



# Proactive Support

Expanding the AFS Effect  
Baltimore, MD  
November 5, 2016

- In this session, we will
  - Identify different stakeholders and resources involved in the support process
  - Become familiar with basic support structure of AFS-USA – on the volunteer and staff levels
  - Gain a basic understanding of existing support tools
  - Become familiar with several proactive support strategies
  - Learn what to report to whom (and how) when support situations come up

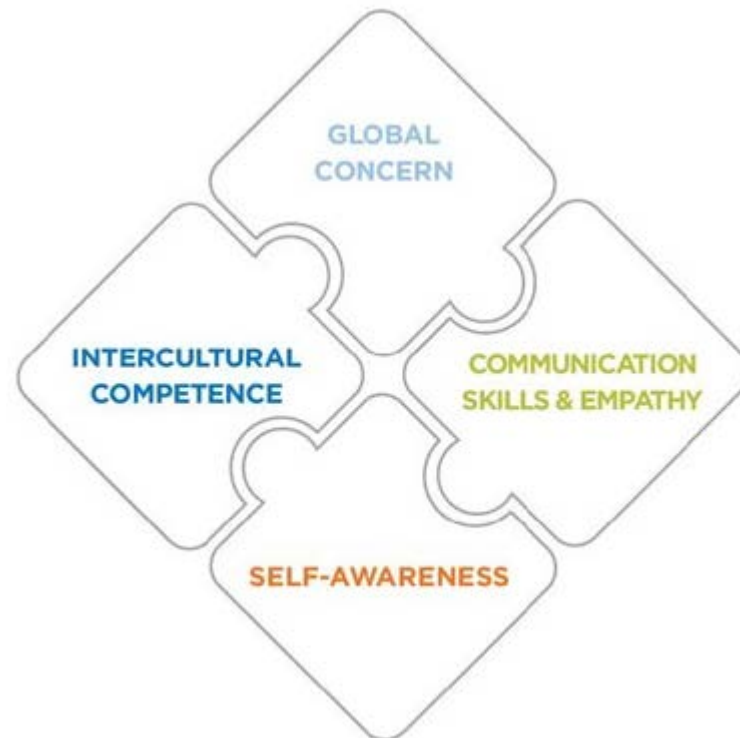


# AFS Participant Learning Objectives

- Personal Development
- Interpersonal Relationships
- Intercultural Knowledge
- Global Awareness

## Participant Support Philosophy at AFS-USA

We **transform** challenging experiences into learning opportunities



A graphic of several interlocking puzzle pieces in shades of brown and tan. The pieces are arranged in a way that suggests a larger whole, with some pieces missing or slightly offset. The text 'Stakeholders & Resources' is overlaid on the puzzle pieces.

# Stakeholders & Resources

# What is a Liaison?

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- First point of contact for participant and host family
- A trained “first responder”
- An objective ear
- A facilitator of healthy relationships, problem-solving, and learning
- A mediator of interpersonal conflict
- A documenter of Monthly Contact reports for student, host family and school

# What is a Support Coordinator?

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- An experienced volunteer – many have been with AFS for decades
- A resource for liaisons
- The link in the chain of communication between liaisons and Support staff
- Often wears many hats – doing Support, organizing events/orientations, finding host families and recruiting participants

# What is an Associate Support Coordinator?

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- An extra layer of trained support volunteers within a team between the Support Coordinator and Liaisons
- Usually assigned to a chapter or smaller region within the Area Team
- A resource for liaisons
- Works with liaisons, host families, hosted participants, Support Coordinator, and staff

# What is a Participant Support Specialist?

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- AFS-USA staff
- Works with several volunteer teams
- Works with both Sending and Hosted participants
- Hosted: Facilitates communication between local Support volunteers and partner staff
- Sending: Works directly with natural families
- Other roles include
  - Works with TDS and volunteer team to link liaisons to hosted participants
  - Facilitates Intercultural Learning
  - Collaborates with other AFS-USA departments (Travel, Compliance, etc.)
  - and more



