conduct research to check whether your interpretation is accurate

**EVALUATE:** Based on all of the above, how would you qualify and judge what you see?

*This model is based on the D.I.E. (Describe, Interpret, Evaluate) exercise by Janet Bennett.*

WHAT IS DMIS?

The Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) was created by Milton J Bennett as a framework to explain the reactions of people as they engage with cultural differences. Bennett observed that individuals deal with cultural differences in certain predictable ways, which can be divided into six developmental stages (Denial, Defense, Minimization, Acceptance, Adaptation and Integration). Each of these stages builds on the previous ones.
Pre-Arrival Orientation

FOCUS

The key goal of the pre-arrival orientation is to prepare the families for their upcoming intercultural experience. By this time, all families should have received the basic information about the student they will be hosting and have hopefully established first contacts with the student. The pre-arrival orientation should review and build on all the previous conversations and materials shared in an interesting and memorable way. At this stage, it is key to discuss and manage host families expectations and empower them to use effective coping strategies.

Make sure to take into account different ages of family members and their learning styles and preferences when organizing this orientation. The orientation sessions should be framed more as helpful learning tips and discussions rather than strict events, as is the case for students. Don’t forget to address the double role of host families in the AFS intercultural exchanges— as learners and co-facilitators of learning for students.

Finally, this orientation must provide all the necessary logistical and safety information to the families. To review these, please refer to the AFS Standards, Policies and Procedures (see the Library on AFS Gobal at library.afsglobal.org) and any relevant local regulations.

**AFS LEARNING OBJECTIVES & ACTIVITIES**

**Self-Awareness**

1. To better understand themselves as individuals, as a family and the influence of their own cultural background(s)
2. To become more aware of the influence of cultural backgrounds on perception, behavior, values and attitudes

**HOST FAMILY ACTIVITIES**

› Use the pre-arrival orientation for sharing expectations and concerns of the host families. Ask them questions such as:

- *What would make this experience a success?*
- *What are you concerned could happen during the experience?*
- *What are your expectations of AFS (intercultural tutor or back-up for 'emergencies')?*
- *Do all family members have the same expectations or concerns?*

› Remind the host families about the Concepts and Theories of Culture they
were introduced to in the host family handbook (also available at iclibrary.afs.org as part of the ICL for AFS & Friends series). Review these basic models and choose one (e.g. the iceberg model of culture) and use it analyze the topics of culture and family. Discuss and explore:

- Various levels of culture and cultural groups (national, regional, social, gender, etc.)
- The concept of family and how it differs in various contexts
- Their own family culture, applying the selected model to it
- Possible cultural friction points between the family and the student (doing this will help the family manage their expectations, become more aware of possible conflicts and ways to deal with them)

**Communication Skills and Empathy**

1. To listen, be mindful of the needs of other people and consider different perspectives when approaching problems and everyday situations

2. To learn how to become thoughtful active listeners and respond with respect for the other person

**HOST FAMILY ACTIVITIES**

› Facilitate different communication exercises during which host families:
  - Explore various forms of communication (verbal, non-verbal, limited vocabulary, etc.)
  - Become aware of personal communication preferences.

› For more information about communication styles, refer to the *What Every AFSer Should Know About Intercultural Learning 2.0*, available in the ICL Digital Library at iclibrary.afs.org.

› Introduce the concept of the comfort zone and how to leave or stretch it enough to be able to learn from new experiences. Focus on:
  - The idea of crises as learning opportunities
  - The possibility of gaining/improving skills
  - Understanding for the extraordinary situation of a host student and a host family, thus strengthening patience for each other
Intercultural Competence

To develop strategies for coping with cultural differences

HOST FAMILY ACTIVITIES

› Facilitate a D.I.V.E. exercise introduced to the families in the host family handbook. Encourage families to use the D.I.V.E. model as a tool to deal with, process, and understand new and possibly ambiguous information.

› Discuss cultural adaptation processes with the host families to raise awareness and provide context of the process the student and the family will be going through during the exchange experience. For more information, refer to the Cultural Adaptation Models (available in ICL for AFS & Friends at iclibrary.afs.org).

› Distribute and review Handout 1, ‘Starting life as a family’ (see Appendix) that the family will go through together with the student during their first Monthly Contacts & Learning Reflections.
DURING the AFS Intercultural Experience

Helping Host Families Thrive and Enjoy Sharing and Learning About Culture

This section contains activities to address AFS Learning Objectives for:

- Arrival Orientation
- Post-Arrival Orientation
- Mid-Stay Orientation
- End-of-Stay Orientation
- Monthly Contacts & Learning Reflections
- Newsletters
During the AFS Intercultural Experience

Facilitating and supporting host families cultural sharing, discovery and learning processes are key roles of AFS volunteers and staff during this stage of the learning journey. Right from the start, volunteers are encouraged to 'nudge' families to identify, explore and understand both their own and the new culture, and to help them develop constructive coping strategies.

Volunteers also play an essential role in the different orientations and Monthly Contacts & Learning Reflections that are staples of this phase in the families intercultural experience. The Monthly Contacts & Learning Reflections begin with the arrival of the student in the local community and continue through the end-of-stay orientation.

Finally, this is also an opportunity for families to reflect on their culture and the construction of their own identities and to prepare for the upcoming stages of their life-long journey AFS.
Arrival Orientation

**WHEN**
Immediately upon the arrival of students, host families should gather for the arrival orientation. It is ideal to organize the students and host families arrival orientations at the same time.

**FOCUS**
Use the arrival orientation to prepare host families for communication challenges that may occur with their student and the variety of changes that many families experience when someone moves into their home. Volunteers and staff should remind families of the cultural adaptation process, as well as expectations and coping strategies discussed during the pre-arrival orientation.

Bear in mind that at this point, most families will be focused on welcoming, handling the logistics and getting to know the new family member, and that the orientation should accommodate those issues.

**AFS LEARNING OBJECTIVES & ACTIVITIES**

**Communication Skills and Empathy**

1. To learn how to become thoughtful active listeners and respond with respect for the other person

2. To listen, be mindful of the needs of other people and consider different perspectives when approaching problems and everyday situations

**HOST FAMILY ACTIVITIES**

- Conduct communication exercises that explore how information is processed to help families understand their own communication patterns and start thinking about how these patterns could be misleading to newcomers or outsiders. For example:
  - Facilitate a session where the meaning of yes and no is reversed and see how families cope in the new situation
  - Analyze different types of communication, with a special focus on non-verbal communications (body language, such as using hands to communicate, eye contact, personal space, touch, gestures, tone of voice, etc.)
Intercultural Competence

To develop strategies for coping with cultural differences

HOST FAMILY ACTIVITIES

› Discuss first challenges host families may encounter and encourage families to come up with ways to constructively deal with them. Ask questions like:

   - *What are your impressions of the experience so far?*
   - *How do your impressions differ from or reinforce the impressions gained before the arrival of the student (by pre-arrival communications, background material, etc.)?*
   - *What were your family’s first reactions to hosting? Was the family (or family members) surprised by their reactions? What was surprising?*
   - *Are there any particular issues that might require assistance from AFS in the near future?*

› Remind host families about the importance of going through Handout 1, ‘Starting Life As a Family’ with the student (see Appendix).
Post-Arrival Orientation

**WHEN**
This orientation should take place four to six weeks after the students have arrived to the host families, if feasible at the same time as the students are attending their post-arrival orientation.

**FOCUS**
During the first few weeks of the program, families and students usually focus on getting to know each other and developing family and individual routines. Having the post-arrival orientation at this point will help family members explore their initial reactions to their students and reflect their intercultural learning experiences. Ask the families to think about how they have adapted to having a host student in their homes and discuss the successful coping strategies and different communication styles. Explore cultural differences with self-reflective exercises, and make good use of the D.I.V.E. models.

**AFS LEARNING OBJECTIVES & ACTIVITIES**

**Self-Awareness**
1. To better understand themselves as individuals, as a family and the influence of their own cultural background(s)
2. To accept and appreciate the changes the family experiences when hosting a student, and to view such changes as learning opportunities

**HOST FAMILY ACTIVITIES**
› Help families think through their intercultural and other challenges and successes as a family. This can be done in a group discussion where families can share with each other. Ask questions, such as:
   - Have any of your concerns already been proven right or wrong? What happened?
   - What strategies for bridging cultural and other differences have you been using so far? Which ones were most successful?
   - Are there any visible signs of change within the family as well as with the student that indicate that the family and student are bonding and learning to live together successfully?

**Communication Skills and Empathy**
5. To listen, be mindful of the needs of other people and consider different perspectives when approaching problems and everyday situations
5. To be aware, able to recognize and interpret the non-verbal communication signals.
HOST FAMILY ACTIVITIES
› Review different communication styles with the families, such as indirect versus direct relationship versus task orientated circular versus linear high versus low context and others. (For more information, see the What Every AFSer Should Know About Intercultural Learning 2.0 training manual in the ICL Digital Library at icllibrary.afs.org.)
  - Explore various communication styles and find real life examples for each one so that families can link them to either themselves or their students
  - Discuss how people with differing communication styles can still communicate effectively and successfully

Intercultural Competence
To develop strategies for coping with cultural differences

HOST FAMILY ACTIVITIES
› Explore cultural differences with the host families. For example:
  - Prepare case studies or simulations where families need to engage with cultural values and norms different from their own
  - Have the host families analyze their own cultural values in an objective and neutral way
› Repeat the D.I.V.E. activity that the families are already familiar with. Make sure to use different examples each time this activity is conducted
  - Refer back to the Pre-Arrival Orientation add on to the experiences and results of that orientation
  - Provide variations of the D.I.V.E. activity possibly having the families doing it on their own
Mid-Stay Orientation

WHEN
This orientation happens approximately at the mid-point in the host experience, if feasible, at the same time as the students are attending their mid-stay orientation.

