

Pre-Departure Orientation

Lead Facilitator Guide

Morning Session:
Students & Parents





Pre-Departure Orientation Leader Guide

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Pre-Departure Orientation Leader Guide:

Morning Session

Options for Presenting the PowerPoint

- PowerPoint can be used in their entirety, partially, or not at all.
- PowerPoint slides are designed to:
 - Present visual touch points for the activities
 - Add a visual enhancement to the overall orientation
 - Reinforce AFS as a professional brand to anyone participating
- There are a several optional ways to use PowerPoint slides:
 - Print out slides and use as handouts
 - Show slides on a screen or wall using a PC and projector
 - Diagrams and/or questions on slides can be written on flipchart paper and posted on a wall
- Another option is to photocopy the diagrams/images in the Leader Guide and use them as handouts.
- Projectors are **not** required nor must be purchased.
- If using one, projectors can be borrowed, rented, purchased or leased from a variety of sources. Some venues may even have/provide them for use.

Notes for Orientation Leaders

- Orientation Leaders must have at least one printed copy of the Leader Guide for each session. (Required)
- Please share any great activities you have with the ICL department.

Required Materials for Pre-Departure Orientation

- ✓ 2-3 pieces of blank/white paper per person (8.5"x11" or larger size if desired)
- ✓ Flipchart paper
- ✓ Pens/pencils
- ✓ Markers
- ✓ Tape
- ✓ Nametags
- ✓ Print-outs of AFS Learning Goals (required)
- ✓ Printout of SMART Goals (required)
- ✓ Print-outs of AFS Chain of Communication (required)

Overview

- According to the orientation agenda, parents and students should remain together for the morning sessions so that both groups receive the same preparatory information.
- By structuring the bulk of the afternoon sessions with students and parents in separate groups, students and parents are more likely to share with more honesty.
- It is advisable to ask an adult returnee to lead the student sessions and a natural parent or experienced volunteer to lead the parent sessions.

Suggested Orientation Agenda

- **REQUIREMENT:** Pre-Departure Orientation is a MINIMUM of 4 hours
- **RECOMMENDATION:** 6 hours including lunch and all sessions

Morning Session: Students & Parents combined	Slide #	Approx. time
1. Introduction to PDO	None	5 min
2. Non-Dominant Hand	None	20 min
3. Expectations and Goals	2-3	35 min
4. Cultural Adjustment and Critical Thinking	4-6	35-45 min
<i>Break time</i>		15 min
5. Where Do You Stand	7	35 min
6. Lunch and Panel Discussion	None	60-75 min
<i>Parents and students split up for separate afternoon sessions</i>		

Early Afternoon Session: Students only	Slide #	Approx. time
1. Tricky Scenarios	1-7	45 min
2. Safety Discussion	8	15 min

Early Afternoon Session: Parents only	Slide #	Approx. time
1. Case Studies for Natural Parents	1-5	60 min

Late Afternoon Session: Students & Parents re-combined	Slide #	Approx. time
<i>Parents and students rejoin for the final afternoon session.</i>		
1. AFS History, Rules, and Guidelines	1-14	30-40 min
2. PDO Evaluation	None	5 min

PDO Objectives

- Each activity/section present in the Pre-Departure Orientation is designed to meet at least one of the orientation objectives indicated in the AFS Orientation Framework.
- Intended objectives are listed with each activity.
- The person facilitating should clearly present and explain the objectives before beginning each activity.

Goals and Expectations

- Differentiating between expectations and goals.
- Creating and setting personal goals.

Culture Learning

- Defining culture, generalizations and stereotypes, and value judgments.

Cultural Adjustment and Critical Thinking

- Identifying and practicing skills to assist in understanding and adapting to a new culture.

Personal Safety and Well-Being

- Identifying challenges that they may face in their exchange experience that could affect their health, safety and ability to stay on program for AFS.

AFS History, Rules and Guidelines

- Discussing students' participation and the role of natural parents within the framework of AFS's mission and program expectations.

AFS Learning Objectives

Personal: 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, and to use their inner resources to handle stress and ambiguity and to show patience with other people who are in learning situations.

Personal: Creative thinking

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

Personal: 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.

Personal: 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.

Personal: Defining self in terms of ideals and values

- To develop personal goals in terms of academic knowledge and skills, character building, family interaction, etc.