# What is a TDS?

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- Team Development Specialist
- AFS-USA staff in the field
- Each TDS has one, two or three Area Teams in the same geographic region
- Stakeholder in the Support process when a move is needed
- Roles include
  - Recruiting liaisons
  - Recruiting host families
  - Developing school relationships
  - and more

# What is a Duty Officer?

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- AFS-USA staff person
- Responds to emergency situations during nights, holidays, weekends
- Every AFS partner country has a D.O. system
- AFS-USA volunteers should use the AFS-USA D.O.
- 1-800-237-4636, ext. 9
- 212-299-9000, ext. 9

# AFS-USA Participant Support Department Structure

## WEST TEAM

## EAST TEAM

**Director**

Regional Travel  
and Logistics  
Coordinator

**Manager**

Senior Participant  
Support Specialist

Participant Support  
Specialist

Regional Travel  
and Logistics  
Coordinator

**Manager**

Senior Participant  
Support Specialist

Participant Support  
Specialist



# Participant Support Team

## West

Working hours: 10-11 am to 6-7pm EST

Işıl Nart-Alexander  
Manager, West



Barbara Telser-Gadow  
Director



Ian Loumos  
Sr. Specialist



Adriana Miladinovic  
Specialist



Kendra McKechnie  
Specialist



Maria Feliciano  
Specialist



Anjanae Wilson  
Specialist



Rebecca Oswalt  
Specialist



Sarah Tice  
Regional Travel  
& Logistics  
Coordinator

## East

Working hours: 9-10 am to 5-6 pm EST



Candace O'Malley  
Sr. Manager, East



Diana Sarabia  
Sr. Specialist



Veronica Lorya  
Specialist



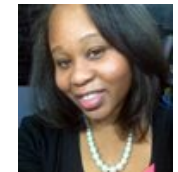
Mia Oliveri  
Specialist



Thomas Quinn Smith  
Specialist



Amanda Brown  
Specialist



Roslyn Randall  
Specialist



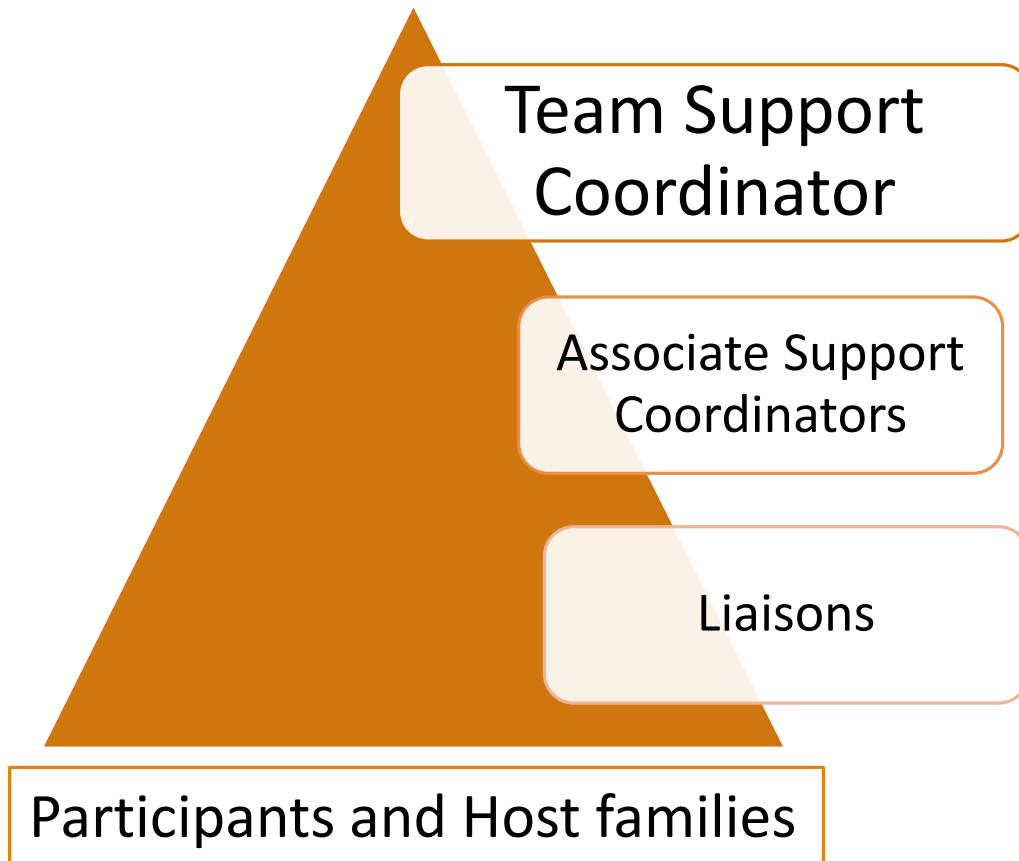
Julie Ball  
Regional Travel  
& Logistics  
Coordinator