FOCUS
Happening mid-way through the hosting program, this orientation is the opportunity to evaluate the experience so far, reassess goals and expectations and plan for the remainder of the exchange program. Volunteers and staff should use it to check in with the family on the cultural adaptation process and their progress in achieving various AFS Learning Objectives. You should explain and emphasize the value of learning in a crisis using the real-life situations that the families have experienced in the past few months.

AFS LEARNING OBJECTIVES & ACTIVITIES

Self-Awareness
1. To become more aware of the influence of cultural backgrounds on perception, behavior, values and attitudes.
2. To better understand themselves as individuals, as a family and the influence of their own cultural background(s)

HOST FAMILY ACTIVITIES
› Discuss the families impressions and findings about their participation in the intercultural program with AFS so far. Ask questions such as:
   - What are the success stories so far?
   - Does the student feel like a member of the family?
   - Do your family members consider the student a member of the family? Is there a difference in opinion between individual family members with regards to this question?
   - What challenges have not been solved?
   - Have there been any new challenges since the first orientation?
   - How has AFS been helpful with the intercultural experience up to this point?

› Introduce cultural dimensions such as individualism vs collectivism and power distance as defined by Geert Hofstede. (For more information refer to Hofstede’s Cultural Dimensions for AFS & Friends available at iclelibrary.afs.org)
   - Make sure the families understand all the concepts and dimensions, and provide real-life examples based on previous hosting experiences for each of the dimensions.
- Link the dimensions to intercultural communication and the hosting experience
- Discuss how knowledge of the dimensions can be helpful for the rest of the hosting experience

Communication Skills and Empathy
- To learn how to become thoughtful active listeners and respond with respect for the other person

HOST FAMILY ACTIVITIES
- Review the previously covered communication styles and exercises conducted.
- Conduct a communication exercise that builds on earlier activities and encourages families to practice and try out different communication styles. Make sure you not only highlight differences in communication, but also provide opportunities to practice bridging them.

Intercultural Competence
- To understand that strong and lasting relationships, friendships and family bonds are strengthened when individuals embrace cultural differences, as well as similarities
- To overcome ethnocentric worldviews when interacting with new people, social situations and cultural norms

HOST FAMILY ACTIVITIES
- Discuss cultural differences between the host family and student, asking questions like:
  - Which cultural differences have you observed?
  - In what way have these differences changed over time?
  - How do cultural differences influence the relationship between family members and the student?
End-of-Stay Orientation

**WHEN**
The end-of-stay orientation should be organized two to four weeks before the end of the hosting program, if feasible at the same time as the students are attending their end-of-stay orientation.

**FOCUS**
During the end-of-stay orientation, families should reflect on their experience with AFS—what they learned and gained through the hosting program—and prepare for the departure of the student. Volunteers and staff leading these discussions should help the families analyze expectations and concerns for the future. Finally, this orientation should inspire families to continue their intercultural learning journey and start considering other ways of staying involved with AFS and global issues, for example, through volunteering.

**AFS LEARNING OBJECTIVES & ACTIVITIES**

**Self-Awareness**
1. To better understand themselves as individuals, as a family and the influence of their own cultural background(s)
2. To accept and appreciate the changes the family experiences when hosting a student, and to view such changes as learning opportunities

**HOST FAMILY ACTIVITIES**

› Facilitate a discussion with host families about values and why they are important. Start by finding a common understanding about and definition of values, using different models of culture families are already familiar with, such as the iceberg. Help the families articulate their own values and discuss how these values may have changed during the hosting experience. Then, ask questions like:
   - **Have you noticed different values between yourself and the host student?**
   - **How have these different values affected members of your family, including your student?**

› Engage host families in a discussion about what’s to come, asking questions like:
   - **What do you expect to change in your family after the student leaves?**
   - **How will the ‘little’ and the ‘big’ things be impacted by the departure of the student?**
   - **Do you foresee any permanent changes in your family as a result of the hosting experience?**
   - **How can you help the student prepare for the departure?**
- What kind of support do you need to conclude your hosting experience?

Please emphasize that many families continue their bond with the student beyond the hosting experience. Many relationships last a lifetime.

**Intercultural Competence**

To appreciate diversity, and to engage, display respect for and accept people with diverse backgrounds, attitudes, opinions, lifestyles and values

**HOST FAMILY ACTIVITIES**

- Referring to the learning objective outlined above, discuss the idea of diversity, using the following questions:
  - Should differences among people be celebrated or overcome?
  - What’s the difference between tolerance and acceptance?
  - How have cultural differences impacted your daily lives—before and after hosting a student?
  - Has the hosting experience changed your opinion on cultural differences—specifically and generally?
  - How do you view your own culture now?

**Global Concern**

To become interested and concerned about global affairs and aware of the impact of our choices have on other people

**HOST FAMILY ACTIVITIES**

- Discuss voluntarism and volunteering with the host families. Ask questions that help them explore how volunteering is perceived in their country/culture and in their families:
  - How is volunteering conceptualized in your culture (for example is there a difference between non-paid labor and volunteering)?
  - What’s the cultural attitude towards volunteering?
  - How did the volunteer character of AFS shape the hosting experience (would it have been the same with an all-staff organization)?
  - How has the attitude of family members towards volunteers and volunteering changed during the course of the hosting experience?
  - Can you imagine contributing further (than hosting a student) to the AFS cause?
Monthly Contacts & Learning Reflections

WHEN
Once a month

For many years, AFS has required that each student and host family be contacted at least once a month separately. These monthly contacts help meet AFS compliance requirements (described in the AFS Standards, Policies and Procedures (see AFS Global section on World Café). AFS Support volunteers also use monthly contacts to provide students and families with emotional support as they adapt to their intercultural experience. The new Monthly Contacts & Learning Reflections approach builds on this process by additionally giving the student, host family and the support volunteer the opportunity to deepen their learning experience.

PLEASE NOTE Support volunteers must be able to provide impartial, non-judgmental, trustworthy and educational support to AFS students and their host families. The relationship should be based on mutual trust, and the support volunteers should be ‘friendly but not friends’ with the students and the families. Their role is to provide students with practical support and facilitate student self-reflection to improve their intercultural competence and the learning associated with the AFS experience.

Support volunteers are expected to deal with conflicts between students and host families, with a focus on preventing a conflict from becoming a crisis point in which neither the student nor the family can learn or cope.

Therefore, the support volunteers contact the host families and the students at least once a month separately, so that the families can have an open and honest discussion about their concerns with the student and with the intercultural dynamics (the same is valid for the students with regards to the families).

FOCUS
The monthly touch points present the opportunity for a series of regular learning discussions during the AFS experience. These conversations will lead the host family through a series of learning-focused reflections aimed at the development of intercultural competencies as well as overall achievements as measured by the AFS Learning Objectives.

We recognize that each family and each support volunteer is different, and their experience and relationship will progress in different ways and at different speeds. The activities are thus broken down into four ‘learning focus areas’ with general guidelines and topics for discussion for each area. It is for this reason that the Monthly Contacts & Learning Reflections section of the AFS Host Family Learning Journey is set up differently than the other touch points.

It is important to understand that some host families may need more time to
reflect and process the learning, which will require working longer in certain learning focus areas. Others may move at a faster pace and be ready for activities from a later learning focus area at an earlier stage. Support volunteers should remain thoughtful of an individual style and particular situation. Also, they will bear different program lengths in mind and adapt content accordingly.

You will also find the Monthly Reflection Activities for the Student and Host Family handouts in the Appendix. This series of activities has been designed to help students and host families get closer and learn from each other. They can do these in their own time. These activities have been designed as a bonus and something students and families can and should do on their own, on top of the Monthly Contacts & Learning Reflections with the support volunteer.

TIPS FOR BUILDING POSITIVE RAPPORT WITH AFS HOST FAMILIES

The concept of rapport in the AFS context is very much related to the Communication Skills and Empathy outlined in the AFS Learning Objectives. But rapport goes beyond the ‘magical chemistry’ between people. Volunteers should work to build a good relationship with the host family based on trust, and with the goal of getting to know each other—trying to understand how the other person feels, and developing good communications skills. For the Monthly Contacts & Learning Reflections, the volunteer and family must engage in a joint learning journey.

CONTACT CONTEXT

• First contacts with the host family are key in building rapport. This process starts with the first contact that may occur before the student’s arrival and it never ends. Rapport evolves over time and begins with understanding the host family’s motivation to start the AFS experience.

• Consider that the way your first contact occurs will impact the rapport (whether approaching the host family online, over the phone or in person). Remember the value of non-verbal communication and how much the tone of voice or body posture conveys. This is why an in-person meeting is the best way to build rapport.

• Start building rapport with the host family as soon as possible. This is a first significant step to show your interest in connecting during the journey. A volunteer who is slow to contact the family often starts out with a ‘yellow card’—contacting the host family in person as early as possible is key to the establishment of rapport.

• Be realistic about the family’s motivation for hosting. Not all families or family members will express goals as profound as you may like them to have.

• Try to genuinely connect on an emotional level, without judging them based on first impressions.
• Remember that as an AFS volunteer, your role is to facilitate the family’s intercultural learning process while you are working on your own intercultural competence development. This is what the concept of ‘the unfinished product’ looks like in daily practice.

GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES
• No matter how old you are and what the age difference is between you and members of the host family, respect is a crucial basis for communication and for building rapport.
• Remember that people’s attitudes depend on many factors and that they may change over time. Reflect on and share an example of how you may have changed over time with the host family. Be careful to select constructive examples, with a learning objective. Don’t forget that ‘learning examples’ do not need to be ‘boring.’ Humor—if appropriate and well used—may help you build a good rapport with the host family.

BEING A GOOD LISTENER
• Be a good listener. Listen first and acknowledge what you hear (even if you don’t agree with it), before expressing your experience or point of view. Listen to hear and understand, not to respond. If you are thinking of your response, you are not listening.
• Try to separate feelings from facts, and remember the D.I.V.E. method (see Appendix). Recognize possible feelings and thoughts, then ask the host family to confirm or clarify if you perceived and understood what they were trying to communicate.
• Summarize in your own words what you understood from what the host family said, and if you are not sure enough, try starting with a phrase like: “It sounds to me that you probably felt like______.” Try finishing your summary saying something like: “Is that right? Or was it different?”
• Be an empathetic listener. Using the appropriate tone of voice, body language and eye contact helps convince host families that you are interested in understanding who they are and how they feel/think. Empathetic listening with the right body language helps to build trust, which requires constant maintenance.
• Don’t forget the value of non-verbal communication (including body language and eye contact), especially being mindful of possible cultural differences.

OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS
• Questions starting with “How” and “What” will help you get deeper into a conversation than questions leading to a yes/no answer. For example:
- What do you think about this?
- How comfortable do you feel with______?
- How would you imagine yourself dealing with_______?
- How do you think you would like being supported?

FIND THINGS IN COMMON
- Try to identify common or similar interests anecdotes and life experiences. Remember that your goal is to build a sense of camaraderie and trust. And keep in mind that being friendly does not mean becoming friends with the host family.

IDENTIFY AND VALIDATE STRENGTHS OF THE HOST FAMILY
- Validating the host family’s decision to embark on an intercultural journey is important. Be appreciative of the host family and reinforce their positive traits. This step toward building rapport will help you identify potential skills to develop and work with during the family’s intercultural educational journey.

REMEMBER NAMES OF PEOPLE AND THINGS IMPORTANT FOR THE HOST FAMILY
- Being able to remember details of the host family’s life that are significant for them shows them you care and you are genuinely interested in helping them.
- Don’t forget that rapport isn’t something you can force. Implementing some of these tips may help, but it is essential to genuinely care about the other person and to accept that we can relate even if we are different.
AFS LEARNING OBJECTIVES & ACTIVITIES*

Self-Awareness

1. To better understand themselves as individuals, as a family and the influence of their own cultural backgrounds(s)
2. To become more aware of the influence of cultural backgrounds on perception, behavior, values and attitudes
3. To accept and appreciate the changes the family experience when hosting a student, and to view such changes as learning opportunities

Communication Skills and Empathy

7. To develop a deeper concern for and sensitivity to others
8. To expand the capacity and willingness of all family members to perceive and respond to the values, feelings, and realities of others

Intercultural Competence

11. To develop strategies for coping with cultural differences

Global Concern

13. To become interested and concerned about global affairs and aware of the impact our choices have on other people

*Any and all learning objectives can be worked on during the Monthly Contacts & Learning Reflections; the experience of each family and their learning will be different
LEARNING FOCUS AREA #1

Discovering & Developing Awareness of Cultural Differences

During this period, the focus is on helping the student settle in and become part of the family, school and community. At the same time, the family is adapting to a new person in their home and the roles and responsibilities of being a host family. Your early involvement with the family during this time will help establish a supportive and trusting relationship. This is important for three primary reasons:

1. The family should be comfortable contacting you if there are challenges or problems.
2. You want to establish a solid partnership for your future learning partnership.
3. It is essential that both the family and student think of you as an experienced, supportive, knowledgeable and trustworthy person representing AFS. They should feel comfortable approaching you with questions and take your advice seriously.

The discussion points described in the Learning Focus Areas can help you develop a relationship with the family, and jointly develop some observational and listening skills that will support learning in the months to come.
1st Month (Learning Focus Area #1)

› It is realistic to assume that not all contacts with the host family can be conducted in the form of in-person meetings. However we strongly suggest having face-to-face meetings instead of phone calls, whenever possible. This is especially important for the first meetings.

› First meetings with host families should focus on getting to know one another as well as practical advice for the initial hosting phase. Please remind everyone that AFS has special rules and regulations for hosting. Also cover key administrative areas, such as school attendance, registering with the local authorities, setting up a mobile phone for the student, etc.

› Encourage families to reflect on their orientation activities and refer to these activities (as well as the student’s orientation activities) when appropriate or to emphasize a particular point. (The orientation activities are included in this document as well as in the Student Learning Journey Curriculum.) In particular, refer to the arrival orientation and the first newsletter, particularly the testimonial of a host family addressing hopes, expectations and fears of host families and the video on first impressions and/or misinterpretations (see page 27 for more information about the arrival orientation, and page 71 for the first newsletter).

HOST STUDENT AND FAMILY ACTIVITY

Remind both the student and host family to go through Handout 1, ‘Starting Life As a Family,’ as soon as possible. This is a form with a series of questions to discuss about household rules, safety, etc. that helps to set some realistic expectations for both parties.

Give both the student and the host family Handout 2, ‘Cultural and Family Heritage Discussion Guide’ with instructions on the cultural and family heritage shared activity.
2nd Month (Learning Focus Area #1)

› Discuss how integrating the student is working out and how he or she has changed the family’s routine.

› Collect information on school attendance and the importance the family places on school activities. This is a good opportunity to touch on cultural differences of learning and education. You could ask questions such as:
  - What differences do you notice in the attitude towards school and learning?
  - Do you know what type of educational system your host student is used to?
  - What can you do to facilitate your student’s transition into this new educational system?

› During this Monthly Contacts & Learning Reflection, refer to the post-arrival orientation and the second newsletter, especially the testimonial of a host family that describes the first phase of their experience (satisfactions, difficulties, influences on family life/family members, expectations for the future) (see page 39 for more information about the post-arrival orientation, and page 72 for the second newsletter).

HOST STUDENT AND FAMILY ACTIVITY

Give both the student and the host family Handout 3, ‘Values and Behaviors’ (page) with instructions to do the exercise together.
LEARNING FOCUS AREA #2

Deepening Skills & Understanding

Now that you have developed a solid relationship with the family, focus on helping everyone develop skills to make the intercultural experience more meaningful and rewarding. Our suggestion for discussion topics focus on deepening the understanding of various communication patterns and preferences, and how these relate to the intercultural learning elements of the exchange program. You may need to help the family recognize and understand their own cultural traits. It’s also important to help the family understand why being more flexible and comfortable when talking with their student can help prevent, reduce and better manage conflicts. For instance, discussing ways to communicate household rules (even those rules that seem obvious) or other sensitive topics can help avoid misunderstandings and hurt feelings.
3rd Month (Learning Focus Area #2)

- Many families are reluctant to address potential conflict issues during the first few weeks and months of the hosting experience. However, by the third month it’s important to address different types of conflict and resolution. Talk about various conflict styles (see for example *Intercultural Conflict Styles for AFS & Friends*, available in the ICL Digital Library at [afs.org](http://afs.org)) and help the family discover their own as well as their student’s preferences to address disagreements and other types of conflicts. This input should help everyone improve how to resolve conflicts that may arise. Referring back to the D.I.V.E. model (see Appendix), you could ask questions like these:
  - Have you noticed that you or one of the family members started doing something different in everyday life? Where does this change come from?
  - How would you describe how the relationship with your host student has developed over the last month?
  - Did you ever have a feeling that something didn’t go right and you didn’t know why? What did you observe? Describe the situation and interpret what happened. How can you verify this? How did you evaluate the situation then? How do you evaluate it now?
  - What do you think must happen to further strengthen the relationship between your family and the host student?

**HOST STUDENT AND FAMILY ACTIVITY**

Ask both the student and the host family to review the Monthly Reflection Activities Handout 1 ‘Starting Life as a Family’ (in Appendix) they did right after arrival and discuss these questions:

- Were these conversations useful for discovering family life?
- What else have you learned since then about the functioning of the household?
- Are there new things we need to ask or explain?
4th Month (Learning Focus Area #2)

› Over the past few months, families may have noticed behaviors by their students they are not familiar with. However, even though these unfamiliar activities, routines, etc., don’t always lead to conflicts, they may be bothersome and families just ‘shrug them off’. However, there could be meaning behind different behaviors that cannot simply be attributed to a typical teenager’s conduct.

› Support the family’s abilities to interpret different behaviors by discussing various communication styles, including non-verbal communication (see What Every AFSer Should Know About Intercultural Learning 2.0 in the ICL Digital Library at iclibrary.afs.org for more information). Have a discussion about different perspectives on behavior using the following questions:
  - How did you manage to translate confusing behavior? Was it a change of perspective? Was it new information you didn’t have access to before? Was it something else?
  - How could you help your host student to translate some of your own behavior that might seem confusing to them?
  - Do you know if your host student is confused by some of your behaviors or traits?

HOST STUDENT AND FAMILY ACTIVITY

Give both the student and host family Handout 4 ‘Nonverbal Communication’ with instructions to do an activity together.
Improving personal communication skills is an ongoing process for everyone, especially when factoring in the challenges that often occur in new intercultural situations. That’s why support volunteers should continue discussing various communication styles with host families, using the D.I.V.E. model to help make these conversations more productive. Some questions that you should consider asking the host families are:

- **In your opinion, does your student communicate clearly?** For example, if he or she usually answers, ‘yes’ to a question, do you always know what they mean by that? Are there differences between the way you speak and the way the student speaks?

