

AFS Learning Objectives for Support Counseling

PERSONAL REALM

Self-awareness

- To become more fully self-aware, willing and able to view themselves objectively and to see themselves as deeply influenced by their own culture.
- To learn how to manage their internal moods, emotions and impulses, to use their inner resources to handle stress and ambiguity, “accepting responsibility for oneself”, and to show patience with other people who are in learning situations.

Creative thinking

- To view ordinary things, events and values from a fresh perspective so they are able to generate innovative ideas and “win – win” solutions.

Critical thinking

- To look beyond superficial appearances and to be skeptical of stereotypes.
- To form their own opinions based on recognizing that there are different ways to view things, more than one source of information and more than one solution to a problem.

Motivation and self-confidence

- To be comfortable and eager to pursue new learning situations.
- To be comfortable seeking support and receiving constructive criticism.
- To feel confident in their own abilities, to have a strong sense of self-worth and to be self-reliant.

Defining self in terms of ideals and values

- To develop personal goals in terms of academic knowledge and skills, character building, family interaction, etc. “At school, to succeed in different academic settings”
- To define and value themselves in terms of ideals and goals rather than material worth and to resist peer pressure that belittles the value of other individuals or groups.

Key:

Underlined = Learning Objectives most relevant for addressing serious behavior, host family, and school issues that may affect placement or result in an early return.

Italics = to add emphasis for key word(s) in the sentence

“Quotation” = words added to help participants with English as a second language better understand the concept

INTERPERSONAL REALM

Empathy

- To listen and be mindful of the needs of other people and to use different perspectives in approaching problems and everyday situations.
- To have a deeper concern for and sensitivity to others, and to expand their capacity to perceive and respond to the values, feelings and realities of others.
- To be able to *manage disagreements* with others effectively and respectfully.

Flexibility and social skills

- To be comfortable handling a wide range of social situations and *to adapt to new environments* by applying appropriate behaviors in diverse contexts.
- To enjoy themselves in the company of others and to be less preoccupied with their own needs or how others view them.
- To adjust to changing social circumstances and show greater flexibility in adjusting to new people, social situations and cultural norms.

Communication skills

- To develop skills in *listening actively and thoughtfully* and to respond with respect for the other person.
- To *express themselves* easily both verbally and non-verbally.
- To converse actively with a wide range of people.
- To speak with confidence in front of large groups.

Commitment to others and contributing to the group

- To engage with others in a spirit of cooperation, with respect and *“showing” appreciation* for their goals and decisions.
- To *contribute actively and positively* in school, community and family life.
- To be worthy of and to *inspire trust*.

Support Counseling:

The AFS Personal and Interpersonal Learning Objectives are used in the support counseling process. The intent is to frame the issues as an AFS learning opportunity. Support volunteers work with the participant and host family to understand the issues, define the participant's goals and identify the relevant AFS learning objectives to focus on for success. The support counseling result may be a verbal understanding or more likely a written Plan for Success or Support Agreement.