

# Host Family Orientation

## Leader Guide



# Host Family Orientation

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## Notes for Orientation Leaders

- Orientation Leaders are required to have at least one printed copy of the "Host Family Orientation Leader Guide" to use as a facilitation manual/resource.
- The Host Family Orientation has an optional, accompanying PowerPoint
- The PowerPoint slides are completely **optional** and are there to use only if it fits your setting, needs and comfort as a facilitator.
- The PowerPoint slides are designed to be visual cues for the activities, add a visual enhancement to the overall orientation, and reinforce AFS as a professional brand to anyone participating.
- Slide #13 has the embedded "AFS Timeline" video and Slide #14 has the embedded "JFK Speech to AFSers". The videos can be shown without Wi-Fi and at any time during the orientation (i.e. during the Welcome Speech etc.)
- The relevant PowerPoint slide numbers are listed on each activity in the Leader Guide.
- If using the PowerPoint, please review it in advance and practice presenting it.

## Required Materials for Host Family Orientation

- Blank paper (2-4 pieces per person)
- Flipchart paper
- Pens/pencils/markers
- Nametags
- Communication Styles: Direct vs. Indirect (required handout)
- Changing Communication Styles (required for activity)
- AFS Quiz (required handout)
- Evaluation of Host Family Orientation (required if not using URL link)
- Nuts & Bolts (required handout)
- Tips for the First Days (required Handout)
- AFS Terms (Required handout)
- AFS Orientations for Students (required handout)
- Tips for Adjusting (required handout)

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- AFS Quiz for Host Families (required for activity)
- AFS Chain of Communication (required handout)
- Participant & Host Family Questionnaire (required handout)

## Host Family Orientation Learning Objectives

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

### **Self-Awareness**

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

### **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 learn how to become thoughtful active listeners and respond with respect for the other person

### **Intercultural Competence**

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

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## Suggested Host Family Orientation Agenda

- **REQUIREMENT:** Host Family Orientation is a MINIMUM of 4 hours
- **RECOMMENDATION:** 5-6 hours including breaks and all activities

Host Family Orientation – Suggested Agenda	Approx. Time
1. Introduction to HFO [SLIDE #1]	15-30 min
2. Interactive Ice-breaker [SLIDE #2]	15-20 min
3. Communication Styles [SLIDE #3]	30-45 min
4. Describe Your Family & “Participant & Host Family Questionnaire”	30-45 min
5. Families and “Culture” [SLIDE #4-6]	30-45 min
6. Viewing Scenarios from Different Cultures [SLIDE #7]	20-30 min
7. The DIVE Method [SLIDE #8-9]	20-30 min
8. Snapshot Scenarios [SLIDE #10]	30-45 min
9. Common Adaptation Experiences [SLIDE #11]	30 min
10. AFS Quiz [SLIDE #12]	15-25 min
11. Evaluation	5 min

# Host Family Orientation

## Activity (Methodology)

Intro to the Host Family Orientation (welcome speech)

## When to do the exercise

1st

**Time Needed:** 15-30 Min

**Materials:** Agenda (written on flipchart paper), Community Guidelines (written on flipchart paper), required handouts – 1 per host family [Nuts & Bolts, Tips for the First Days], Slide #1 (optional)

## Objectives

- To become familiar with the agenda for the Host Family Orientation.
- To review and understand the goals of the Host Family Orientation.
- To identify ways to prepare for the AFS Hosting experience.

## Preparation

- In advance of the Host Family Orientation, review/update and print the handout “Nuts & Bolts” and “Tips for the First Days” (also available on MyAFS Help & Learning).
- Write HFO Agenda on flipchart paper and post on wall.
- Write “Community Guidelines” on flipchart paper and post on wall.

## Welcome Speech [SLIDE #1]

1. Welcome to the in-person, pre-arrival Host Family Orientation.
2. We are pleased that you are all here, and our hope is that this day will provide some beneficial information as you prepare for this AFS experience.
3. Today's Host Family Orientation is a series of activities that cover intercultural learning concepts and provide basic insight into these areas:
  - Intercultural Learning
  - Goals and Expectations
  - Cultural Adjustment and Coping
  - AFS and You

# Host Family Orientation

4. The orientation activities and Intercultural learning concepts are designed to:
  - Prepare host family members to engage effectively across cultural and other differences.
  - Give host families the necessary support, encouragement and skills training to make their experience meaningful intercultural learning opportunities – for themselves and the students.
  - Help host family members to learn firsthand about the impact of culture on values and decisions they make.
  - Help host family members gain the ability to better see themselves through the eyes of others.
  - Challenge personal and cultural assumptions.
  - Broaden host family member's views on cultural stereotypes and global issues.
  - Help host family members to begin to understand how to shift perspectives effectively, appropriately and authentically.
5. Let's review our "Community Guidelines" for effective communication and sharing.
6. Additionally, you will be given several essential, helpful handouts for you to take home and read as you prepare for your hosting experience.
7. 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.
8. If you have any questions or would like any additional guidance, please feel free to reach out to your liaison, who is the local volunteer assigned to support your family as well as your student.
9. Let's review "Nuts & Bolts" – a helpful sheet that highlights important things to know about hosting as well as relevant info for both host families and students to know.

## Community Guidelines

- Openly contribute your ideas.
- Ask questions when you do not understand.
- Respect the views of the other participants.
- Restrict discussion to the topic.
- Avoid telling stories of individual cases unless it furthers the discussion.
- Be aware that our time together is limited, avoid side conversations.
- Take a break when you need it.

# Host Family Orientation

## Activity (Methodology)

Interactive ice-breaker (self-introductions)

## When to do the Session

2nd

**Time Needed:** 15-20 Min

**Materials:** index cards, pens/pencils, flipchart paper, markers, Slide #2 (optional)

## Objectives

- To prepare host family members to engage effectively across cultural and other differences

## Preparation

1. In advance, post 6 pieces of flipchart paper on the wall and label one for each discussion question (#1-6):

1. **What is your reason for hosting?**
2. **What you know about hosting?**
3. **What you hope to learn about hosting?**
4. **What you worry about hosting?**
5. **What you look forward to about hosting?**
6. **What you want to gain from the hosting experience?**

1. Be sure to have enough markers for teams to use.
2. Draw the "AFS as a Transformative Learning Journey" image on flipchart paper or display photo-copy of image.

## Instructions

1. Pair up host families (i.e. 2 families per team). For larger groups, 3+ families can be together on a team.
2. Give each team several markers.
3. Give instructions:
  - **As a team, walk around to each flipchart paper.**

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- **With your team, discuss the question.**
  - **Write your team's answers on each flipchart paper.**
4. Allow time for each team to discuss and finish writing (i.e. 2-3 min).
- **After each team is finished writing, have teams move on to the next flipchart paper.**
  - **Repeat the process till all teams have responded on all prompts.**
5. Allow everyone a minute to walk around and view all flipchart papers. This allows each team to see what other wrote. Then, gather everyone together again.