- **Did you discuss non-verbal communication with your student last month?** Did that conversation change the way you relate to each other? How? Why?

**HOST STUDENT AND FAMILY ACTIVITY**

Give both the student and host family Handout 5, ‘Communication Styles and the Concept of Time’ (in Appendix) with instructions to do an activity together.
LEARNING FOCUS AREA #3

Putting Intercultural Learning in Context

After the first few months, the family and the student should have established a routine that makes living together as a family easier, enjoyable and rewarding. While new interpersonal challenges will continue to arise, both the family and the student should be able to navigate their everyday life successfully with your support. So now is the time to look beyond the interpersonal challenges, and deal with the intercultural aspect of the program. Also, help the family reflect more about themselves within their own cultural and greater global contexts, and start processing and using what they are learning in this AFS program.

At this stage of the program, family members should be able to identify the values, skills and behaviors they bring from their cultural background and the new skills and learning they’ve acquired by hosting an international student. Use these discussions to help family members better understand what it means to be a global citizen and how the AFS host family program is helping them refine their intercultural skills and understanding.

Finally, help families reflect on specific roles and responsibilities of global citizens, which includes respecting and accepting the complexity of human behavior and cultural differences and appreciating the value of volunteering and contributing to society.
6th Month (Learning Focus Area #3)

› By this point in the experience, communication between the host family and the student will have moved beyond mere words and gestures to more difficult areas, such as the differences in the way people show emotions, concern, affection and love for each other.

› You can refer to the different cultural dimensions and identify where the students home and host cultures fall on their separate continua to start the learning reflection with the family. Showing emotions may be linked to different dimensions in one culture: indulgence versus restraint, power distance, masculinity versus femininity and others. See Hofstede’s Cultural Dimensions for AFS & Friends in the ICL Digital Library at icllibrary.afs.org. Make sure you understand these different dimensions and are able to explain them to the family.

› During this Monthly Contact & Learning Reflection, refer to the mid-stay orientation and the third newsletter, particularly the article reminding families of the objectives of the program (see page 41 for more information about the mid-stay orientation, and page 73 for the third newsletter). Ask reflection questions such as:
  - Why are there different ways to show affection respect to different people even in the same cultural environment?
  - What differences in showing emotions have you noticed with your host student?
  - Do you know what the main differences are between your student’s home culture and host culture in terms of expressing love and affection? Why do you think such differences exist?
  - Do you feel comfortable with the way your host student shows emotions? Why? Why not?
  - Has your host student changed the way he or she shows emotions? If yes, how?
  - Have you changed the way you show emotions? If yes, how?

HOST STUDENT AND FAMILY ACTIVITY

From now through the 10th and final month, ask both the host family and student to discuss these three questions together every month:
  - What was everyone’s highlight of the month?
  - What was everyone’s main challenge?
  - How can we support each other with the challenges?
With only a few months left in the hosting experience, emphasize the most important learning points for the host family. Discuss the usefulness of intercultural learning and how members can apply it in their daily lives outside and after the hosting experience. Recognize the personal, professional and community value of hosting as an intercultural experience. These reflections may also trigger ‘a-ha moments’ when dealing with issues of global concern. During your discussions, refer to real-life issues and concerns, such as climate change, ethnic or economic conflicts, human rights, etc., to stimulate the conversations. Ask questions along the following lines:

- Have you ever discussed global issues with your host student?
- What have you noticed during these discussions? Do you share viewpoints or do you have different opinions?
- Has hosting a student helped you understand global issues? How?
- Does ‘global issue’ mean that the whole world puts the same importance on such an issue? What’s a global issue to you?
- Have you discovered global issues you were not aware of before the hosting experience?
- Have you changed attitudes or behavior vis-à-vis local issues since your student arrived? Which and why?
- What do you think is the connection between hosting a student and global issues?
- Do you think AFS as an organization (i.e. thinking not only about the programs but also the structure, the volunteer-based approach, etc.) has a positive impact on the local level AND the world at large? Why? Why not?
- What is your opinion on volunteering? (This could lead to a discussion about how much a society should rely on volunteers, the benefits of volunteers and/or professionals, how much social pressure to volunteer exists in a society, etc.)

HOST STUDENT AND FAMILY ACTIVITY

Ask both the student and the host family again to discuss these three questions:

• What was everyone’s highlight of the month?
• What was everyone’s main challenge?
• How can we better support each other with the challenges?
8th Month (Learning Focus Area #3)

- Developing sensitivity and empathy for a particular person is relatively easy, and the host family will have done so towards the student, even if they don’t share all of each other’s values. Talk with them if they think it will be easier for them to approach and engage with other people or groups as well, or if they feel more at ease in other situations than previous to the hosting experience. You may want to use a short story like this parable of the wise judge as a starting point for your conversation:

  Two litigants bring their case before a judge who listens to the first litigant with serious and considered attention before delivering his verdict: “You are right.” He then listens to the second with the same considered attention and pronounces: “You are right.” Someone from the gallery stands up and objects “Your honor, how can they both be right?” The judge pauses for a minute before responding, “And you too are right.”

  Have a discussion about what this story means to members of the family:
  - How can the judge think that all three people are right?
  - Can contradictions coexist?
  - How does this parable fit the AFS context, and intercultural learning in general?

- During your conversation, refer to the fourth newsletter, particularly the testimonial of a host family that focuses on the educational benefits that they feel they have gained throughout the experience (see page 74 for more information about the fourth newsletter).

HOST STUDENT AND FAMILY ACTIVITY

Ask both the student and the host family again to discuss these three questions:

- What was everyone’s highlight of the month?
- What was everyone’s main challenge?
- How can we better support each other with the challenges?
LEARNING FOCUS AREA #4

Preparing to Let Go

At the end of the program, families start reviewing their whole experience, planning for their last weeks with the students and preparing to let go of their new family member. Use these monthly reflections to enhance this process. Help the families think deeply about their AFS experiences as a family and as individuals.

Encourage everyone to go beyond the obvious high and low points and identify what they have gained and learned during their hosting experience. Also, help the family examine the skills and tools they have developed and used—and discuss ways to continue using these skills in their everyday lives.

Discuss the benefits of staying involved with AFS by becoming AFS volunteers or supporting AFS in other ways to enjoy being part of a network of people with similar experiences and commitment to fostering intercultural learning and understanding.

Finally, point out that the AFS hosting and learning experience has launched a lifelong learning adventure and that the intercultural skills and tools they’ve acquired should become part of each family member’s everyday personal and professional lives.
9th Month (Learning Focus Area #4)

› Help the family prepare for the departure of their host student.
› Ask the family members to discuss the most memorable learning moments for themselves and their student. Begin by asking questions such as:
   - What were the main challenges you faced in helping somebody adapt to your culture?
   - What were some of the most surprising cultural differences you discovered?
   - What are the differences in values? In communication styles? In the sense of time?
   - To what extent did the student conform or contradict your general thinking about their culture?
   - What suggestions would you give to someone who considers hosting for the first time?
   - What advice do you have for future AFS students or local host families and schools?
   - Based on how you understand the AFS experience, who in this community do you think would be a good host family? Why?

HOST STUDENT AND FAMILY ACTIVITY
Ask both the student and the host family again to discuss these three questions:

• What was everyone’s highlight of the month?
• What was everyone’s main challenge?
• How can we better support each other with the challenges?
10th Month (Learning Focus Area #4)

› Help the family reflect on the permanent changes brought about by the hosting experience.
› Ask family members to list things they will miss when their student is gone.
› As they had welcomed the student to their home, many things have changed to accommodate the new person. When the student returns back home, some things will change back to the way they were before arrival, and others will remain changed. Ask the family if they can think of the things most likely to remain changed and why that is.
› During your conversation, refer to the end-of-stay orientation and the fifth newsletter, especially the testimonial of a host family that reflects on the transformation they have undergone throughout the experience and the article that helps families continue their journey to become more globally aware and on how to view global issues from a more intercultural perspective. (see page 43 for more information about the end-of-stay orientation, and page 75 for the fifth newsletter).

HOST STUDENT AND FAMILY ACTIVITY
Ask both the student and the host family again to discuss these final reflection questions:

• What was the highlight of our time together?
• Does anyone remember the funniest story?
• What were the main challenges?
• What was the main learning?
• What is each of us proud we did?
• What does each of us wish we did differently?
FOCUS

These newsletters should be shared with host families in addition to the practical program-related materials. They should inspire host families to explore intercultural learning issues more deeply, within their own home and on their own time. Each newsletter should have an interactive and engaging aspect suited to the needs of host families, such as a video the family can watch together to explore communication styles, a quiz to complete together over dinner or critical articles on world events and globally important issues.

Families hosting a student for the European Citizenship Trimester Program (ECTP) should be aware of the fact that the students receive emails from the ECTP orientation team with tasks and reflections and that this program has specific content. The host families should be encouraged to engage in conversations connected to this content—newsletters sent to ECTP host families can and should include corresponding articles.

The local contact person can follow up on the content of these newsletters during the monthly contacts & learning reflections.

The content of the newsletters should build on the previous issues. Make sure to provide a brief summary or overview of key points previously discussed and to invite families to request copies of preceding newsletters if needed.

SUGGESTED STRUCTURE OF NEWSLETTER:

› Opening/introductory article
› Testimonial host family
› Content article
› Suggested video/film with accompanying questions to discuss after watching (visit the dedicated space in the AFS World Cafe for a selection of videos at: woca.afs.org/education)

The opening or introductory article should put the current newsletter into context, by reviewing the stage of the program, explaining the learning objectives touched upon in the newsletter and similar current issues.