Interpersonal: 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 sensitivity to others and expand their capacity to perceive and respond to the values, feelings, and realities of others.

Interpersonal: Communication skills

- To develop skills in listening actively and thoughtfully and to respond with respect for the other person.
- To converse actively with a wide range of people.

Interpersonal: Building intercultural friendships

- To interact with people and communities that are different from their own and to develop and maintain meaningful and long-term relationships across cultures and backgrounds.
- To actively seek out and form new relationships with people from different cultures or backgrounds.

Cultural: Knowledge and awareness

- To become more aware of their own culture and recognize its influence on their behavior and attitudes.
- To understand the concepts of “culture” and intercultural adaptation.
- To appreciate diversity and display tolerance and respect for people from diverse backgrounds, attitudes, opinions, lifestyles, and values.

Global: Global concern – interest in and concern about world affairs and awareness of one’s choices on others

- To develop and increased curiosity and concern about world affairs, to develop a sustained commitment to obtaining information from many sources and seek out perspectives from other cultures in understanding world situations and problems.
- To have an increasing knowledge of a range of world issues that affect people and divide us, such as human rights, environmental issues, and poverty.

Pre-Departure Orientation: Morning Session

Activity (Methodology)

Pre-Departure Orientation Welcome (Short speech)

When to do the exercise

First activity

Time Needed: 5-15 Min

Group Size: Any size

Materials: None

Slide #: 1

Objectives

- Become familiar with the agenda for the Pre-Departure Orientation.
- Review and understand the goals of the Pre-Departure Orientation.
- Identify ways to prepare for the AFS experience.

Optional ice-breaker activities

There are many options for ice-breaker activities, such as having students introduce themselves and their parents, share their reason for studying abroad, etc.

Introduction

1. Welcome to the local Pre-Departure Orientation, or PDO for short.
2. We are pleased that you are all here, and our hope is that this day will provide some beneficial information as you and your teen prepare for this AFS experience.
3. The local PDO is the only time when parents and students from the same area team are together in-person.
4. You are all going through the experience, just from different vantage points.
5. Parents and students will go through most of the activities together, with some sessions separated.
6. Pre-Departure is a process that begins at the interview and continues as you complete Culture Trek online as well as receive materials from the sending team, the host country, and the travel department.
7. The Gateway Orientation in the departure city is the final stop of Pre-Departure.
8. The Arrival Orientation in your host country provides more host country-specific information.

9. Today's local PDO is a series of activities, which cover concepts introduced in Culture Trek, and provide basic insight into these areas:
 - Personal Goals and Expectations
 - Cultural Adjustment and Coping
 - Intercultural Learning
 - Personal Safety and Well-Being
 - AFS Rules and Guidelines
10. These apply whether you go for a summer, semester, or year-program, or live with a host family or with dormitory roommates from many countries.
11. No one helping with this orientation is an expert in every aspect of an AFS experience, but our hope is that together we can give you the tools to make this an experience well worth the time and effort.
12. Before your Gateway Orientation, make sure that you:
 - Complete all available pages of Culture Trek
 - Read all emails from AFS
 - Read and print out all AFS booklets and info sheets from your host country
 - Check out additional AFS resources

Activity (Methodology)

Non-Dominant Hand (Physical activity, self-reflection, group discussion)

When to do the exercise

Second activity

Time Needed: 15-20 Min

Group Size: Any size

Materials: blank paper, pens/pencils

Slide #: None

Objectives

- View ordinary things, events and values from a fresh perspective so they are able to generate innovative ideas and solutions.
- Identify one or more challenges and emotions that they or their teen may face during the first few days/weeks of the experience
- Reflect on ways to cope with the stress of adjusting to a new environment

Instructions

1. Give out a piece of paper and a pen/pencil to each person.
2. Give directions: Identify your non-dominant hand and use it to complete each task.
3. Read each task and allow 5 seconds to complete each before moving on.
 - **Write your full name.**
 - **Write the word "Experiential".**
 - **Write the sentence "I am writing with my non-dominant hand."**
 - **Draw a dog.**

Discussion

1. How did you feel during this exercise?
2. What did you do differently to accomplish each task?
3. If you were to write/work with only your non-dominant hand for the rest of the day, how do you think you would feel?
4. What would happen if you were required to do this for six weeks? Six months?
5. How is this activity related to studying abroad?