## Discussion

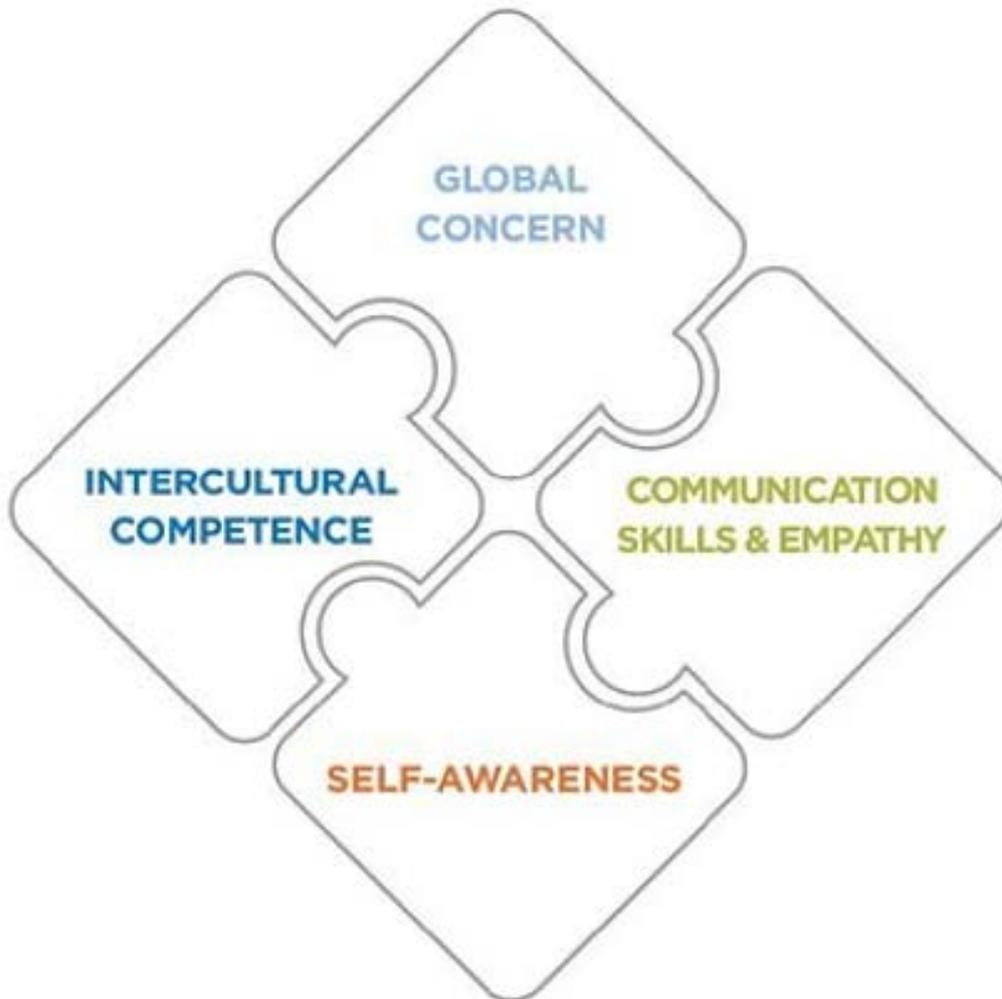
1. **Looking at each flipchart (#1-6), do you see any similarities among what people wrote?**
2. **Are there any common themes or answers across all 6 questions?**

## Debrief

- Thank you to everyone for sharing a bit about themselves.
- Your answers give great insights into your hosting experiences as well as what you hope to get out of this Host Family Orientation.
- AFS believes that intercultural challenges and learning moments are inevitable parts of our everyday lives.
- The hosting experience is a transformative learning journey for host families.
- The Journey focuses on different aspects of:
  - Self-awareness
  - Communication Skills and Empathy
  - Intercultural Competence
  - Global Concern
- The Learning journey is an intercultural, 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.

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AFS as a Transformative Learning Journey [SLIDE #2]



# Host Family Orientation

## Activity (Methodology)

Communication Styles (Discussion)

## When to do the exercise

3<sup>rd</sup>

**Time Needed:** 30-45 min

**Materials:** Communication Styles handout (1 per host family), Slide #3 (optional)

## Objectives

- To become more aware of the influence of cultural backgrounds on perception, behavior, values and attitudes
- To be aware and able to recognize and interpret non-verbal communication signals
- To learn how to become thoughtful active listeners and respond with respect for the other person
- To develop strategies for coping with cultural differences
- To be sensitive towards differences between direct and indirect communication
- To be aware of misunderstandings that can arise from the different styles and uses of communication
- To be aware that one's own way of communicating is not the only way – and that one's own way is not always the same in every situation
- To be reflective of the ways in which differences in communication style can influence the way we may perceive various actions/behaviors
- To develop and refine intercultural communication skills and filters

## Introduction

- Now, we will focus on different communication style that most often lead to cultural misunderstandings are direct and indirect communication.
- Cultures teach their members to communicate in a more direct way or a more indirect way.
- Indirect communication is common in Asia, the Middle East, Latin/South America and many Mediterranean and African countries.
- Direct communication is generally the norm in Western Europe, the US, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and other parts typically considered "The West".
- There are many reasons a culture prefers a certain type of communication style, such as showing emotion or helping to maintain harmony - in the case of indirect communication.

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- In the case of direct communication, it is efficient to solving problems and/or is considered honest and truthful.
- The meaning is clearly verbalized, and a listener does not have to know much about the context or the speaker to understand the message.
- An indirect communicator is usually able to understand a direct message, although the direct communicator may be perceived as abrupt and rude.
- On the other hand, the direct communicator tends to have more difficulty understanding an indirect message and may perceive the indirect communicator as vague and indecisive.
- In a context with host families and exchange students, problems can occur in both directions.
- People in the U.S. do not communicate directly all the time.
- Even for an American, while the message of a statement may be clear, it might not be for the exchange student.
- Communication issues are often one of the biggest challenges that host families and hosted students face, and despite good intentions, can lead to miscommunications - so this is really an important topic.
- Language can be an additional barrier.

## Introduction: Changing communication styles

1. Give instructions:
  - **You are going to practice interpreting direct and indirect messages.**
  - **The task is to “translate” the examples into their opposite communication style.**
2. Give each host family a printed handout “Changing Communication Style” (on p. 11) and pen/pencil.

## Activity: Changing communication Styles [Answer Key – do not show]

1. I don't like pizza. [**frown, grumble, only eat a little bit, say “I like (something else)” etc.**]
2. I disagree with you. [**frown, grumble, raised eyebrows, look away, say “hmm” etc.**]
3. I am hungry. [**look intently at food, say “smells delicious.”, ask “what time is dinner”, look in fridge, wanders around kitchen, talks about food in general way, sits at kitchen table etc.**]
4. It's cold in here. [**rub shoulders, say “brrr”, blow on hands, put on sweater etc.**]
5. You are late. [**look at watch, sigh, tap foot, tap watch, cross arms, pace etc.**]
6. No. [**no answer, direct stare, tilt head, square jaw, cross arms, shake head etc.**]

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7. \*Smile\* [I am happy, I am pleased, I am appreciative, I feel positive, I don't understand you, I feel nervous but don't know how to react etc.]
8. \*Pat on shoulder\* [Are you okay; I am glad to see you; Thank you; I hear what you are saying; I support you; I agree; I appreciate you etc.]
9. \*Hug\* [I love you; I care about you; You are my friend etc.]
10. \*Watching you while you do a task\* [What are you doing; How are you doing that task; Can I help you; I enjoy being in your company; I am learning from watching you do something; I respect you; I am paying attention because what you are doing is important; I am trying to follow your instructions; I am interested in your culture; I want to task you a question but respect that you are busy now etc.]

## Debrief

1. For each example, what the intention of the speaker?
2. For each example, how it might be perceived by the listener?
3. How did it feel to use/try to understand a different communication style?

## Additional Communication Styles

1. In addition to Direct and Indirect communication styles.
2. Here are two more styles of communication that vary across cultures and can have the potential for miscommunication/misunderstanding.

### Emotive Style:

- often engage in action-oriented behavior as they talk
- often prefer informality
- often like to be on a first-name basis
- tend to share personal views openly
- can be dramatic and forceful when trying to convince others of their views
- may appear flighty, unfocused, or illogical
- To more reserved thinkers, the open expression of affect, particularly anger, may be perceived as overly forceful and uncomfortable

### Reflective (Non-Emotive) Style

- describes people who fully and thoughtfully consider all information before expressing an opinion or coming to a decision

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- Often do not seem to be in a hurry to act/make decisions
- often exhibit emotional control
- Tend to express their opinions in a formal and deliberate manner
- Tend to prefer orderliness, and often show other traits of compulsivity, such as preferring
- elaborate detail and organization
- appreciate agendas, and tend to review and fully consider details prior to making decisions
- To others, they may appear preoccupied and, at times, unresponsive
- Others may see them as withdrawn, stalling, being unwilling or unable to act, or resistive to dialogue

## Discussion [SLIDE #3]

1. What is your family's preferred communication style: direct or indirect? Emotive or reflective?
2. What is your own preferred communication style?
3. Describe your body language when you communicate.
4. Have you seen or observed any misunderstandings due to different communication styles?
5. What are some different ways to handle those types of situations?
6. What are the main differences and similarities between verbal and non-verbal communication?
7. How do you think culture influences these aspects of communications and interactions?
8. How could the differences between communication styles influence difficult conversations?