# Area Team Support Structure

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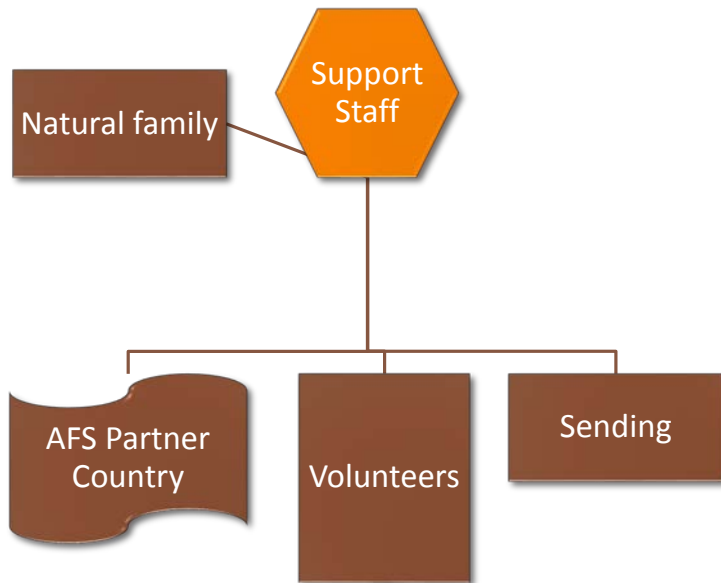
## Others:

- Participant Support Specialist (staff)
- Team Development Specialist (staff)
- Area Team Chair
- School Staff