Debrief conclusions

- This was a taste of what it might be like for students to come out of their comfort zone on exchange.
- At first, small changes wouldn't be too hard to adapt to.
- But over time, the accumulation of all of the "little stuff" could build up and become somewhat exhausting.
- It takes a lot of physical and mental energy to adapt to a new culture.
- When people cross cultures, they may feel vulnerable and unsure of themselves.
- Therefore, they often need a lot of support.
- Having a sense of humor and not taking yourself too seriously are both good coping strategies when learning a new language/culture.
- Learning the appropriate behavior of a new culture and understanding the cultural context of a situation does not mean that you relinquish your own cultural values and behaviors.
- Ambidextrousness: When we study a culture/language for a long period of time, we might start to become bilingual, or bicultural – we become proficient in the host language/culture and remain proficient at our own language/culture.
- One can "pick and choose" what to incorporate from a new culture into one's home culture.
- Keep this activity in mind today as we explore more adjustment strategies.

Activity (Methodology)

Expectations and Goals (Brainstorming, small group work, group discussion)

When to do the exercise

Third Activity

Time Needed: 35 Min

Materials: Flipchart paper, markers

Group Size: Any size

Slide #: 2-3

Objectives

- Creating a positive and interactive environment to share expectations and consider whether they are realistic
- Being comfortable and eager to pursue new learning situations.
- Reflect on their motivation for becoming an AFSer and their expectations for the experience
- Developing personal goals in terms of academic knowledge and skills, character building, family interaction, etc.

Expectations [Slide #4]

1. Split Students and Parents into separate groups.
2. Give each group a piece of flipchart paper and marker(s).
3. Give directions:
 - **Students, think of your top 3 expectations for your experience.**
 - **Parents, think of your own top 3 expectations from your perspective – sending your teen abroad.**
 - **In your groups, write down your list on the flipchart paper.**
4. After 5 minutes, end the brainstorming activity and post both lists on the wall.
5. Read each expectation aloud and ask:
 - **How would you feel if this expectation is not realized during the exchange?**

Goals [Slide #5-6]

1. It is natural to have many expectations prior to an exchange experience.
2. However, it is even more important to limit your expectations of how the experience will look or feel.
3. While having expectations is normal, setting goals for yourself is a better way to make the most of your AFS experience.
4. Working on goals can also help you to stay focused while you are on program.
5. When setting goals, remember the acronym SMART
 - Specific
 - Measurable

- Attainable
 - Relevant
 - Time-Bound
6. Using these guidelines can help you to write goals that you are more likely to achieve and give you a feeling of accomplishment.
 7. Here is an example of a SMART goal:
My goal is to learn **10 German words** [specific, attainable] **each week** [measurable] **so I will pass the German Language Proficiency Exam** [relevant] **at the end of my AFS program** [time-bound].
 8. AFS Learning Goals are organized into four categories that focus on different skills and areas of personal development.
 - Personal
 - Interpersonal
 - (Inter)Cultural
 - Global
 9. It is important to start from the bottom (Personal) and work upwards.
 10. This process is like Maslow's Hierarchy of Human Needs.

Goals activity

1. Students: Create 3 goals for yourself that you can accomplish before you leave the US.
2. Parents: Create 3 goals for yourself, which support your teen, that you can accomplish before your teen leaves the US.