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## Helpful Guide to Communication Styles: Direct vs. Indirect

<b>Direct Communicators</b>	<b>Indirect Communicators</b>
clearly say what they think	do not directly say what they think
use words to communicate their needs and their central goal is to get or receive information in a clear and effective manner, and depend on the literal interpretation of these words	meaning is conveyed not just by the words used but by nonverbal behaviors (physical cues, pauses, silence, tone of voice, etc.), implication, understatement, and a widely shared understanding of the context of the communication.
value honesty and trust it is acceptable to say what wants to be said	value politeness, maintaining harmonious relationships and saving face (i.e. avoiding embarrassing themselves or the person they are speaking with/about)
Feel it's acceptable to say "No" and reveal their needs, requirements and wants without hesitation	do not believe everything needs to be said and will avoid saying "No" or revealing their wants, desires and needs if they feel it could cause tension
Ex: U.S., Germany, Israel	Ex: China, Japan, Argentina
<b>Of course, within countries, individuals will use direct/indirect communication to varying degrees.</b>	
<b>Note: "Context" refers to shared knowledge and understanding of a meaning or situation.</b>	
common in low-context cultures, which are usually more culturally heterogeneous and tend to emphasize individualism, independence, and self-reliance	common in high-context cultures, which may be relatively homogeneous and tend to emphasize interdependence and social relationships, so people develop deep and often unconscious understandings of what is expected in that culture.
draw very little meaning from context and just pays attention to the words spoken	pay as much attention to the context, body language, and to what's not said as to what is said
share little common knowledge or "value individuality above group identification", so additional explanations become essential to avoid misunderstanding	share the same cultural background and can easily understand the hidden meanings ("reading between lines") without additional explanation
<b>Did you know? - Culture also affects people's facial expressions.</b>	
tend to express themselves as clearly and openly as possible - obvious or exaggerating facial expressions (including eyebrows and mouth) emphasize the speaker's meaning by showing their emotions vividly and to effectively avoid misunderstanding	because the speakers' message(s) is subtler or hidden, it is reflected in their facial expressions more subtly and primarily through their eyes and changing the direction of their gaze

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Direct Communicators	Indirect Communicators
Especially in the U.S., criticism of indirect communication is common. Many Americans feel that directness is logical, they expect and respect honesty and bluntness, and often view indirect communication as passive-aggressive, manipulative, weak, deceptive, vague, insincere and/or untrustworthy.	Direct communicators may be perceived as blunt, rude, insensitive and inappropriate, which can lead to interpersonal tension, negative perceptions, and other problems. Often, direct communicators don't understand how indirectness works and don't understand that they often miss nuances and subtleties.
it is seen as the responsibility of the communicator to convey information.	it is seen as the responsibility of the listener to understand it.

Suggestions for Direct and Indirect communicators	
Direct Communicators	Indirect Communicators
Avoid blunt comments.	Accept that direct communicators respect direct speech.
Remember that avoiding insults may be seen as more important than providing honest thoughts/opinions.	Recognize that your subtle messages may not be perceived in the way you expect or may not be perceived at all.
Pay attention to nonverbal behaviors. In particular, a discrepancy between nonverbal behaviors and the words used by an indirect speaker can indicate that the words aren't accurate.	
Recognize that, for indirect communicators, it's "always easier to agree than to disagree"	
Use open-ended, non-leading questions.	
Avoid phrasing a question so that the answer may be perceived as insulting to someone (for example, may be seen as criticizing someone).	
Suggestions to change your communication style	
Give me your thoughts on... → What do you think about ...?	How about....? → I strongly suggest...
That's wrong! → Hmm, I'm not sure that's right.	I tend to agree. → That's absolutely right. Here's why...
You should talk to him about... → What if you talk with him...?	I think maybe... → My strong advice is...
You need to... → I wonder if...	Well, what if...? → I recommend...

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## Changing communication Styles

Translate the statement/message into the opposite communication style.

Asterixis (\* \*) indicate an action/behavior of student.

1. I don't like pizza. \_\_\_\_\_
2. I disagree with you. \_\_\_\_\_
3. I am hungry. \_\_\_\_\_
4. It's cold in here. \_\_\_\_\_
5. You are late. \_\_\_\_\_
6. No. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \*Smile\* \_\_\_\_\_
8. \*Pat on shoulder\* \_\_\_\_\_
9. \*Hug\* \_\_\_\_\_
10. \*Watching you as you do a task\* \_\_\_\_\_

# Host Family Orientation

## Activity (Methodology)

Describe Your Family & “Participant and Host Family Questionnaire” (Discussion)

## When to do the exercise

4th

**Time Needed:** 30-45 min

**Materials:** printed copies of “Participant & Host Family Questionnaire” (1 per host family), paper (optional), markers (optional), pens/pencils (optional)

## Objectives

- To better understand themselves as individuals, as a family and the influence of their own cultural background(s)
- To become more aware of the influence of cultural backgrounds on perception, behavior, values and attitudes
- To expand the capacity and willingness of all family members to perceive and respond to the values, feelings and realities of others
- To appreciate diversity and to engage, display respect for and accept people with diverse backgrounds, attitudes, opinions, lifestyles and values
- To overcome ethnocentric world views 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
- To bring you and your hosted student closer together as a family unit.

## Overview: Describe Your Family

1. This activity can be led as a group discussion.
2. Another effective option is to give host families the task to answer the questions by creating a drawing/visual using pictures, words and symbols.
3. Host Families do not need to answer or include all of the questions.
4. Then, the drawings can be presented/displayed, shared/viewed by all and discussed as group.

## Activity: Describe Your Family

1. What is your families’ cultural background(s)?

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2. If you are comfortable sharing, what does your family name mean?
3. What are some important events in your family history?
4. What is important about your family that you would like others to understand/know?
5. What were you taught by your family (parents, relatives etc.)?
6. What is a core family value (ex: honesty, kindness, openness etc.)?
7. Does your family have any sayings (ex: If you can't say anything nice, don't say anything at all; Respect is earned etc.)?
11. How do you demonstrate appreciation in your family?
12. How do you demonstrate disagreement in your family?
13. How do you demonstrate love/affection in your family?
14. How do you demonstrate displeasure/anger in your family?
15. How do you demonstrate happiness in your family?
16. What is your parenting style?
17. What is the role of a sibling (younger or older)?
18. What could get people in trouble in your family? (ex: *dishonesty, breaking rules, prioritizing friends, not doing chores, swearing, too much TV or internet etc.*)

## Introduction: Participant & Host Family Questionnaire

1. We talked about our unique family dynamics, values, behaviors and norms.
2. Now, you will all be given an essential, helpful tool to help both your family and host student adapt to living together.
3. This tool is the "Participant & Host Family Questionnaire", which has many basic questions that will help facilitate your student's integration into your family's life.
4. This questionnaire covers a variety of topics relating to family life, rules/expectations, transportation, etc.
5. Your first assignment, as a host family, is to review the "Participant & Host Family Questionnaire" together as a family before your student arrives.
6. Talking about the questions will also help you become aware of your present habits as a family, and what you expect situations to be like with your student.
7. When your student arrives, they will also be told about the questionnaire at their Arrival Orientation.