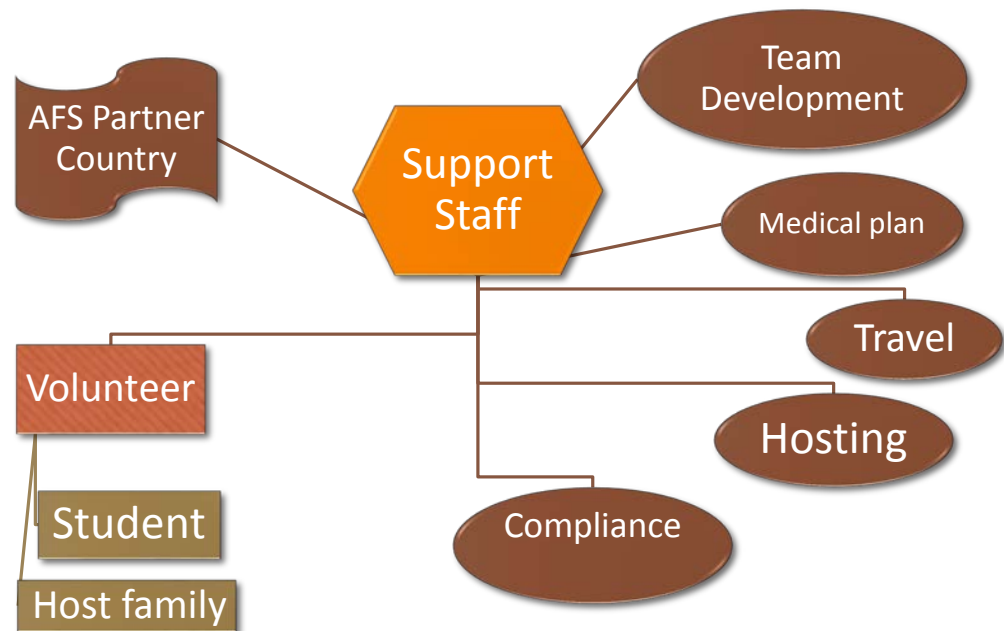


# Support Structure

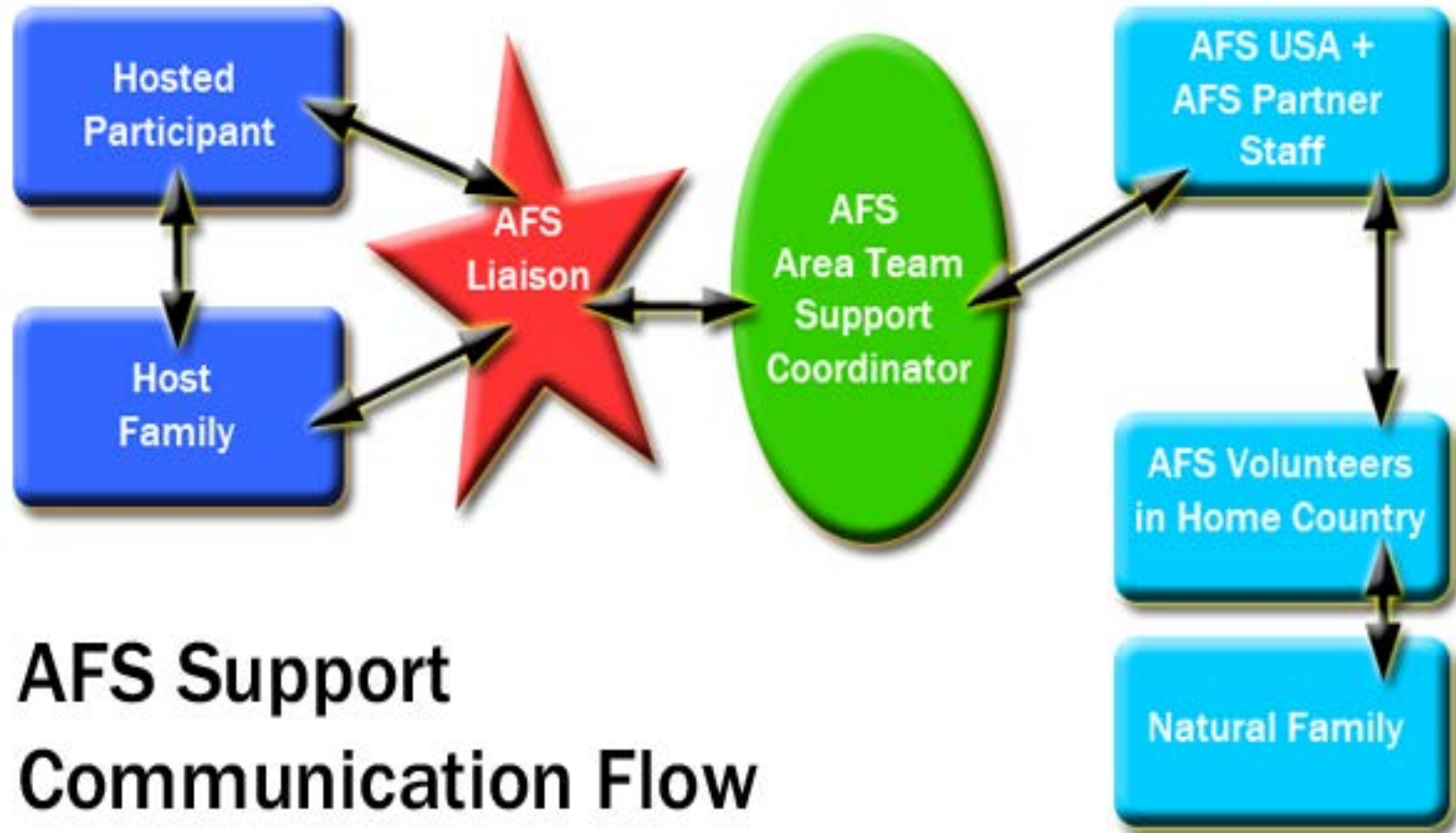
- Sending Perspective



- Hosting Perspective



# Communication Flow (Hosting)





# When a dialogue could improve the experience, a Liaison will...

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- Obtain multiple perspectives from all parties involved:
  - Host family
  - Student
  - School
- Collaborate with the Support Coordinator and other volunteer stakeholders
- Facilitate a Support Meeting
  - Have separate conversations with the participant and the host family
  - Meet with the participant and the host family together