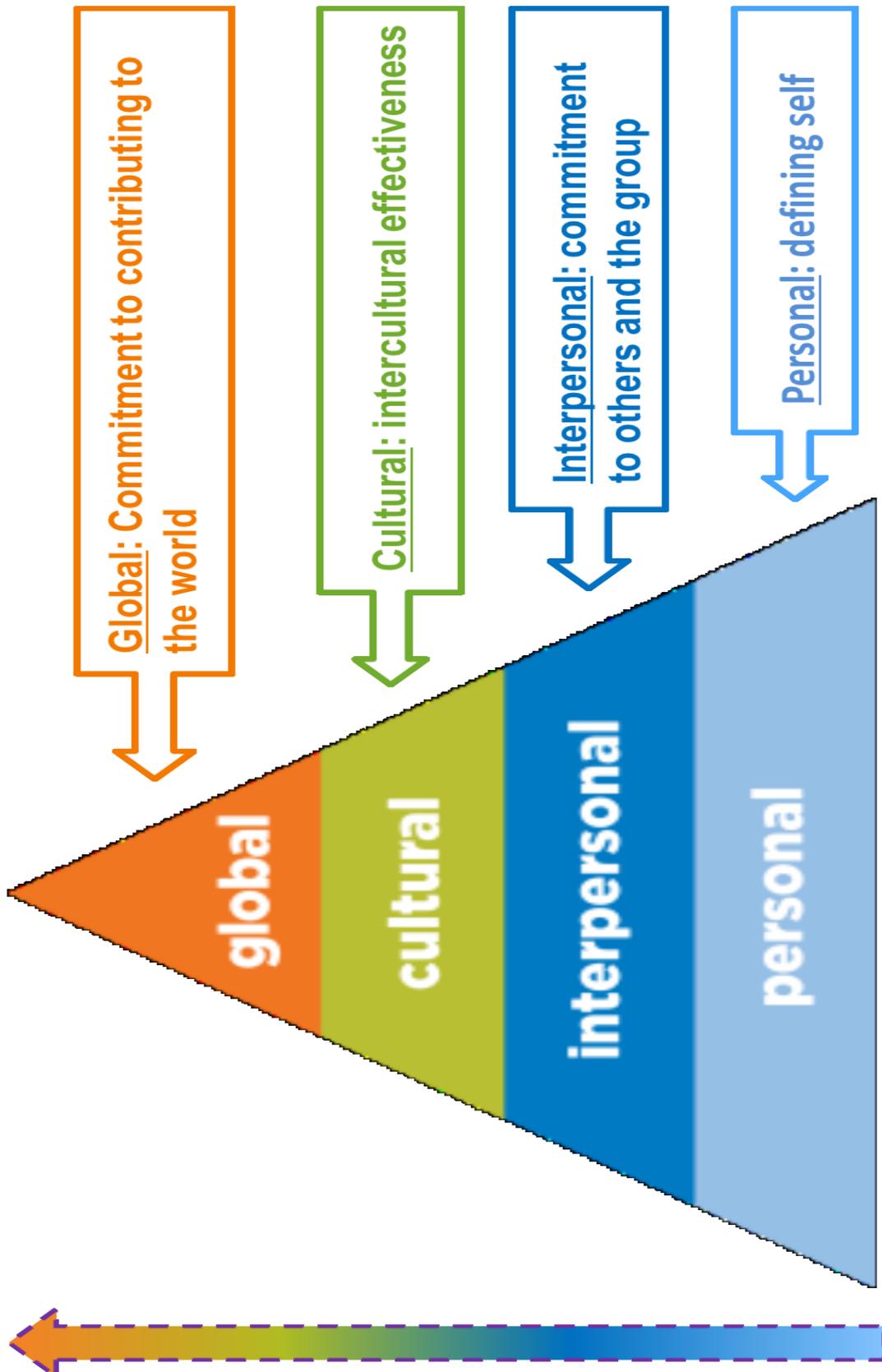
Discussion

1. What is the difference between Expectations and Goals?
2. What 3 goals did you set for yourself, or your teen, to prepare to go abroad?
3. What categories do your goals fall under?
4. Do any of your goals help you to realize your expectations? If yes, why and how?

AFS Learning Goals

See diagrams on following pages.

AFS Learning Goals



AFS Educational Goals

PERSONAL REALM

- 1 Self-awareness
- 2 Creative thinking
- 3 Critical thinking
- 4 Motivation and self-confidence
- 5 Defining self in terms of ideals and values

INTERPERSONAL REALM

- 6 Empathy
- 7 Flexibility and social skills
- 8 Communication skills
- 9 Commitment to others and contributing to the group

CULTURAL REALM

- 10 Building intercultural friendships
- 11 Cultural knowledge and awareness
- 12 Foreign language skills and non-verbal communication
- 13 Intercultural effectiveness

GLOBAL REALM

- 14 Global concern
- 15 Global understanding
- 16 Commitment to contributing to the world community

Activity (Methodology)

DIVE Method (Brainstorming, group discussion)

When to do the exercise

Fourth Activity

Time Needed: 35 Min

Group Size: Any size

Materials: Flipchart paper, markers

Slide #: 4-5

Objectives

- Introducing the importance of observation and the concept of cultural relativism
- Becoming more aware of their own culture and recognize its influence on their behavior and attitudes
- Looking beyond superficial appearances and to be skeptical of stereotypes
- Forming 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
- Explore the concept of culture.
- Identify personal cultural characteristics in the context of the home culture and various subcultures within the home culture
- Practice using the “Describe, Interpret, Verify, Evaluate” (D.I.V.E.) method of observation

Variations

The DIVE images are on page 11 and Slide #4. They can be displayed as a PowerPoint slide, printed out and distributed, or photocopied from the Leader Guide. The images can also be enlarged and shown/printed.