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8. Your second assignment is for host families and their student(s), to complete the task of reviewing and discussing the questionnaire within two weeks of the student's arrival.
9. Please share the completed questionnaire with your Liaison if you're comfortable.
10. It is useful for Liaisons as they support both you and your student and is helpful for them to better understand the host family rules and expectations.
11. Discussing these topics early will strengthen your relationship and help avoid some of the "little" misunderstands that can become bigger issues.

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## Activity (Methodology)

Families and “Culture” (Self-reflection, discussion)

## When to do the exercise

6th

**Time Needed:** 30-45 Min

**Materials:** paper (optional), pens (optional), Slide #4-6 (optional)

## Objectives

- Understand the concepts of “culture” and cultural adaptation
- Be able to conceptualize “visible” and “invisible” aspects of culture, including their own
- Become more fully self-aware, willing and able to view themselves objectively and to see themselves as deeply influenced by their own culture
- Appreciate diversity and display tolerance and respect for people with diverse backgrounds, attitudes, opinions, lifestyles and values

## Introduction: Culture

1. What specific life experiences might influence your values and beliefs?
  - social cues (gender-specific, societal norms)
  - family interactions (parenting style, communication styles, expectations, acceptable behavior)
  - interpersonal interactions (friendships, relationships)
  - life changes (family changes, moving, difficult times)
  - cultural practices (religion, ethnicity, traditions)

## Components of Culture [SLIDE #4]



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## Discussion: Culture

1. 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.
2. How do you acquire your cultural values and beliefs?
  - You are programmed (aka "learn" them) from other people in your group, and from society, from the time you are born.

## Culture Model: The Iceberg [SLIDE #5]



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## “Culture” as an Iceberg

1. Some parts of culture are easily observed, and some are hidden below the surface.
2. Visible things “above the surface” include physical attributes, observable behaviors and other cultural artifacts.
3. Things “below the surface” are norms and values have a stronger emotional attachment, that develop over time, and may change as people grow older or live in different cultures.
4. Things “at the bottom” of the iceberg are core values, beliefs and assumptions that we learn at a very young age, are often unconscious and unchangeable, and have a very deep emotional attachment.
5. Culture clashes, or misunderstandings most often occur between hidden elements of culture just as icebergs often crash undetected under the water.
6. Each person has his/her own cultural identity, based on their individual experiences, sub-cultural groups with which they identify (religious, ethnic, gender, generational, etc.), their family, and the country/culture they were raised in.

## Optional Discussion: Your Culture & Values (Recommended)

1. What are your “visible” behaviors and characteristics?
2. What are your “less visible” values and attitudes?
3. What are your “invisible” (core) norms and beliefs?
4. Are your values and beliefs similar to or different from common U.S. American values?

## Common U.S. Values [SLIDE #6]

- Equality
- Individualism & Privacy
- Private Property & Personal Opinion
- Informality & Friendliness
- Time is important
- Directness

## Optional Activity: Values (Recommended)

1. What are your family’s top 2-3 values/attitudes?
2. What are the positive interpretations of those values? (ex: *Directness = honest, clear communication, minimizes misinterpretation etc.*)
3. What are the negative interpretations of those values? (ex: *Directness = offensive, insensitive, aggressive, abrasive etc.*)

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## Debrief

- It's important to remember that every value and attitude can be seen both positively and negatively.
- Remember, your liaison is a great resource and can help decode different behaviors and look for the values these behaviors are linked to.

# Host Family Orientation

## Activity (Methodology)

Viewing Scenarios from Different Cultures (Brainstorming, group discussion)

## When to do the exercise

7th

**Time Needed:** 20-30 Min

**Materials:** Flipchart paper, markers, Slide #7 (optional)

## 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

## Introduction [SLIDE#7]

- Developing relationships with people from different cultures is not easy.
- The unspoken rules of society especially may be a challenge for you and your student.
- This exercise can help you to understand each other better
- Now, let's think through some scenarios and think about how we might react as ourselves and from different cultural perspectives.

## Instructions

1. Give the task: **Listen to each scenario and ask yourself these questions for each one.**
  - **What would you, as host parents, do?**
  - **What would you do if you were host parents with cultural values that are opposite to yours?**
2. Read each scenario and elicit responses.
3. Write all responses on flipchart paper.
4. Go through the discussion questions and debrief.

## Scenarios

1. **Student doesn't take initiative, make own decisions, seems "needy/dependent".**
  - Students from a culture where parents are authoritative and tell their children what to do.
  - Students may be unsure of what is/is not okay to do.

# Host Family Orientation

- Student may be unaccustomed to autonomy.
- 2. Student doesn't help with chores or make their own lunch.**
    - Student comes from culture where they were expected to study and achieve academic success and chores are the parents'/mothers' responsibility.
    - Student may be unsure of what to do or how to use household appliances.
    - Student may come from a culture that has specific expectations on how to do tasks/chores.
  - 3. Student borrows siblings' clothes without asking, uses family PC without asking.**
    - Student comes from "collective" culture where all family items are shared/okay to borrow.
    - Student wouldn't feel badly if you borrowed their items without asking first.
  - 4. Student accepts gifts but doesn't react warmly or open it in front of family.**
    - Student comes from a culture where gifts are opened privately.
    - Student comes from culture that encourages stoicism/not showing strong emotions.
  - 5. Student copies classmates' homework and submits it as their own.**
    - Student comes from a culture where copying is viewed as helping/sharing.
    - Student comes from a culture that values classmate/student cooperation.
    - Student comes from a culture that values task completion more than the process of the task.
  - 6. Student says they will complete a chore but doesn't follow through.**
    - Student comes from a culture where Yes can mean No.
    - Student comes from a culture where time and task completion are more relaxed.

## Discussion

1. How would you proceed in this situation?
2. What may explain the student's behavior? Could this be cultural?
3. Why are certain expectations important to you?

## Debrief

- It is important to remember the AFS slogan "It's not right or wrong, it's just different."
- This slogan emphasizes the importance of **Cultural Relativism** - the idea that a person's beliefs, values, and practices should be understood based on that person's own culture, rather than be judged against the criteria of another.
- For example, if a student speaks to host parents without making direct eye contact, the host family might conclude that the student is lying/hiding something. However, the student might come from a culture where it is very disrespectful to look parents/elders in the eye when speaking with them. So, according to **Cultural Relativism**, the student is actually trying to show respect and the host parents should be understanding of this perspective.

# Host Family Orientation

- Both host families and students behave and operate within their cultural norms.
- However, values and behaviors may be perceived differently in other cultures.
- The consequences of behaviors may differ between countries.
- As host parents, remember the importance of cultural context when listening to student talk about their experiences.

# Host Family Orientation

## Activity (Methodology)

The D.I.V.E. Method (brainstorming, critical thinking/analysis, discussion)

## When to do the exercise

8th

**Time Needed:** 20-30 min

**Materials:** flipchart paper, markers, DIVE image (p. 25 and on MyAFS Help & Learning), Slide #8-9 (optional)

## Objectives

- To practice using the “Describe, Interpret, Verify, Evaluate” (D.I.V.E.) method of observation
- To distinguish between descriptions, interpretations, and evaluations
- To produce neutral descriptions of situations
- To respond effectively and appropriately within an intercultural interaction
- To slow down our minds from wanting to make a judgement

## Introduction

- Next, you will be practicing your critical thinking skills.
- 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”.
- The D.I.V.E. Method is one of the strategies that can help you in these situations.

## Instructions

1. Show the DIVE image and ask: **What can you tell me about this image? What else?** \*wording is essential here\*
2. Write all comments on flipchart paper.
3. Read each comment aloud and ask: **Is this a Description (an observable fact) or Interpretation (your personal view)?**
4. Using different colored markers, write a “D” or “I” next to respective comment.
5. Explain the DIVE Method.
  1. 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.)