Testimonial articles should be collected from genuine former host families. This is a great way to engage them in the volunteer work and also to help them in their reflection processes. Testimonial articles are good tools for peer facilitation.

*Templates for newsletters can be found in the World Cafe and will be uploaded there upon their completion.
Content articles can be a bit more ‘academic’ but should not be overly theoretical and complicated to read. They can explain a theoretical model AFS is using during the program (make sure it’s one that readers have already encountered or that’s referred to in one of the current orientations or Monthly Contacts & Learning sessions), they can give practical real-life examples for intercultural learning issues, etc. You can invite academic experts to provide the content article, or you can engage your own alumni and volunteer base in this. For inspiration, have a look at the ICL Blog. If you ‘recycle’ articles you found elsewhere, make sure you have permission to do so and translate into your local language(s).

The videos can be anything from short clips (advertisements that fit a message or self-made clips for the purpose) to short movies or documentaries. Selecting the right kind of video for each newsletter can be a great task for a trainers pool. Make sure that the videos can be watched online and are accessible (if need be, save them and send recipients a link to a space on your website for download). Don’t forget to provide a set of suitable guiding questions for a discussion after watching!
Newsletter 1

WHEN
Within the first two weeks after the students arrival in the host country.

FOCUS
› Present the newsletter as an educational resource that will offer the host family moments of reflection throughout their Learning Journey
› Share a testimonial of a host family addressing hopes, expectations and fears of host families with the arrival of the new member
› Include an article about communication – verbal and non-verbal
› Share a video on first impressions and/or misinterpretations with accompanying questions for discussion

AFS LEARNING OBJECTIVES ADDRESSED

Self-Awareness
3 To accept and appreciate the changes the family experiences when hosting a student, and to view such changes as learning opportunities

Communication Skills and Empathy
4 To learn how to become thoughtful active listeners and respond with respect for the other person
5 To be aware, able to recognize and interpret non-verbal communication signals

Intercultural Competence
9 To appreciate diversity and to engage display respect for and accept people with diverse backgrounds, attitudes, opinions, lifestyles and values
WHEN
Approximately six weeks after the students arrival in the host country.

FOCUS
› Share an article that focuses on empathy: how being empathetic can help the family members face the adjustment process with a more positive outlook (for inspiration, see AFS Intercultural Link Volume 2 Issue 2, Global Edition, April/May/June 2011, pages 3 and 4; available via the ICL Digital Library at icllibrary.afs.org)
› Provide a testimonial of a host family that describes the first phase of their experience (satisfactions, difficulties, influences on family life/family members, expectations for the future)
› Write an article about values: How values may change from culture to culture and from person to person
› Cover any of these topics in a video, with accompanying questions for discussion

AFS LEARNING OBJECTIVES ADDRESSED

Self-Awareness
1. To better understand themselves as individuals, as a family and the influence of their own cultural background(s)
2. To become more aware of the influence of cultural backgrounds on perception, behavior, values and attitudes
3. To accept and appreciate the changes the family experiences when hosting a student, and to view such changes as learning opportunities

Communication Skills and Empathy
6. To listen be mindful of the needs of other people and consider different perspectives when approaching problems and everyday situations
7. To develop a deeper concern for and sensitivity to others
8. To expand the capacity and willingness of all family members to perceive and respond to the values, feelings, and realities of others

Intercultural Competence
9. To appreciate diversity and to engage display respect for and accept people with diverse backgrounds, attitudes, opinions, lifestyles and values
Newsletter 3

WHEN
Approximately halfway through the program.

FOCUS
› Include an article reminding families of the objectives of the program. Emphasize the necessity to reflect on how the experience has affected the family and the student so far. Also stress the importance of establishing clear Learning Objectives for the program.

› Share a host family testimonial reflecting on the first half of their experience (satisfactions, difficulties, influences on family life/family members, expectations for the future, etc.). Some tips on strategies that worked for them when dealing with the cultural differences might also be helpful at this stage.

› Provide an article about how crisis can be seen as an opportunity for learning rather than a problem.

› Include a video on continued motivation to learn and grow with accompanying questions for discussion.

AFS LEARNING OBJECTIVES ADDRESSED

Self-Awareness
• To accept and appreciate the changes the family experiences when hosting a student, and to view such changes as learning opportunities.

Communication Skills and Empathy
• To listen be mindful of the needs of other people and consider different perspectives when approaching problems and everyday situations.
• To develop a deeper concern for and sensitivity to others.
• To expand the capacity and willingness of all family members to perceive and respond to the values, feelings, and realities of others.

Intercultural Competence
• To develop strategies for coping with cultural differences.
• To understand that strong and lasting relationships, friendships and family bonds are strengthened when individuals embrace cultural differences, as well similarities.
Newsletter 4

WHEN
Approximately two months before the end of the program.

FOCUS
› Include an article offering a reflection on how the student is now truly a part of the family and how the host family’s view of the world (not just the individual host student) has changed since the beginning of the experience
› Share a testimonial of a host family that focuses on the educational benefits that they feel they have gained throughout the experience
› Offer an article that highlights the fact that the families are entering the final leg of the program. The host family and student should start preparing mentally for the departure of the student and the student’s return home. They should also identify which competences still need to be further developed during the remainder of their time together on the program
› Provide a video about prejudices with accompanying questions for discussion

AFS LEARNING OBJECTIVES ADDRESSED
Self-Awareness
3 To accept and appreciate the changes the family experiences when hosting a student, and to view such changes as learning opportunities

Communication Skills and Empathy
7 To develop a deeper concern for and sensitivity to others
6 To expand the capacity and willingness of all family members to perceive and respond to the values, feelings, and realities of others

Intercultural Competence
9 To appreciate diversity and to engage, display respect for and accept people with diverse backgrounds, attitudes, opinions, lifestyles and values
10 To overcome ethnocentric worldviews when interacting with new people social situations and cultural norms
12 To understand that strong and lasting relationships, friendships and family bonds are strengthened when all individuals embrace cultural differences, as well as similarities

Global Concern
15 To become interested and concerned about global affairs and aware of the impact our choices have on other people
Newsletter 5

WHEN
Approximately three weeks before the end of the program.

FOCUS
› Provide an article that stimulates the families to reflect on the program as a whole, with regards to the educational and social* value it offers to all involved. What can the host family do to continue this Learning Journey?
  • Through their participation, the host family has likely acquired acquaintances and connections within their community.
› Include a testimonial of a host family that reflects on the transformation they have undergone throughout the experience
› Write an article that helps families continue their journey to become more globally aware with insights on how to view global issues from a more intercultural perspective
› Share a video on intercultural global awareness with accompanying questions for discussion

AFS LEARNING OBJECTIVES ADDRESSED

Self-Awareness
1. To better understand themselves as individuals, as a family and the influence of their own cultural background(s)
2. To become more aware of the influence of cultural backgrounds on perception, behavior, values and attitudes
3. To accept and appreciate the changes the family experiences when hosting a student, and to view such changes as learning opportunities

Intercultural Competence
2. To understand that strong and lasting relationships, friendships and family bonds are strengthened when all individuals embrace cultural differences, as well as similarities

Global Concern
1. To become interested and concerned about global affairs and aware of the impact our choices have on other people
4. To become a volunteer committed to making positive change in local, national and/or global communities
AFTER
the AFS Intercultural Experience

Rounding up the experience and preparing host families to begin their lives as global citizens

This section contains activities to address AFS Learning Objectives for:

- Post-Program Appreciation & Debriefing
- Volunteer Recruitment
AFTER the AFS Intercultural Experience

The learning journey of AFS host families does not stop at the end of their intercultural experience. The ‘final’ stage of the intercultural discovery is in some ways actually the beginning of a life-long reflection on the experience and their lives as global citizens. It is now that host families will begin to look back on the time spent hosting a student summarize their experiences and start to apply what they have learned through AFS for their futures.

AFS volunteers and staff should pay special attention to showing post program appreciation to host families and debriefing their learning experiences.

This part of the learning journey is also crucial for volunteer recruitment and engagement. It is a stepping-stone for life-long learning and participation in the AFS family.
Focus

At this point on their intercultural journey with AFS, most families will be getting used to life after the hosting program. AFS volunteers and staff should make sure to conduct a reflection on the experience and start rounding up any open issues. Show appreciation to host families for going through the intercultural journey, making progress with the Educational Goals and supporting the learning and involve them with preparing future host families for their experience; you can also help with the transition of families from program participants to active volunteers.

AFS Learning Objectives & Activities

Self-Awareness

• To accept and appreciate the changes the family experiences when hosting a student, and to view such changes as learning opportunities

Host Family Activities

› Conduct an activity or a discussion to help the families deal with the changes created by the hosting experience and the gap the host student left after departure. Ask them questions about the changes they have observed so far in the family as result of the hosting program and their ways of dealing with the changes

Communication Skills and Empathy

• To develop a deeper concern for sensitivity to others
• To expand the capacity and willingness of all family members to perceive and respond to the values, feelings, and realities of others

Host Family Activities

› Hold an activity to help the families deal with the lasting effects of the hosting experience. Ask the families to reflect on their experience so far:
  - What advice would they give to future host families?
  - What advice do they have for exchange students?
  - How can AFS better support host families?
Intercultural Competence

To overcome ethnocentric worldviews when interacting with new people, social situations and cultural norms

HOST FAMILY ACTIVITIES

Review the DMIS materials that the families were acquainted with in the previous orientations and through materials shared. (See Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity for AFS & Friends, available in the ICL Digital Library at icllibrary.afs.org for more information.) Ask the host families:

- Where do you think you are now on the DMIS scale?
- Has your sensitivity towards cultures improved due to the hosting program?
- What events during the hosting program made the most significant impact on your intercultural sensitivity?
- What advice would you give others who are about to start their hosting program?