  - Encourage host family and participant to explore cultural factors that could be influencing the situation
  - Report the outcome of the meeting
- Document all actions taken in a timely, factual, objective manner





# Understanding Department of State Regulations

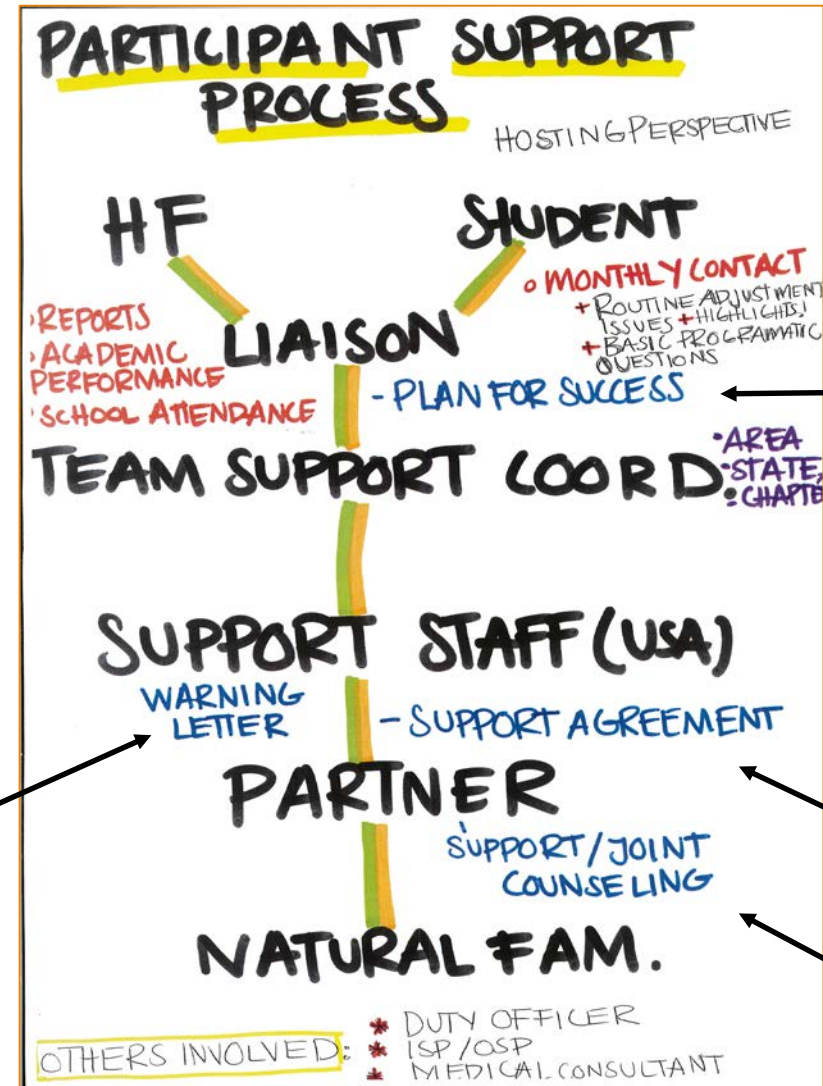
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- Dept. of State issues J-1 visas
- Dept. of State regulates
  - Screening of host family and school placements
  - Placement deadlines
  - Student moves
  - Monthly contact requirement
  - Incident reporting
- Liaison must be within 120 mile radius