# Host Family Orientation

2. INTERPRET = how you make sense of what you see (What are your assumptions about what you described? How would you characterize?)
  3. VERIFY = what deeper insights others can provide (Liaisons and AFS staff can be the cultural informant to help the host family understand the situations. Are there any other ways the host family could check if their interpretation was correct?)
  4. EVALUATE = what value judgments you give to this situation (How would you qualify and judge what you see?)
6. Discuss the comments.

## The D.I.V.E. Image [SLIDE #8]



## The D.I.V.E. Image - Explanation

- The photo is of a professional funeral mourner in China.
- A common ritual in China involves the family paying the mourners in advance and bringing them in lavish style to the place the funeral will take place.
- Since the funeral is usually a couple of days after the actual death, the goal of the professional mourner is to remind everyone attending the funeral about the sadness and pain that is associated with when someone passes away.

# Host Family Orientation

- The mourners are trained in the art of singing and bring a band with them.
- The first step is for the mourners to line up outside and crawl. While crawling, the mourner says with anguish the name of the person. This is symbolic of daughters running home from their families in an effort to see the body.
- Next, a eulogy is performed in loud, sobbing, fashion and backed up by dramatic instrumental tunes, driving the attendees to tears.
- The more wailers or mourners that followed your cascade around, the more respected you were in the society.

## The D.I.V.E. Method [SLIDE #9]

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

## Discussion

1. What other ways are there to describe the situation?
2. What are your observations of the perceived behavior?
3. How did your evaluation of the situation influence your action?

## Debrief

1. It is normal to jump to conclusions, make assumptions and judge things quickly.
2. However, it is important to separate observations from interpretations/opinions.
3. Wait before making evaluations and/or reacting.
4. The DIVE method helps us to refrain from passing judgment and making incorrect assumptions.

# Host Family Orientation

## Activity (Methodology)

Snapshot Scenarios (group discussion, brainstorming)

## When to do the exercise

9th

**Time Needed:** 30-45 Min

**Materials:** paper (optional), pens (optional), Slide #10 (optional)

## Objectives

- To overcome ethnocentric worldviews when interacting with new people, social situations and cultural norms
- To develop strategies for coping with cultural differences
- To become more aware of the influence of cultural backgrounds on perception, behavior, values and attitudes
- To listen, be mindful of the needs of other people and consider different perspectives when approaching problems and everyday situations
- To learn how to become thoughtful active listeners and respond with respect for the other person

## Instructions [SLIDE #10]

1. Read each Snapshot Scenario (#1-8) aloud and discuss as one large group, in small groups, in pairs etc.

## Discussion

1. When hearing from your student about their problem, how might you react initially?
2. Thinking about this situation, how can you help your student work through it?

## Debrief

1. Who do you think would be the first one to make a step towards a solution?
2. Can you think of alternative solutions to the scenarios?
3. What do all of the best approaches to these scenarios have in common?
4. What do these scenarios and solutions say about your role as a host parent to a student coming on program?

# Host Family Orientation

## Snapshot Scenarios

### Snapshot scenario #1: Different communication styles

**Our student doesn't have the same communication style as our family.**

Facilitator Notes:

- Practice changing your own communication style to match the student.
- Have someone else in the family who is a different age/gender try to communicate the message.
- Try to communicate using other non-verbal methods (ex: written).

### Snapshot scenario #2: Homesick

**Our student is homesick and seems very sad.**

Facilitator Notes:

- Remember to verify your perception before evaluating.
- If your interpretation is correct, create a "host family rule" that students must spend time with the family and not stay in their room.
- Remember that students are going through the process of cultural adaptation and may be experiencing culture shock, so experiencing different emotions is normal.

### Snapshot scenario #3: Shy/trouble making friends

**Our student hasn't made many friends.**

Facilitator Notes:

- If you haven't already, introduce your student to others their age.
- Encourage students to join a school activity or local youth group.
- Encourage students to self-reflect and be more aware of how their behaviors/attitudes are perceived by others.

### Snapshot scenario #4: Uses phone/internet all the time

**Our student is on their phone/social media for hours every day.**

Facilitator Notes:

- Put on "your detective hat" and try to figure if the interactions are positive (ex: communicating with new friends in U.S.) or negative (ex: communicating with natural parents).
- Talk with your Liaison and have them talk with the student about their phone usage.

### Snapshot scenarios #5: Doesn't follow household/family rules

**Our student doesn't do chores, even though we told them that everyone must help out around the house.**

# Host Family Orientation

Facilitator Notes:

- Make a "chore chart" for all family members and track everyone's chores. Mark when each is completed with gold star stickers or some other visual cue.
- Students may come from cultures where they were expected to only study.
- So, it is important to demonstrate how chores should be done and your expectations of "clean" or "completed".
- Also, be sure to demonstrate how to use any household appliances (ex: vacuum cleaner, washing machine, dishwasher, garbage disposal etc.) in case they have never seen/used them.

## Snapshot scenario #6: Touching/personal space/boundaries

**Our student seems uncomfortable when we hug them.**

Facilitator Notes:

- Be mindful that physical contact can be culturally insensitive or even inappropriate.
- Always ask permission before initiating physical contact.
- Always respect students' wishes and personal boundaries.
- Ask students what their personal boundaries and preferences are (ex: "Thank you for telling me that hugs make you uncomfortable. Is it okay to pat you on the shoulder to show appreciation?")

## Snapshot scenario #7: Medical issue

**Our student injured their knee during a soccer game.**

Facilitator Notes:

- Ask the student about their symptoms and offer medical care (ex: pain should be followed up by a visit to Urgent Care).
- Retain any/all medical documentation received (ex: treatment plan, medical diagnosis, prescription, etc.)
- Medical documentation is extremely helpful in supporting your family/student if further medical care is needed.
- Keep your Liaison informed of any medical issues or injuries.

## Snapshot scenario #8: Dental care

**Our student has a toothache.**

Facilitator Notes:

- If there is no immediate medical concern, reach out to your Liaison before seeking dental services.
- Should you need immediate dental care, please be aware that you may be required to pay out-of-pocket and coverage cannot be guaranteed.

# Host Family Orientation

## Activity (Methodology)

Common Adaptation Experiences (Group discussion)

## When to do the exercise

10<sup>th</sup>

**Time Needed:** 30 Min

**Materials:** flipchart paper, markers, Required handouts – 1 per host family [Cultural Adjustment Cycle, AFS Orientations for Students, Tips for Adjusting], Slide #11 (optional)

## Objectives

- To develop strategies for coping with cultural differences
- To become more aware of the influence of cultural backgrounds on perception, behavior, values and attitudes
- To accept and appreciate the changes the family experiences when hosting a student, and to view such changes as learning opportunities
- 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

## Introduction

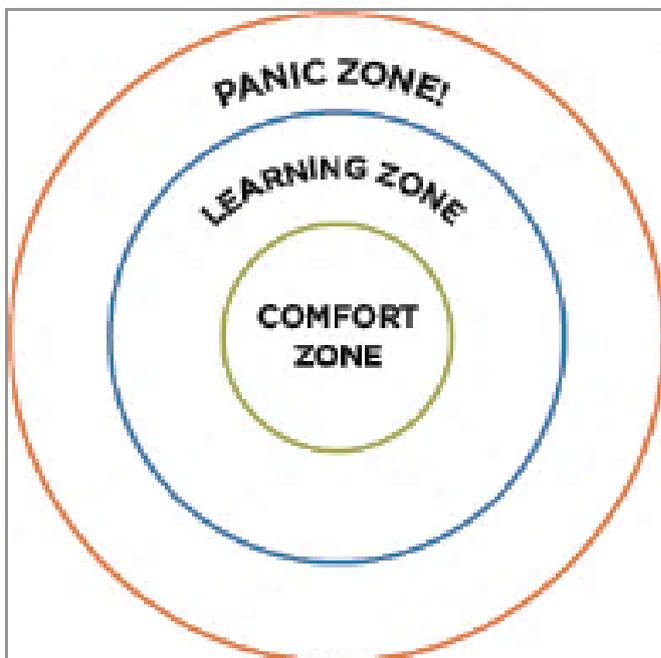
1. Host families play a vital role in helping their student through cultural adjustments.
2. As a host family, both you, along with your student, will be experiencing the ups and downs of cultural adjustment and adaptation.
3. Introducing a new member of the family into your daily life may disrupt old routines, take you out of your comfort zone and/or ask you to question yourself and your assumption.
4. Cultural adjustment and the adaptation experience are unique to each person.
5. Cultural adjustment and adaptation often involve leaving your comfort zone.
6. However, leaving or stretching your comfort zone provides the opportunity to learn from new experiences.
7. Even crises are learning opportunities that provide the opportunity to gain or improve your interpersonal and communication skills.
8. Before your student arrives, it is important to reflect on what you are thinking and feeling.