Global Concern

To become interested and concerned about global affairs and aware of the impact our choices have on other people

HOST FAMILY ACTIVITIES

Conduct the Customer Service Evaluation. Make sure to follow-up on any open questions you receive as well as any negative feedback

Ask members of the families to contribute to the training of future host families by reflecting on their own experience and writing down their advice, learning points and main takeaways. They can be as creative as they wish with this activity, perhaps making a video or speaking during a webinar or an event in the local community to promote AFS hosting programs

Invite host families to become active AFS volunteers and integrate them in the local structures (see ‘Volunteer Recruitment’ next page)
Volunteer Recruitment

**FOCUS**

While host families within AFS are, in essence, volunteers (because they don’t get a fee for hosting), they are often not official active AFS volunteers. Volunteer recruitment (and development), therefore, is a chance for host families to further develop their cultural knowledge, attitudes and awareness of the AFS *Educational Goals*, while contributing to the organizational development of AFS. Volunteers and staff working with host families should emphasize that the AFS learning journey can last a lifetime, and that volunteering is a perfect opportunity for families to improve and practice their intercultural and interpersonal skills and contribute to the global community.

**AFS LEARNING OBJECTIVES & ACTIVITIES**

**Global Concern**

- To become interested and concerned about global affairs and aware of the impact our choices has on other people
- To become a volunteer committed to making positive change in local, national and/or global communities

**HOST FAMILY ACTIVITIES**

- Organize events, such as a round table discussion meeting with various people linked to AFS programs in different capacities (teachers, students, sending families, host families)
- Introduce new host families to the group and ensure that they have opportunities to continue being involved in AFS programs as support for future host families and students
- In addition to enabling families to support AFS programs, you should provide opportunities for meaningful volunteering and changemaking on global issues in the local community
Appendix

84  What to Do When There is a Crisis
85  When is it Time to Involve the AFS Support Staff
86  D.I.V.E. - Describe, Interpret, Verify, Evaluate
87  HANDOUT 1: Starting Life As a Family
95  HANDOUT 2: Cultural and Family Heritage Discussion Guide
96  HANDOUT 3: Values and Behavior Exercise
99  HANDOUT 4: Nonverbal Communication
100 HANDOUT 5: Communication Styles and The Concept of Time
103 References
What to Do When There is a Crisis

Following are required action steps for all support volunteers when a student (or host family) situation becomes serious.

When you determine that a situation has escalated to the point of serious concern or crisis, communication is key. Be sure that you as a volunteer know how to contact the following four parties: the student, the host family, other local volunteers and your national AFS office. Your national AFS office has a 24-hour emergency phone number (duty office number). We recommend you keep all of these numbers handy, i.e. add them to the contact list in your mobile phone.

Additionally, please make note of the following key requirements and considerations:

- If a student or host family member calls you about a medical emergency, make sure that the participant goes to see a doctor and get as much information as possible regarding where the participant is going, for example, the name and location of the hospital, etc.
- If a student reports that the words or behavior of someone in the host family is making them uncomfortable and compromising their feeling of safety—including inappropriate sexual behavior or open use of drugs for non-medicinal purposes within the host family home—you must move the participant immediately to a safe place while you learn more about the situation.
- If a student is arrested, it is important to be sure that they get legal advice right away so that their legal rights are understood and respected. If the national AFS office needs extra assistance, they will contact AFS International.
- Any of the above situations (or similar) must be reported immediately to the national AFS office. Use the 24-hour emergency phone number if the office is closed but do not wait to communicate the situation.
- If a participant is moved out of a home for any reason and the office is closed, notify the 24-hour emergency number so that the office may contact the AFS sending partner. In this day of immediate communications, it is to be expected that a participant will notify the parents quickly, so AFS must also act very quickly.
When is it Time to Involve the AFS Support Staff

This section is a brief reminder of when to involve staff in support issues with exchange students. Check with your local AFS office to see if detailed local guidelines also exist (for example, in your organization’s Support Handbook). If so, be sure to review these.

In the AFS Participation Agreement, AFS commits to informing the sending parents of any significant change in their child’s welfare. In an age when students have the ability to quickly inform their parents of such changes, it is vitally important for support volunteers to keep their local AFS office informed of such situations as well*.

- The following situations should be reported immediately to the local AFS office and if the office is closed, should be reported to the 24-hour emergency number (duty officer) for the AFS organization:
  - Any sudden, unplanned family change no matter the reason for the change
  - Any significant medical issue such as injury, illness, hospitalization or psychological situation.
  - Any incident where the student is a victim of a crime.
  - Any incident where the student is suspected of committing a crime and/or is arrested.
  - Any situation where the student and host family are having serious difficulties, especially if the student is not observing family rules.
  - Any notice that a student is not doing well in school.
  - Any time the area where the student is hosted experiences a natural disaster (earthquake, flood, severe storm, etc.) and it is reasonable that someone far away would be concerned for the student’s wellbeing.

It is important to recognize that although the student may contact the sending parents with information, the students who have experienced a traumatic incident of any sort may filter what they tell their parents and it is the responsibility of AFS to present as clear a picture as possible of the facts as well as the support being given to the student. It is worth noting that although support volunteers should make an effort to remind the student of their support and learning facilitator roles, sometimes students do not realize that the person giving them support is an AFS volunteer responsible for monitoring their wellbeing (the student may think of you as a friend). Thus, in situations such as the above, verbally confirming your AFS role to the student as a support volunteer as well as giving a full and clear report to the office is vital.

*Note: Remember that sending parents expect to hear from AFS about issues. If they hear only from their child, they will only get one perspective on the issue. Therefore, it is important for volunteers to share the facts and impressions with the office in a timeline fashion to help AFS best support both the student and their parents.
D.I.V.E. - Describe, Interpret, Verify, Evaluate

With all of the cultural and personal differences that we encounter daily, it is necessary to have some strategies for when we are confronted with them, or in general, when we find unclear circumstances or something feels ‘strange’. D.I.V.E. is one of the strategies that can help you in these situations. Objectives of this strategy are to be able to:

- Distinguish between descriptions, interpretations, and evaluations;
- Produce neutral descriptions of situations;
- Respond effectively and appropriately within an intercultural interaction;

There are lots of examples of intercultural interactions that involve a misunderstanding and/or confusion. In the monthly learning reflections, when helping the host families overcome these misunderstandings, guide them through the four steps of D.I.V.E.:

**DESCRIBE** what you see:
What are the elements of the situations you can observe? Try to be as objective as possible and only stick to the facts.

**INTERPRET** how you make sense of what you see:
What are your assumptions about what you described? How would you characterize?

**VERIFY** what deeper insights other can provide:
As a support volunteer, you can be the cultural informant to help the host family understand the situations. Are they any other ways the host family could check if the interpretation was correct?

**EVALUATE** what value judgments you give to this situation:
How would you qualify and judge what you see?

Discuss the host family’s observations:

- **What other ways are there to describe the situation?**
- **What are your observations of the perceived behavior?**
- **How did your evaluation of the situation influence your action?**

For a complete learning session outline, please refer to our manual *What Every AFSer Should Know about ICL® 2.0* (available via the ICL Digital Library at icllibrary.afs.org)
WHO IS IT FOR?
All family members living in the host home and the AFS student should participate in this activity.

INSTRUCTIONS
Please read this handout carefully and have an overview about this activity before your student arrives.

Decide in advance which family member(s) will explain the ‘house rules’ to your student, who will show them around the house, who will assist them in using electrical devices and so on. Be aware that this activity lasts several hours and plan on spending some extra time for follow up with the student during the first days.

When the student arrives in your home, you will of course have many things to talk about and many questions to ask each other. These questions will help you get to know each other and learn to live together while sharing an intercultural experience. As you know, many of your family’s habits and daily routines may be quite different from those of your AFS student.

Remember that this is a lot of information for your student, especially if shared in a foreign language, and that they might be tired both physically and emotionally when they first arrive. Take your time and split this exercise into small tasks that are conducted over several days, ideally following the order shared here. Don’t get impatient if not everything is understood the first time and you have to repeat things several times. This is normal and your newest family member will appreciate your patience.

Host families come in all shapes and sizes - not all have kids, some have extended family members living at home, etc. so feel free to adapt this exercise as appropriate for your specific family configuration.

Finally, if you find that your student’s language skills are weak, feel free to revisit certain items later and as often as needed.
1. FAMILY BASICS

› What should your student call you? What do your children (if any living at home) call you? (Mom/Dad, first name, etc.)

› Greeting words and habits vary from culture to culture. What do you say when you first see a family member in the morning, when you come home, when you leave home? Tell your student!

› Should your student have his or her own key? Show them how to open and lock the doors and which key goes into which lock.

› If possible add the student’s name on the door/mailbox.

What does your student call their parents at home? Do they feel uncomfortable calling you mom and dad right away?

2. HOW WE SHARE OUR SPACE (INTRODUCING THE STUDENT’S ROOM)

› Does your student share the bedroom with siblings or have their own room? Show them where your bedroom is and where your children and other family members sleep and spend time.

› Show your student where they can put clothes, shoes, books, plus how to open the window, close the curtains, turn on the air conditioning/heating, etc.

› Share with the student the degree to which they may personalize their bedroom by moving the furniture, putting up pictures, etc. and what should be used to place items on the walls (for example tape, push-pins, nails...)