# Participant Support Process

## Communication Chain and Support Tools

- Host Family Questionnaire
- Reflective Essay
- Plan for Success
- Support Agreement
- Warning Letter
- Joint Counseling Call





# Explanation of Support tools

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**Host family rules** outlined in the Host Family Questionnaire

**Orientations** Arrival, Post-Arrival, Mid-stay, Pre-Return, End-of-Stay

**Support Meeting** a dialogue between the student and host family facilitated by the Liaison and/or Support Coordinator

**Cultural Exploration Tool** to identify cultural factors influencing a Support issue

**Reflective Essay** for the student's perspective in his/her own words

**Plan for Success** a collaborative document including guidelines, expectations, and action items for the student and host family

**Support Agreement** for Support issues that could jeopardize the placement and/or program

**Warning Letter** last chance before an Early Return

**Joint Counseling Call** with partner staff and participant

# Case Studies

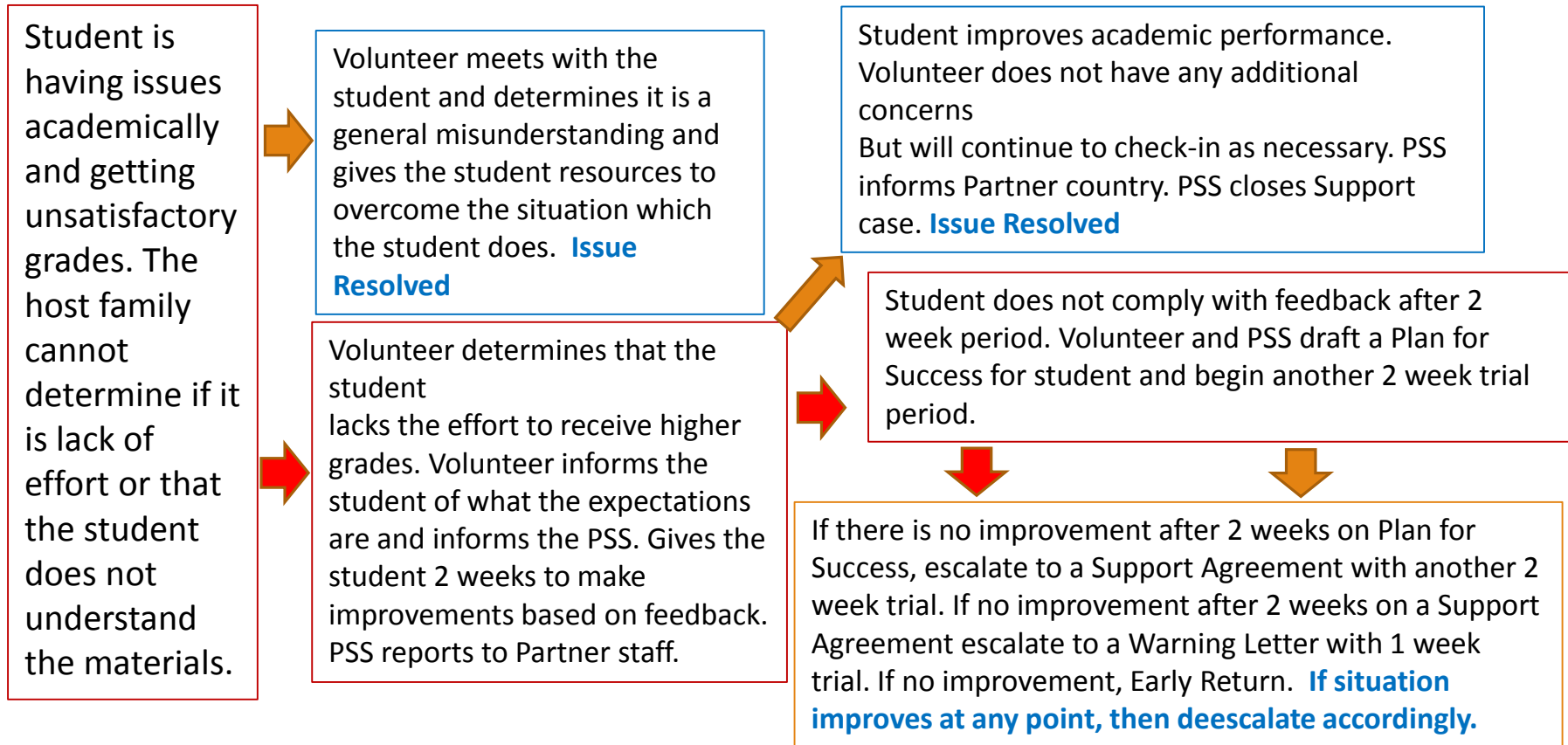


# Case Study Directions

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1. Elect one person in your group to be “reporter” and one person to be “recorder”
2. Read the case study
3. Discuss these three questions:
  - What are the cultural factors that may be playing a role?
  - What proactive measures could have been taken?
  - What are the next steps?

# Support Reporting Example



# Support Resources on the Wiki: [www.afswiki.org](http://www.afswiki.org)

## Support

### The Support Tool Box

#### The Support Tool Box *(an alphabetical list)*

#### Support Overview

- [Support Aspects Overview](#)
- [AFS Learning Objectives](#)
- [Plan for Pro-active Support](#)
- [Chain of Communications for Support](#)

- [Orientations - table listing materials available](#)

#### Handbooks Used in Support (primary users listed)

- [Hosted Participants - Welcome to the USA, pre-arrival handbook](#)
- [Hosted Participants - Safety Tips for the USA, pre-arrival handbook](#)