# Host Family Orientation

## Discussion prompts

1. One word to describe my current feeling(s) about hosting is...
2. I feel excited about...
3. I feel nervous about...
4. During the hosting experience, I hope that...
5. I feel like this hosting experience will be a success if...

## Comfort-Learning-Panic Zones



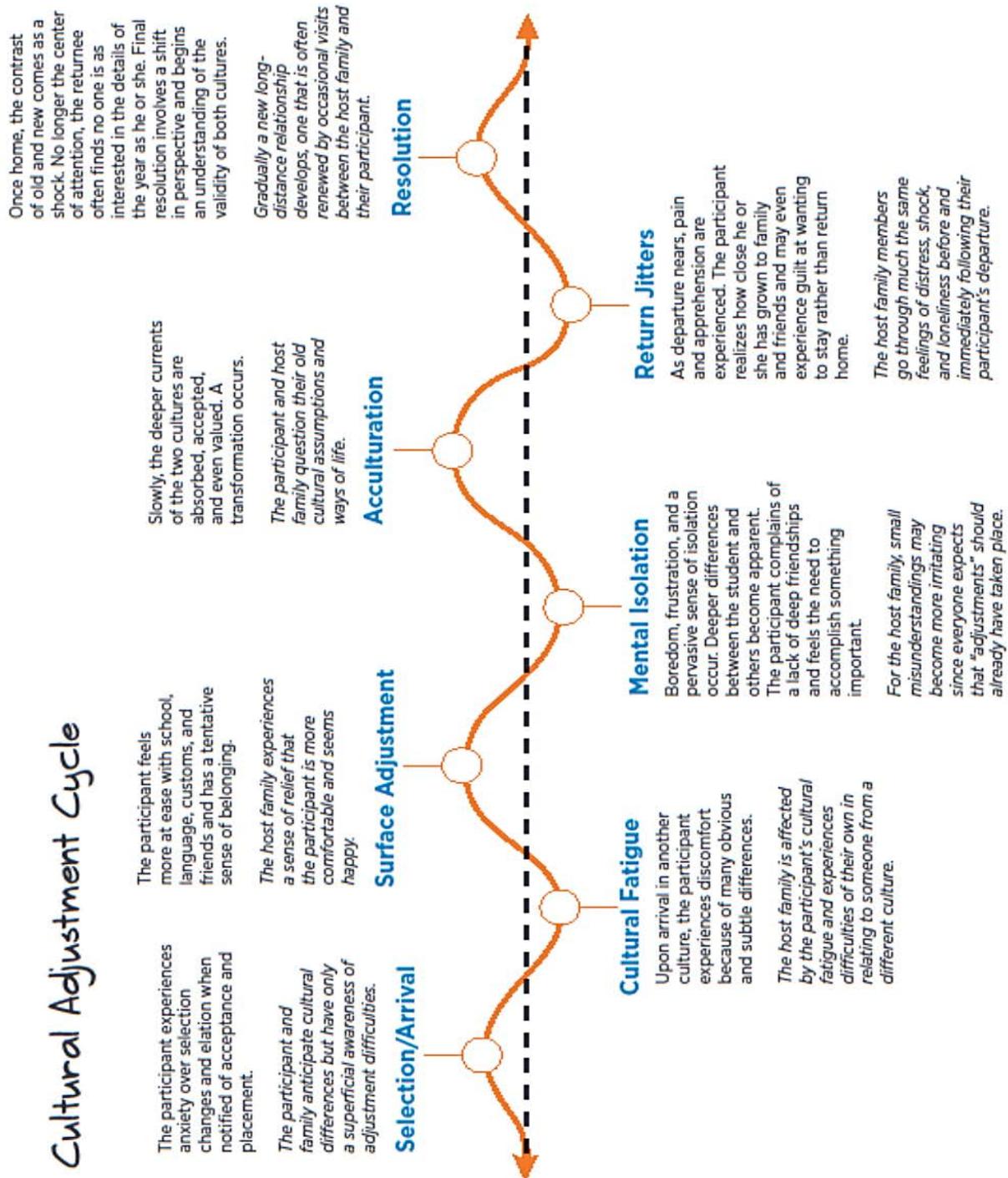
## Cultural Adjustment Cycle - Explanation

- The model (on the following page) outlines the common emotions that students, as well as host families, experience while on program.
- Please note that the model portrays the general emotional changes.
- However, each student and host family are unique and may experience a variety of emotions throughout the student's program.

# Host Family Orientation

## Cultural Adjustment Cycle - Diagram [SLIDE #11]

### Cultural Adjustment Cycle



# Host Family Orientation

## Activity (Methodology)

AFS Quiz (content review)

## When to do the exercise

11<sup>th</sup>

**Time Needed:** 15-25 Min

**Materials:** printed AFS Quiz - 1 per host family, Required handouts – 1 per host family [AFS Chain of Communication, AFS Terms], pens/pencils, Slide #12 (optional)

## Objectives

- To review the AFS rules and safety relating to students and host families
- To demonstrate understanding of AFS guidelines and regulations related to students and host families

## Overview

- This activity is designed as a final quiz that tests host parents' knowledge and understanding of AFS rules and safety.
- Depending on the size of the group, it can be split into smaller teams or specific team groupings (ex: parents vs. students, men vs. women, etc.).
- Giving out small prizes to the winning teams or people is completely optional.
- Required handouts can be distributed after the quiz/when discussing the answers and reviewed as they relate to the AFS Safety Quiz content.

## Instructions [SLIDE #12]

1. Pass out printed copies of the **AFS Quiz for Host Families** and pens/pencils to each host family.
2. Allow approx. 3-5 min for host parents to complete the **AFS Quiz for Host Families**.
3. Review the answers using **the AFS Quiz – Answer Sheet**

# Host Family Orientation

## AFS Quiz for Host Families

1. As an AFS Host Family, we are expected to provide three balanced meals for our participant, including packing their lunch for school days, providing adequate food for students to make their own lunch for school days, or an allowance to purchase lunch in the cafeteria.	<b>True</b> <b>False</b>
2. Emotional highs and lows are a normal part of the cultural adjustment cycle.	<b>True</b> <b>False</b>
3. In case of adjustment difficulties, the first person we should contact is the participant's natural parent or guardian.	<b>True</b> <b>False</b>
4. Participants are not allowed to drive any vehicle requiring a license.	<b>True</b> <b>False</b>
5. In case of emergency during business hours, we contact our National Service Center and in case of emergency during non-business hours we contact the National Service Center to reach the AFS Duty Officer.	<b>True</b> <b>False</b>
6. Host siblings of similar ages will become best friends.	<b>True</b> <b>False</b>
7. AFS discourages natural parents from visiting their children while in the U.S.	<b>True</b> <b>False</b>
8. The dominant communication style in the U.S. is indirect.	<b>True</b> <b>False</b>
9. Participants have been promised that they will receive a diploma if they graduate with their class in the U.S.	<b>True</b> <b>False</b>
10. It is a good idea to limit the amount of time our participant spends communicating with friends and family back home via the computer or other means.	<b>True</b> <b>False</b>
11. The AFS Medical Plan covers the cost of any vaccinations, sports physicals, and chest X-rays that your participant may need.	<b>True</b> <b>False</b>
12. In order for a participant to gain approval for any independent travel, he or she must first obtain approval from his or her host family, then from the Volunteer Area Team Support Coordinator or other designated volunteer in his or her region.	<b>True</b> <b>False</b>
13. The only document our participant will need to travel outside of the U.S. while on the program is his or her passport.	<b>True</b> <b>False</b>