Introduction

- Next, you will be practicing your critical thinking skills.
- It’s important to remember the importance of observation when interacting with different cultures.

Instructions

1. Give the task: **Look at the images and tell me - What do you observe about the images?**
2. Show the DIVE images [on page 17 or Slide #8] and elicit responses
3. Write all responses on flipchart paper
4. Review all responses and ask: **Is this a Description or Interpretation?**
 - Descriptions are concrete, objective, observable facts.
 - Interpretations are your subjective thoughts about what think you are observing.
5. Write a “D” next to each Description and an “I” next to each Interpretation.
 - Ex: There is a cross in the picture. = DESCRIPTION (A cross is a recognizable shape/object.)
 - Ex: It’s a religious celebration. = INTERPRETATION (A cross doesn’t automatically mean something is religious.)

6. Show the image of DIVE Model [on page 16 or Slide #5].
7. Explain the meaning of DIVE.
8. Act as the "cultural informant" and explain the images.
9. Go through the discussion questions and debrief.

DIVE Explanation

1. The DIVE Method is an effective strategy to help understand and process experiences and observations.
2. As humans, we tend to process information and categorize things based on our cultural norms, values, behaviors and beliefs.
3. Most people learn to observe something briefly, then quickly make assumptions and judgements about it.
4. By using DIVE, you can slow down the critical thinking process to better understand other cultures/people and avoid rushing to judgement.
5. DIVE stands for:
 - **Describe:** What do I observe (i.e. see, hear, smell, touch, taste)? These are objective, universal, verifiable facts.
 - **Interpret:** What do I think about what I am observing (i.e. who, what, when, where, why, how)? These are your subjective, personal thoughts and opinions what you are observing.
 - **Verify:** Talk with a cultural informant (someone who is from that culture or someone who might understand the situation better). Be sure to ask multiple cultural informants because they might be able to provide multiple views, trustworthy information and/or more context as to what you are observing.
 - **Evaluate:** What do I feel about what I think is going on? Do I have a positive or negative emotional reaction? Do I approve or disapprove? Why do I have this emotion/reaction/opinion? How does this experience compare with my cultural values? Where do my opinions/bias come from?

Explanation of images

Now, I will act as the cultural informant, or "cultural expert" and tell you more about the images.

El Salto del Colacho ("El Colacho") aka "Baby Jumping"

- Traditional Spanish holiday dating back to 1620
- Part of a week-long festival in Burgos, Spain
- Celebrates the Catholic feast of Corpus Christi
- Men dress as the Devil (*El Colacho*) in red and yellow jumpsuits.
- Men jump over babies [less than a year old] that are laid on mattresses in the town streets.
- Men hold whips and oversized castanets as they run and jump over the babies.
- The tradition is said to cleanse the babies of original sin, ensure them safe passage through life and guard against illness and evil spirits.

Discussion

1. Was your first impression of the images negative or positive? Why?
2. Do you have a positive or negative response now that you have all the cultural information?
 - Ex: Positive = It's good for the community because it celebrates the town's historical traditions, and everyone gets involved.

- Ex: Negative = That is a terrible event because the men could step on the babies and hurt them!
3. How does this cultural event compare with your cultural norms and values?
 4. Where do your opinions/biases come from?

Debrief

- It is normal to jump to conclusions and make assumptions.
- It's important to wait before making evaluations and/or reacting.
- These are essential skills to have/use while on program, as well as in life.
- The D.I.V.E. method that we just practiced provides us with a useful framework with which we can analyze intercultural experiences.