- [Hosted Participants - Orientation Student Handbooks for Hosted Participants](#)
- [Orientation Presenters - Orientation Leaders Guides for Hosted Participants](#)
- [Liaisons - Student Family Liaison Guide](#)
- [Host Families - Host Family Handbook](#)
- [Sending Families - AFS Guide for Families of Participants](#)

#### Support Structure

#### Primary Volunteers

- [Team Support Coordinator](#)
- [Associate Support Coordinator](#)
- [Support Family](#)
- [Liaison](#)

### Support Case Resources

- [Support Counseling for a Continuum of Issues](#)
- [Support Counseling Plan for Success](#)
- [Support Agreement](#)
- [Joint Staff Counseling Call](#)
- [Warning Letter](#)

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- [Guidelines for Specific Support Situations](#)

- [Effective Communication techniques for Support](#)
- [Clarifying a Problem](#)
- [Having Difficult Conversations with Participants and Families](#)
- [Format for Reporting a Support Situation](#)

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- [Emergency procedures](#)

### Other Support Documents and Guidance

- [A Guide to the Grieving Process](#)
- [Culture/Country Specific Information](#)
- [Cultural Negotiation Styles by Country](#)
- [Common concerns from host students & host families](#)
- [Books for Sale - Host Family Survival Kit & Exchange Student Survival Kit](#)

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- [Medical Claim Form](#)
  - [Print a Temporary Student ID Card](#) or [Print a Temporary Medical ID Card](#)
  - [Activity Waivers](#)
  - [Hosted Participant Travel Guidelines - updated November 2014 \(PDF\)](#)
  - [Independent Travel Guidelines](#)

# Thank you!

Allison Barton

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Central California Coast

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Participant Support Specialist

Helen Armstrong

Support Coordinator, Alaska

Barbara Telser-Gadow

Director, Participant Support

Linne Shields

Support Coordinator, Dallas