# Host Family Orientation

## AFS Quiz for Host Families – Answer Sheet

<p><b>1. As an AFS Host Family, we are expected to provide three balanced meals for our participant, including packing their lunch for school days, providing adequate food for students to make their own lunch for school days, or an allowance to purchase lunch in the cafeteria.</b></p>	<p><b>True</b></p>
<p>As AFS Host Parents you are expected to provide all meals, including either a sack lunch for school days or an allowance to purchase lunch in the cafeteria. In addition, you are expected to pay for your participant's meal when you go out for a meal. <i>Section – What does AFS expect of us as hosts?</i></p>	
<p><b>2. Emotional highs and lows are a normal part of the cultural adjustment cycle.</b></p>	<p><b>True</b></p>
<p>Studies show that a general cycle of emotional stages, or high and lows tend to exist when an individual embarks upon living in a new culture. <i>Section – Adjusting to a New Culture</i></p>	
<p><b>3. In case of adjustment difficulties, the first person we should contact is the participant's natural parent or guardian.</b></p>	<p><b>False</b></p>
<p>Contact your liaison first and keep the lines of communication open with your participant. Refer to <i>AFS Support Chain of Communication</i>. <i>Section – Adjusting to a New Culture</i></p>	
<p><b>4. Participants are not allowed to drive any vehicle requiring a license.</b></p>	<p><b>True</b></p>
<p>The three main AFS Rules are no drugs, no driving and no hitchhiking. <i>Section – Rules and Regulations</i></p>	
<p><b>5. In case of emergency during business hours, we contact our National Service Center and in case of emergency during non-business hours we contact the National Service Center to reach the AFS Duty Officer.</b></p>	<p><b>True</b></p>
<p>The National Service Center can be reached during business hours at 1-800-AFS-INFO (237-4636) and the AFS Duty Officer, outside of business hours, at 1-800-AFS-INFO (237-4636) and dialing 9. Refer to <i>AFS Support Chain of Communication</i>. <i>Section – How do we get help?</i></p>	
<p><b>6. Host siblings of similar ages will become best friends.</b></p>	<p><b>False</b></p>
<p>Just as many siblings are close but would not describe each other as best friends, participants may or may not share the same interests or set of friends as their host sibling. <i>Section – Family Relationships</i>.</p>	

# Host Family Orientation

<b>7. AFS discourages natural parents from visiting their children while in the U.S.</b>	<b>True</b>
<p>Visits from friends or family from back home are discouraged, and the participants signed an agreement stating that they understood this. Natural family visits are disruptive to the participant's exchange experience. For the participant, the arrival of someone from home interrupts integration into U.S. life, as relationships and cultural norms from home are resumed. For the hosts, it interrupts their role as parents, may confuse relationships, and imposes additional hospitality burdens. <i>Section – Family Relationships</i></p>	
<b>8. The dominant communication style in the U.S. is indirect.</b>	<b>False</b>
<p>The dominant communication style in the U.S. is direct. <i>Section – Culture Learning</i></p>	
<b>9. Participants have been promised that they will receive a diploma if they graduate with their class in the U.S.</b>	<b>False</b>
<p>Participants are informed that no school is required to give diplomas and that each school has its individual policy. If the student and/or the natural family are pressuring the school to grant a diploma, the liaison should be contacted. <i>Section - School and Teenage Life</i></p>	
<b>10. It is a good idea to limit the amount of time our participant spends communicating with friends and family back home via the computer or other means.</b>	<b>True</b>
<p>AFS recommends that participants communicate with friends and family back home via the computer no more than 60-90 minutes per week. A schedule should be set and adhered to from the start of the experience as excessive communication with those back home can be very detrimental to the participant's integration into your family. <i>Section – Common Issues and Concerns.</i></p>	
<b>11. The AFS Medical Plan covers the cost of any vaccinations, sports physicals, and chest X-rays that our participant may need.</b>	<b>False</b>
<p>The AFS Medical Plan does not cover these expenses. The natural family or guardian is responsible for them. <i>Section – Medical Concerns</i></p>	
<b>12. In order for a participant to gain approval for any independent travel, he or she must first obtain approval of the travel from his or her host family, then from the Volunteer Area Team Support Coordinator or other designated volunteer in his or her region.</b>	<b>True</b>
<p>The participant must first obtain approval of the travel from the host family, then from the Volunteer Area Team Support Coordinator or other designated volunteer in his or her region. In addition, independent travel may only take place after the fifth month of the program or in the final month of the program for semester participants. <i>Section – Participant Travel While in the U.S.</i></p>	
<b>13. The only document your participant will need to travel outside of the U.S. while on the program is his or her passport.</b>	<b>False</b>
<p>Consult the <i>Host Family Handbook</i> for detailed information about what is required in this case. The procedure differs for Sponsored Program (NSLI-Y, YES, CBYX) and non-Sponsored Program Participants. <i>Section – Participant Travel While in the U.S.</i></p>	

# Host Family Orientation

## Activity (Methodology)

Feedback & Evaluation (Assessment)

## When to do the exercise

12th

**Time Needed:** 5-10 Min

**Materials:** Printed Evaluation form (optional), URL for Evaluation (optional)

## Objectives

- To evaluate the effectiveness of the in-person Host Family Orientation content and activities.

## Variations

- The Evaluation can be given out to each host parent in printed form, with Volunteers collecting them and entering the data into the online survey using the link.
- Alternately, the URL link can be shared, and host parents can complete the evaluation online.

## URL Link

**<http://bit.ly/AFS-HFO>**

## Follow-up

1. Distribute the URL and/or printed Evaluation Form to everyone.
2. If using printed forms, collect when all are finished.

# Host Family Orientation

## Evaluation of Host Family Orientation

Date of Host Family Orientation: \_\_\_\_\_

Length of Host Family Orientation: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Area Team: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Orientation Leader: \_\_\_\_\_

How would you rate the Orientation Leader? (Please circle your rating)

Effectively made learning points	Poor	Fair	Average	Good	Excellent
Organized	Poor	Fair	Average	Good	Excellent
Knowledgeable	Poor	Fair	Average	Good	Excellent
Supportive	Poor	Fair	Average	Good	Excellent

Overall, how would you rate the Host Family Orientation? (please circle your rating)

Poor Fair Average Good Excellent

How would you rate each activity? (please circle your rating)

Introduction to Host Family Orientation	Poor	Fair	Average	Good	Excellent	N/A (Didn't do activity)
Interactive Ice-breaker	Poor	Fair	Average	Good	Excellent	N/A (Didn't do activity)
Communication Styles	Poor	Fair	Average	Good	Excellent	N/A (Didn't do activity)
Describe Your Family & "Participant and Host Family Questionnaire"	Poor	Fair	Average	Good	Excellent	N/A (Didn't do activity)
Families and "Culture"	Poor	Fair	Average	Good	Excellent	N/A (Didn't do activity)
Viewing Scenarios from Different Cultures	Poor	Fair	Average	Good	Excellent	N/A (Didn't do activity)
The DIVE Method	Poor	Fair	Average	Good	Excellent	N/A (Didn't do activity)
Snapshot Scenarios	Poor	Fair	Average	Good	Excellent	N/A (Didn't do activity)
Common Adaptation Experiences	Poor	Fair	Average	Good	Excellent	N/A (Didn't do activity)
AFS Quiz Game	Poor	Fair	Average	Good	Excellent	N/A (Didn't do activity)