DIVE model

1	2
<u>DESCRIBE</u> : what I see [only observable facts]	<u>INTERPRET</u> : what I think [about what I see]
<u>VERIFY</u> : what others know [about what I see]	<u>EVALUATE</u> : what I feel [about what I see & think] and what my response should be
3	4

DIVE image





Pre-Departure Orientation: Morning Session

Activity (Methodology)

DIVE scenarios (Brainstorming, group discussion)

When to do the exercise

Fifth Activity

Time Needed: 15-30 Min

Group Size: Any size

Materials: Flipchart paper, markers

Slide #: 6

Objectives

- Introducing the importance of observation and the concept of cultural relativism
- Becoming more aware of their own culture and recognize its influence on their behavior and attitudes
- Looking beyond superficial appearances and to be skeptical of stereotypes
- Forming 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
- Explore the concept of culture.
- Identify personal cultural characteristics in the context of the home culture and various subcultures within the home culture
- Practice using the “Describe, Interpret, Verify, Evaluate” (D.I.V.E.) method of observation

Variations

The DIVE scenarios are listed on page 18 and Slide #6. They can be displayed as a PowerPoint slide, printed out and distributed, or photocopied from the Leader Guide.

Introduction

- Now, let's think through some scenarios and continue using the DIVE method.

Instructions

1. Give the task:
 - Listen to each scenario and try to imagine yourself there, as an observer.
 - First, what do you think as an American? What is your first reaction?
 - Second, how would you react now that you know more, after speaking with the Cultural Informant?
2. Read each the scenario and elicit responses.
3. Write all responses on flipchart paper.
4. Verify each scenario as the Cultural Informant.
5. Go through the discussion questions and debrief.

DIVE Scenarios

1. You see a group of teenage boys throwing rocks at a dog.

- Cultural informant: *You are in a host country where dogs carry rabies and are often wild.*

2. You see a neighbor and he makes the OK gesture* to you.

- Cultural informant: *You are a host culture where this gesture is obscene.*

*NOTE: As of 2019, [the OK gesture can mean "white power" in certain contexts](#), both in the US and abroad. This illustrates how gestures can have multiple meanings that can change quickly especially in the age of the internet.

3. Your friend agrees to meet you at a cafe' at 4 p.m. and it is now 5.

- Cultural informant: *You are in a host culture where time and dates are flexible.*

4. You are told that you are getting fat.

- Cultural informant: *You are in a host culture where this is a compliment.*

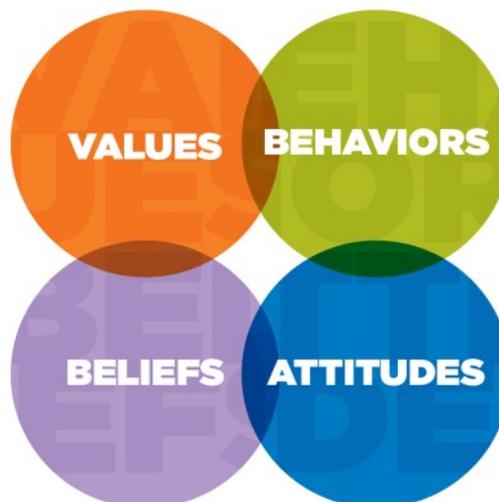
Discussion

1. After hearing the from the Cultural Informant, did your Evaluation (i.e. opinion) change about the scenario? Why/why not?
2. Why are people in the scenarios behaving differently from your teen?
 - They are from a different culture(s).
3. How does the D.I.V.E. method apply to these scenarios?
4. To Students: In what other scenarios might DIVE be useful to use?
5. To Parents: How will your understanding of the D.I.V.E. method affect how you support your teen while they're on program?
6. What is culture?
 - Culture is "the set of shared attitudes, values, and behaviors of a group."
 - Culture Is "the collective programming of the mind, which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another."
7. How do you acquire your cultural values and beliefs?
 - You are programed (aka "learn" them) from other people in your group, and from society, from the time you are born.

Model of Culture

Culture is made up of:

- Values
- Behaviors
- Beliefs
- Attitudes



Debrief

- Avoid jumping to conclusions when hearing about cultural differences.
- You cannot evaluate accurately without having verified first.
- Actions and behaviors may be perceived differently in other cultures.
- The consequences of behaviors may differ between countries.
- As parents, remember the importance of cultural context when listening to your teen(s) talk about their experiences.