› In some cultures the bedroom is only used for sleeping; in others it is also where you study and entertain. What are your habits? What do your children do? Show your student where they can do homework, read, listen to music and engage in hobbies

Encourage your student to tell you whether their family at home lives in a house or apartment (flat), how many people live there, what this place looks like, etc. Do they have photos of this they can share?
3. HOW WE STRUCTURE OUR DAYS

› At what time/s do family members usually wake up on weekdays and on weekends?
› Do you wake up your children in the morning or do they set an alarm clock? How should your student handle this?
› When do family members go to bed? What time do you expect your student to go to bed on weekdays and weekends? Do you have rules for this or does everyone do as they like?
› Do you respect certain hours as prayer or quiet time? Which ones and how does the family behave?
› At what time/s may/should your student...
  - Use the internet? Are there passwords
  - Watch TV?
  - Listen to music?
  - Do homework?
  - Use the bathroom to shower or bathe?
  - Other?
› Do you have set times for this? Are all family members free to do as they wish as long as they don’t disturb others?
› How do you usually spend time after dinner? With the family? With friends? Or does everybody go to their room? Let your student know!

Encourage your student to describe with you - over a meal, during a family meeting or just casually - their everyday life in the home culture!
4. HOW WE SHARE MEALS AND FOOD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPICAL MEALTIMES</th>
<th>WEEKDAYS</th>
<th>WEEKENDS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Breakfast</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snacks/tea/other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dinner</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

› Do you have all certain meals together with all family members? Which are these? Tell your student if they should be home for dinner or get up early enough to have breakfast together.

› Are there fixed seats for every family member at the table? If so show your student where they should sit.

› Do you have a ‘dress code’ for meals (e.g. no pajamas for breakfast)? If yes, make sure that your student is aware of this!

› Do you thank the person(s) who cooked? If yes, what do you say?

› Ask your student whether they have any food allergy or religious restriction regarding food.

› Show your student what a usual portion is or how much family members normally take from shared dishes.

› What things may your student use in the kitchen (such as the microwave, stove, dish washer)? Show them how to use these devices. Should they ask first? What are they expected to contribute in the kitchen (for example, clearing the table, washing dishes, cooking)?

› May your student help themselves to food from the refrigerator/cupboards between meals? Should they ask first? Show them where to find what!

› May your student take food outside of the kitchen? If yes, to which rooms? How do you handle this with your children?

› Will your student take a lunch to school, or be given an allowance to purchase lunch from the school cafeteria or similar? Or will they be expected to come home for lunch?

› Who will prepare the lunch (if applicable)?

Ask your student what they usually eat for breakfast, lunch and dinner and what their favorite foods are! Do they have lunch at school or at home in the host country? Which family members participate in meals?
5. HOW WE USE THE BATHROOM

› Show your student where they can put their towel, toothbrush, shampoo, etc. and where they can find towels.
› Explain, how they are supposed to leave the bathroom after they are finished (door open or closed; fan, lights, heater off/on etc.)?
› How long is your student allowed to take a shower? When, how often?
› For girls, explain how to discard used sanitary napkins and tampons. Is there any place to store them?
› Be aware of the fact that toilets and showers might function differently in your student’s culture and that they might not be familiar with using yours. Show your student how to use the shower and which articles may be thrown in the toilet and which not. Make sure that they are fully comfortable using the bathroom!
› Which articles are used by all family members (for example, soap, shampoo, brush)? Which are not?
› Will your student use the family supply of such personal toiletries or should they purchase these on their own?

› Which articles are used by all family members (for example, soap, shampoo, brush)? Which are not?

How is this handled in your student’s family?

6. HOW WE HELP EACH OTHER WITHIN OUR HOUSEHOLD

› What do you expect your student to do on a daily basis? Tell them!
  - Make the bed
  - Keep the bedroom tidy
  - Keep the bathroom tidy
  - Other:
› How do your children help in the household? Are there any chores you expect your student to do or share with their host siblings? Which?
  - Take out the garbage/recycling
  - Set/clear the table
  - Do the dishes
  - Yard work
  - Walk the dog
  - Feed the pets
  - Vacuum or sweep the floors
  - Other:
7. OUR HOUSE RULES AND HABITS

› Are there any areas of the home in which your student is not allowed? Examples include parents bedroom, cellar...

› Are doors usually closed or open? Should they knock on the door when it is closed?

› Do you wear shoes in the house? Where, where not? Not at all?

› Do you accept smoking in the house or outside? Not at all?

› Do you have a cleaning person or somebody to help in the household? What does this person do? If so, how should your student treat this person?

› What things may your student use around the house? Should they ask first?
  - Sewing machine
  - Piano
  - Stereo
  - Other:

› May your student use the phone to talk with friends from school? If so, for how long? At what times? What are the rules for your children?

› What are the rules for making long distance phone calls? Should your student ask first? Are they expected to pay for each call? Should their parents call back? Do you use voice over internet (Skype or another program) to call via the internet?

› What are the family’s rules regarding internet usage? Did your student bring his or her own laptop or can they use the family’s computer? How long and how often? When? Should they ask first?

› What habits do you have for watching TV or playing video games? When and how often may your student watch TV? Which broadcasts are OK, which not?

› Do you have other house rules? Think of punctuality, tidiness, etc.

What are your student’s responsibilities in their family home?
8. OUR ACTIVITIES WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY

› Is your student allowed to invite friends to the house? If so, at what time/s and under what conditions? What is OK spontaneously; what should be announced in advance?

› Do you want to be introduced to your student’s friends? Where do your children meet with friends – at school, outside, at a sport club, at home in the living room, in their bedroom?

› May your student go out with friends at night during the week or on weekends? If so, by what time should they return home? What are the possibilities to get home late? What information do you expect your student to give you: when, where, with whom, how long, a phone number?

› What would be your position if your student meets a boyfriend/girlfriend? Would you accept this? Do you want to know this person? Could your student invite him or her to your house? How would you handle this with your own children?

› Does the family share certain activities in which your student will be expected to participate? Think of attending sports games, community events, go skiing etc.

› What role does the larger extended family (grandparents, aunts/uncles, cousins…) play for you? Do you expect your student to come and see them on weekends?

› Does the family attend religious services? If so, may or should your student attend them as well?

› If your student would like to attend religious services different from that of your family, how can you arrange for him or her to attend these services, if possible?

9. SAFETY ISSUES

› Is there anything your student should know about safe and less safe areas in the (part of) town where you live? Are there guidelines about where it is safe/unsafe to walk during the day, after dark? Show them on a map!

› How should a fire or other emergency be handled? What are the telephone numbers of related emergency services? Put a list with important
telephone numbers next to the telephone (e. g. police, fire responders, neighbors, relatives and friends living nearby, local AFS volunteers, national AFS office, AFS emergency cell phone).

› Where does your student find first aid supplies in the house?

› How do you secure the home? Lock the doors and windows? When you go out, do you always close the door with the key or only close it by pulling? Show your student what you expect them to do!

› How does your student best safeguard their belongings, such as passport, bank cards, traveler’s checks, camera?

› If home alone, how should your student respond to someone on the phone or someone who comes to the door?

› What does your student need to know about traffic and pedestrian safety?

› What should your student do if they get lost in town or if doesn’t have the house keys and nobody is home?

› What should the student always carry with them (e. g. a copy of passport, AFS ID card, host family’s phone number)?

› Is there anything your student should know about the high school culture, school rules, race relations, and other tensions?

› Are there activities, people, places your student should avoid? What should they find out about a party, concert etc. before deciding to go?

› Does a curfew exist in your town?

› Do you have special recommendations for girls (e. g. going out in twos or in a group, not coming home alone late at night)?

› What is the legal age for drinking alcohol? How is it enforced? What repercussions may result from breaking this law?

› How is alcohol accepted in society? What is normal (e. g. a glass of wine for dinner), what is abuse? How can your student avoid being at a party where people abuse alcohol or other substances? Keep in mind that consuming drugs, driving and hitchhiking break the Golden Rules of AFS and if broken, the student should immediately return to their home country
HANDBOOK 2: Cultural & Family Heritage Discussion

WHO IS IT FOR?
All family members living in the host home and the AFS student should participate in this activity.

INSTRUCTIONS
To help you and your student get to know each other, get everyone together and try to reflect on your family roots and discuss family heritage. This simple but meaningful activity gives you both the chance to understand where the other comes from and what they value.

Ask each other the following questions and take turns sharing your answers:

- Where does your family come from?
- What does your family name mean?
- What are some important events in your family history?
- What is important about your family that you would like to share with the other person?

You can also explore and discuss the similarities and differences you find between the two families and cultures.
HANDOUT 3: Values and Behavior Exercise

INSTRUCTIONS
Using this handout, mark your answers to the following questions. It is possible to give more than one answer. The AFS student should respond as if they were in their home culture. Then, for every question, compare your answers and explain to each other why you selected the one(s) you did. The further questions and ideas in italic might help you!

1. WHAT IS IT MOST LIKELY TO MEAN IF A PERSON DOES NOT FINISH THEIR PLATE OF FOOD AT A MEAL?
   A. They don't like the food.
   B. They are politely showing that they don't want more food.
   C. They don't care about wasting food.
   D. They are impolite
   E. We don't have plates, but share dishes.

HOST FAMILY:
STUDENT:

Explain to each other how you would indicate in a family setting that you like or don’t like the food. How do you indicate that you want or don’t want more food? What do you consider as ‘wasting food?’ How much food should you eat? What kind of behavior at the table is impolite?

2. WHAT IS IT MOST LIKELY TO MEAN IF A PERSON CLOSES THE DOOR TO THEIR ROOM?
   A. They want to be private.
   B. They are sleeping.
   C. They don’t like you.
   D. They are angry.
   E. They are unhappy.
   F. Nothing special.