Activity (Methodology)

Stereotypes & Generalizations (Brainstorming, group discussion)

When to do the exercise

Sixth Activity

Time Needed: 15-30 Min

Group Size: Any size

Materials: Flipchart paper, markers

Slide #: 7

Objectives

- Explore the concept of Culture.
- Recognize and differentiate between cultural stereotypes and generalizations.
- Understand the difference between the stereotypes and generalizations.
- Practice language awareness to shift from stereotypes to generalizations.

Variations

Instructions can be read from the Leader Guide. Statements can be read from the Leader Guide or displayed on Slide #7. The explanations can be read from the Leader Guide.

Instructions

1. Give task: **Please read/listen to each statement.**
 - If you think it is a **Stereotype**, then **Stand up**
 - If you think it is a **Generalization**, then **stay Grounded** (i.e. stay seated).
2. Read each statement aloud and wait for people to standup/remain seated.
3. Clarify which it is and why.
4. Repeat with remaining statements.

Stereotypes & Generalization

1. **Almost everyone enjoys watching sports.** [Generalization – uses “Almost”]
2. **Mothers hug everyone.** [Stereotype - implies “All” mothers hug “all” people]
3. **Americans love their cars.** [Stereotype – implies “All” Americans]
4. **Most people in the world are religious/spiritual.** [Generalization – uses “Most”]
5. **People in Los Angeles always drive to work.** [Stereotype - implies “All” people]
6. **If you go to NYC, you will get mugged.** [Stereotype – implies that “All” people “always” get mugged]
7. **In many parts of the South, life tends to be more relaxed than in the North.** [Generalization – uses “In many parts of” the South]

Discussion

1. What are the differences between stereotypes and generalizations?
 - Stereotypes do not allow for any diversity or variation.
 - Stereotypes are often based on just one interaction with a member of a group or second-hand information about a group.
 - Stereotypes pass judgment.
 - Stereotypes do not tend to change even if/when proven wrong.
 - Stereotypes do not help people understand their differences.
 - Generalizations are based on cultural research and multiple interactions with members of other groups.
 - Generalizations can be helpful information for people outside a given group.
2. How can you change a stereotype to a generalization?
 - Add descriptors and quantifiers to the sentence. (ex: Many, some, a few, the majority of, sometimes, frequently, often etc.)
 - Avoid absolutes. (ex: all, none, never, always)

Debrief

- It is important to watch out for these when researching and realize that not everyone you meet in the host country will adhere completely to generalizations OR stereotypes.

Activity (Methodology)

Where Do You Stand? (Interactive task, personal reflection, group discussion)

When to do the exercise

Seventh Activity

Time Needed: 30-45 Min

Group Size: Any size

Materials: Open area, tape (optional), Post-it notes (optional)

Slide #: 8

Objectives

- Recognize about the various ways that culture influences how people think and feel.
- Better understand themselves as individuals and the influence of their cultural background(s).
- Become more aware of the influence of cultural backgrounds on perception, behavior, values, and attitudes.

Preparation

1. Lay down a long, straight line of tape (approx. 10-15 ft.)
2. Tape one labeled Post-it to each end of the tape line. **A**  **B**
3. Other options: place a line between two walls, two tables, two chairs, etc.

Instructions

1. Have everyone stand up and gather near the middle of the line.
2. Give instructions: **Stand along the line to show how much you agree with statement A or B.**
3. Read the A/B statements [on the following page] aloud.
4. After each statement, everyone moves around and stands along the line where they feel most aligned.
5. Give everyone a moment to look around the room and observe where others are standing.
6. Elicit responses from both teens and parents.
 - **To those standing closer to A, what experiences in your life (cultural values, norms, behaviors) impacted your preference?**
 - **To those standing closer to B, what experiences in your life (cultural values, norms, behaviors) impacted your preference?**
 - **Does your opinion about this differ from typical US Culture? How so?**
7. After each short debrief, gather everyone back to the middle and read the next statement.
8. Continue until all statements are read and debriefed, then have everyone sit down.

A/B Statements

- 1. I make decisions based on what I need/feel. OR I make decisions based on other people's needs/feelings.**
 - Individualism vs. Collectivism
 - US vs. Latin America
- 2. Adults and teens are equals and deserve equal respect. OR Adults are the authorities and require more respect than teens.**
 - less hierarchy/more egalitarian vs. more hierarchy/more authoritarian
 - USA vs. Asia
- 3. It's better to be polite than to be honest. OR Telling the truth is always most important.**
 - Indirect communication vs. Direct communication
 - Japan vs. USA
- 4. I am happy sharing anything I own anytime. OR I prefer to be asked before people use my things.**
 - Collectivism vs. Individualism
 - Latin America vs. USA
- 5. Planning for the future is better. OR Living in the here and now is better.**
 - Long-term Orientation (focused on future; less immediate gratification) vs. Short-term orientation (focused on present/ past; more immediate gratification)
 - China vs. USA
- 6. I communicate a lot through my body language and actions. OR I communicate primarily through my words.**
 - Non-verbal communication vs. Verbal Communication
 - Southeast Asia vs. USA
- 7. When interacting with strangers, I stand closer (1-2 feet) to them. OR When interacting with strangers, I stand further away (2-4 feet) from them.**
 - Contact culture vs. Non-contact culture
 - South America vs. USA

Discussion

1. Were there any statements that you had a strong preference for?
2. To students: For those statements that you felt strongly about, how might you handle adapting to a host culture that is opposite?
3. To parents: How could you support your teen as they adapt to host culture differences?

Activity (Methodology)

Panel Discussion (Open forum, group discussion)

When to do the exercise

Eighth Activity

Time Needed: 60-75 Min

Group Size: Any size

Materials: printed copies of Discussion Prompts for Panelists

Slide #: None

Objectives

1. Learn about and understand the different aspects of an AFS program, based on different viewpoints, personal experiences and various AFS roles.
2. Engage in a free-flow of questions between future participants, their natural parents, AFS Returnees, and experienced AFS volunteers.

Preparation

1. Recruit 5–6 people of diverse ages/genders.
2. Recruit at least one of each: returnee, natural family member, host family member, and a student currently being hosted in the US (if possible)
3. All panelists should have excellent English skills.
4. **Very recent returnees or host families are discouraged from participating** as they may not have had enough time to process the experience.
5. Returnees and families with 1–5 years of time between the AFS experience is recommended.
6. Panelists should be given the list of Discussion Prompts to prepare their answers in advance.
7. Panelists should meet beforehand to discuss the format of the panel, speaking order, etc.
8. For smaller groups, an informal table discussion may work better than a panel.
9. Distribute or create name tags for the panelists.
10. During lunch and/or at the start of the panel discussion, have panelists briefly introduce themselves with their name and AFS affiliation. (*ex: My name is Jane and I was an AFSer to Thailand in 1970. My son went to Germany with AFS two years ago and I hosted a girl from Brazil last year.*)
11. Lead Orientation Facilitators must mediate the panel discussion to keep panelists focused and on-track.
12. Lead Orientation Facilitators should maintain awareness of the panelists' dynamic and defuse any negativity/disagreements by reminding everyone that all panelists' experiences/feelings are unique, personal, valid, and to be respected.

Variations

This is an excellent activity to combine with lunch, which might give it a more casual feel. If combining with lunch, allow everyone to eat and mingle for 15–30 minutes, and then begin the panel discussion.

Discussion Prompts for Panelists

1. Returnees, Hosted students: What was the biggest surprise when you first arrived?
2. Returnees, Hosted students: What are the differences between your host family and natural family?
3. Returnees, Hosted Students, Host Parents: What was the funniest question someone asked you?
4. Returnees, Hosted Students, Host Parents: What was the funniest thing someone said to you?
5. Returnees, Hosted Students: What was the biggest difference between your host school and school in your home country?
6. All: What piece of advice would you give for students in their remaining time before going on program?
7. Host Parents, Natural Parents: What piece of advice do you have for parents in the remaining time before their teen(s) go on program?
8. All: What did you learn about yourself from your AFS experience?
9. All: What was the most challenging thing to adjust to?
10. All: What was the easiest thing to adjust to?
11. All: How did your goals and/or expectations for your/your student's AFS experience play out in reality?



AFS-USA Mission

AFS-USA works toward a more just and peaceful world by providing international and intercultural learning experiences to individuals, families, schools and communities through a global volunteer partnership.

National Service Center
120 Wall Street, 4th Floor
New York, NY 10005
Fax (212) 299-9090
1-800-AFS-INFO (800-237-4636)
<http://www.afsusa.org>