HOST FAMILY:
STUDENT:
Explain to each other: Can everybody come in when the door to your bedroom is closed? Should people knock first? How do you express that you don’t want to be disturbed? When do you leave the door open?

3. WHAT DO YOU THINK IF A TEENAGER IS SITTING IN THE PARENT’S BEDROOM WHEN THE PARENTS ARE NOT THERE?

A. They should not be there.
B. They are watching TV.
C. Nothing special.
D. This is very uncommon.

HOST FAMILY:

STUDENT:

Is the parents’ bedroom a place that every family member can use or are children not allowed to go there? Are there family activities that only take place in the parents’ room (watching television, for example)? What other rooms might be public or private?

4. AT HOME, HOW DO YOU GENERALLY KNOW THAT THE BATHROOM IS AVAILABLE?

A. The door is open.
B. The light is off.
C. Everybody is in another room.
D. By knocking on the door.

HOST FAMILY:

STUDENT:

Explain to each other why you leave the bathroom door open or why you close it. How do you know that somebody is using the bathroom? Is the toilet room separated from the bath? Within a family, how much privacy is expected when using the bathroom? Is it common for siblings of the opposite sex to be in the bathroom at the same time? Is it common for each member of the family to have his or her private bathroom? What behaviors are seen as considerate of others when the bathroom is shared? Is it natural or is it embarrassing to talk about use of the bathroom?
5. WHAT DO YOU THINK IF A PERSON SPENDS 30 OR 45 MINUTES IN THE BATHROOM?

A. Nothing, this is usual.
B. They are wasting water.
C. They have a date tonight.
D. They are hygienic and concerned about their appearance.
E. They do not consider people's needs.

HOST FAMILY:

STUDENT:

What is the appropriate amount of time to spend taking a shower or bath? Is hot water expensive or always available? What are the expectations of others who may share the bathroom?

6. WHAT ROLE DOES THE FAMILY PLAY?

A. Young adults leave home and are free to pursue their own careers and interests and look after themselves. They get together with extended family for special occasions, but may not have much in common with others in the family.
B. There are always some family obligations. In the family you are part of a mutual support network and you must often give up your own interests for the good of the family.
C. Ties with family are more important than any other obligations. Throughout one's life, a person is expected to call at any time to their family network for aid, comfort and advice, and to provide this support as well.
D. It depends on your role in the family (whether you are the oldest or youngest, a daughter or son, mother, husband, etc.).

HOST FAMILY:

STUDENT:

Which of these best expresses the role that your family has in your everyday life? Compare your results. Can you imagine why your answers are similar or different?
HANDOUT 4: Nonverbal Communication

WHO IS IT FOR?
All family members living in the host home and the AFS student should participate in this activity.

TAKE NOTE
Developing relationships with people from different cultures is not easy. The unspoken rules of a society especially may be a challenge for you and your student. This exercise can help you to understand each other better.

INSTRUCTIONS
1. First, the student shares with the host family what specific non-verbal behaviors have caught their attention over the past months. Then members of the host family explain each one of those nonverbal behaviors to the student.
2. Next, the host family demonstrates some typical gestures from the host culture and what they mean.
3. Finally, the student shares some typical gestures from their home culture and their meaning.

Please, use the following questions to guide your conversation:
- What are the main differences and similarities regarding non-verbal communication?
- What is the ideal physical distance in the host and home culture?
- How do you think culture influences these aspects of communications and interaction?
WHO IS IT FOR?
All family members living in the host home and the AFS student should participate in this activity.

TAKE NOTE
Developing relationships with people from different cultures is not easy. The unspoken rules of a society especially may be a challenge for you and your student. This exercise can help you to understand each other better.

INSTRUCTIONS
As with the Values and Behavior Exercise, using this handout, mark your answers to the following questions. It is possible to give more than one answer. The AFS student should respond as if they were in their home culture. Then, for every question, compare your answers and explain to each other why you selected the one(s) you did. The questions and ideas in italics might help you!

1. WHAT WOULD YOU BE MOST LIKELY TO CONCLUDE IF A PERSON IS NOT TALKATIVE?
   A. They are shy.
   B. They find it hard to know appropriate topics to talk about.
   C. They don’t know the language well.
   D. They don’t like you.
   E. They are unhappy.
   F. Nothing special.

   HOST FAMILY:
   STUDENT:
   Do you feel uncomfortable if a person is not talkative? Why or why not? How do you behave in this situation? How do you know what the quiet person is thinking?

2. WHAT DO YOU THINK IF PEOPLE ARE TALKING LOUDLY, IF YOU DON’T UNDERSTAND THE LANGUAGE?
   A. They are fighting.
   B. They are disturbing others.
   C. Nothing special, people always talk loudly.
   D. It is important what they are saying, they want to emphasize it.
   E. They should speak softer; everyone can hear what they are talking about.

   HOST FAMILY:
   STUDENT:
Is your normal speaking voice loud or soft? Do you have to strain or move more closely to hear your AFS participant when they speak? Does it feel that your host family is shouting at you? (or vice versa?) Under what situations might you talk more loudly than you do now? When might you speak more softly?

3. YOU ARE INVITED FOR DINNER AT 8 P.M. WHAT TIME DO YOU ARRIVE?

A. At half past seven, to help setting up the table.
B. At five to eight, just in time.
C. At quarter past eight, so that people have enough time to have everything ready.
D. Between half past eight and ten - at some time in the evening.

HOST FAMILY:

STUDENT:

When do you normally eat dinner? Is this the major meal of the day or a lighter one? In your own culture, how flexible or punctual do you need to be in this context? How is this determined?

4. HOW LATE CAN YOU ARRIVE FOR A PARTY?

E. 5 minutes.
F. 15 minutes.
G. 1 hour.
H. Doesn’t matter.

HOST FAMILY:

STUDENT:

What is the etiquette when going to a party? In your own culture, how flexible or punctual do you need to be in this context? How is this determined?
5. HOW MANY MINUTES WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE BEFORE YOU START THINKING A BUS/TRAIN IS OFFICIALLY DELAYED?

A. 10 minutes.
B. 1 minute.
C. 4 minutes.
D. 15 minutes.

HOST FAMILY:

STUDENT:

How does the public transport schedule work in both cultures? What are the possible issues affecting regular schedule in both cultures? What should the student do to make sure she or he catches the transport in time to meet their commitments?

6. HOW FAR IN THE FUTURE IS YOUR MOST DISTANT PLANNED PRIVATE EVENT?

HOST FAMILY:

STUDENT:

Is there any difference between family and other events? What are the factors that influence how much in advance we plan?
References

› **AFS Resources**

**AFS Digital Intercultural Library**
[icllibrary.afs.org](http://icllibrary.afs.org)

This is a depository for intercultural learning and quality standards materials, projects and ideas from across the AFS network—whether at the partner, regional or international level, as well as from external resources. You can access it using your AFS Global account, or sign up for it at the home page.

**Connect: Intercultural Insights for Global Citizens — curated by AFS Intercultural Programs**
[medium.com/connect-intercultural-insights-for-global-citizens](https://medium.com/connect-intercultural-insights-for-global-citizens)

This is the digital publication of AFS Intercultural Programs focused on intercultural learning, global citizenship education, voluntarism and social impact within the AFS network and beyond. The *Connect* publication is a platform for sharing AFS’s expertise in global citizenship matters and for engaging in meaningful discussions with our readers, supporters and global citizenship enthusiasts. By exchanging ideas and tackling the topical 21st century issues relevant globally, AFS advances its mission to educate leaders of positive change in our societies.

**Intercultural Link news magazine**

This is the quarterly news magazine on intercultural learning in the AFS network. The news magazine features content shared by AFSers and guest writers, including information on trends in intercultural education, interviews with experts in the field and overviews of upcoming and previous conferences. You can sign up to receive the news magazine regularly by using the address provided above.

**ICL for AFSers & Friends**
[go.afs.org/ICLforAFSers&Friends](http://go.afs.org/ICLforAFSers&Friends)

This is a series of short, insightful articles on important intercultural topics featuring AFSers point of view. There are intended for AFSers, educators and all others who either are or would like to improve their intercultural competences and become involved with the AFS mission.

**AFS Education & Intercultural Learning Blog**
[go.afs.org/ICLblog](http://go.afs.org/ICLblog)

This is a space for sharing ideas, articles, materials, news and recommendations related to intercultural learning from the AFS network and beyond.
What Every AFSer Should Know about Intercultural Learning® 2.0
go.afs.org/WhatEveryAFSerShouldKnowAboutICL2.0

This training course is part of the AFS Intercultural Link Learning Program, a network-wide training and assessment program designed to help AFS volunteers and staff become better facilitators of intercultural learning for participants and families, as well as schools and other audiences.

Standards, Policies & Procedures in the AFS Global Library
go.afs.org/StandardsPoliciesProcedures

This includes AFS standards, program content information and program process information, such as administration, preparation and participation information.

Other Resources

An Introduction to Intercultural Communication (1985) by John C. Condon and Fathi S. Yousef

Basic Concepts of Intercultural Communication (1998) edited by Milton Bennett

Communicating Across Cultures (1998) Stella Ting-Toomey


Mapping the Broad Field of Multicultural and Intercultural Education Worldwide: Towards the Development of a New Citizen (2012) edited by Nektaria Palaiologou and Gunther Dietz

The Hidden Dimension (1966) by Edward T. Hall

The SAGE Handbook of Intercultural Competence (2009) edited by Darla Deardorff

The Silent Language (1859) by Edward T. Hall