Additional Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

# Host Family Orientation

## APPENDIX OF REQUIRED HANDOUTS

## Nuts 'n Bolts – Hosting basics for AFS Host Families

### AFS-USA Orientations for Hosted Students

- Please note that attendance at all AFS-USA Orientations is mandatory for hosted students with the exception of serious extenuating or medical situations.
- AFS Orientations are integral learning opportunities on the AFS learning journey for all participants.
  - 1. Arrival Orientation**
    - Dates/Times:
    - Location:
  - 2. Post-Arrival Orientation**
    - Dates/Times:
    - Location:
  - 3. Mid-Stay Orientation**
    - Dates/Times:
    - Location:
  - 4. Pre-Return Orientation**
    - Dates/Times:
    - Location:
  - 5. End-of-Stay Orientation**
    - Dates/Times:
      - June 23, 2019 (for students flying out of LAX, SEA on June 24, 2019)
      - June 24, 2019 (for students flying out of NYC, DFW, ORD, MSP, IAD on June 25, 2019)
    - Location:

### Liaisons & Monthly Contacts

- Each student and host family are assigned a local registered volunteer, who is called their “liaison”.
- Your liaison can act as a resource for you, help you through cultural adjustments and help your resolves issues as they arise.
- Throughout your student’s program, your AFS liaison will initiate separate contact with both you and your student each month.
- 3 monthly contacts must take place in your home for year program participants and 2 must take place in your home for semester program participants.
- It is important to remember however, that you needn’t wait for your liaison to contact you.

## Nuts 'n Bolts – Hosting basics for AFS Host Families

- In fact, we urge you to ask for assistance at any time, before difficulties and misunderstandings escalate to a less manageable situation.

### AFS Support & AFS Duty Officer

- In case of an emergency outside of regular business hours and you are unable to reach your liaison, you would contact the AFS Duty Officer.
- An emergency might be a car accident, serious illness and/or hospitalization of your student, any situations in which the police are involved, or any time you feel there is important information that must be communicated to the natural parents immediately.
- AFS Participant Support Dept. (Mon-Fri, 9am-6pm Eastern Time)
  - **General questions/inquiries (during business hours): 800-237-4636, option 3**
  - **Emergencies (during business hours): 800-237-4636, option 9**
- **AFS Duty Officer number (evening/weekend): 800-237-4636, option 9**

### Making Your Home Accessible

- Be sure to give your hosted student a copy of the house key or pin code for the garage (if applicable).

### Food/Meals

- Host families are expected to provide three balanced meals every day.
- If host families do not provide food for participants to make their own lunch or if host families do not make lunch for the participant, then the host family must provide money to purchase lunch at school. However, if participants choose to buy lunch at school instead of bringing it from home, then that cost is the participant's responsibility.
- If there are any dietary concerns regarding the participant or host family, please contact your Liaison for guidance and support.

### State and Local laws

- Please inform your participant of any local laws that may affect them (i.e. teen curfews; laws about passenger limitations on teen drivers – if host siblings/friends will be driving; trespassing; jaywalking etc.)

### Religious Services

- Participants should not be required to attend religious services with your family if they do not wish to do so but are encouraged to do so at least once, as part of their cultural immersion experience.
- If your participant wishes to attend religious services of another kind, please make sure you locate the place of worship prior to arrival and speak to the appropriate person about AFS, and the fact that your

## Nuts 'n Bolts – Hosting basics for AFS Host Families

participant may attend services there. You may want to coordinate transportation to and from services with other parents whose participant may be attending the same service.

- For more information and recommendations, see your *Host Family Handbook*.

### Money

- With regard to your participant's handling of finances, we advise that you keep all financial transactions separate.
- Your participant may want to check on applicable money or bank transfer fees as they can vary greatly. Participants typically bring debit or credit cards.

### Activity Waivers

- Please communicate with your local volunteers to ensure that your participant has a signed and completed Activity Waiver on file.
- Please note that some activities (i.e. white-water rafting, hunting/gun ranges, etc.) will require an additional Activity Waiver to be signed and completed before engaging in such activities.
- Please reach out to your local volunteers if this scenario applies to you.

### Travel Waivers

- Travel guidelines are strictly enforced. This is in the interest of managing the safety and well-being of all AFS participants.
- Violating the travel guidelines will result in further review and can jeopardize the continuation of the participant's program.
- For more information on travel guidelines, please refer to your *Host Family Handbook* or contact your Liaison for more details.

### GMMI (Travel Insurance – Medical & Dental)

- GMMI insurance is "travel insurance" and intended to cover most unplanned, emergency medical and dental situations.
- The medical insurance does not cover elective procedures, routine medical care (i.e. vaccinations, sports physicals, chest x-rays, check-ups, vision care etc.) or pre-existing conditions.
- The dental insurance only covers dental emergencies and is limited to alleviating pain and emergency and/or medically-necessary dental procedures.
- If your student requires any of these services, it is the natural family's responsibility to cover the cost. You, the host family, can be most helpful by locating local services providers when needed.
- For information on the medical plan, please refer to your *Host Family Handbook* and the *AFS Medical Guide*.

## Tips for the First Days

In the first days after Arrival, your participant may be tired/hyper, scared/fearless, insecure/overconfident, quiet/talkative, or somewhere in between. This is not the sum total of the child you will host all year!

### What to do...

- Act naturally and just be yourself.
- Don't assume anything.
- Explain and demonstrate anything you think is the "obvious/common-sense" because clear, specific instructions are essential!
- Speak very, very slowly and clearly.
- Establish your participant's "member of the family" status right away – Don't do things in the beginning that you don't plan to do all year.
- Break the ice: bring a small gift to give to the participant upon meeting them. (ex: a journal, balloon, t-shirt from your local area, key to the house, etc.)
- Ask to see pictures of the participant's home and family.
- In the first 2-3 weeks, review and discuss the "Participant and Host Family Questionnaire" to establish clear expectations and family rules

### Some typical challenges...

#### Language

- Even if the participant's English is good, concentrated listening is difficult, extremely tiring and can cause headaches!
- Fatigue – from the journey, from the time change, from encountering so many new things and people, and speaking a non-native language
- Participants will fade in and out of conversations
- Once again, speak very slowly, even more slowly than you think is necessary
- Watch for slang or idioms that are clear to us, but totally foreign to our students.
- Be very clear with expectations – don't assume that the participant understood you the first time!

#### School

- Before school starts, take participant to school and show him/her around - how lockers work; where the cafeteria, library, bathrooms are; the bus stop, etc.
- Expect great anxiety – Who to sit with at lunch, how to get from class to class, meeting American kids, how to make friends, the language, not used to electives, changing classrooms, etc. Reassure participant that this is normal and will pass.
- Encourage participants to stick with classes that seem hard at first, otherwise boredom will set in later on
- Let them know teachers often stay after school to assist students
- Make a guidance appointment if you haven't already

- Sometimes a participant has been accepted by a school, but the Guidance Department isn't aware, so now is a good time to track down the paperwork
- Some schools require you to register your participant, and ask for their passport; explain this is not required for exchange students but copy of passport can be made when participant arrives
- Health form addendum – participant will bring updated form that must go to school nurse
- We have sent immunization requirements with all host family information, but you should email your participant to make sure he/she has gotten required immunizations
- Participant will bring updated school records which should be brought to school as well
- Give/send each teacher a letter or e-mail explaining that participant is an AFS Student before classes start

### **Sports**

- Participants may not be used to rigorous try-outs which may start the day after arrival
- Sports physicals must be scheduled and are not covered by the AFS medical plan (see Host Family Handbook)
- Participant may not be aware that they have to go to every practice
- Participants may not be aware of sports “seasons”
- Let coach know what to expect – limited comprehension, need to speak slowly, differences in eye contact ≠ bad attitude, etc.

### **What can you do to raise your participant's spirits in low periods?**

- Encourage participants to spend time in common/shared areas of home, not just in their bedroom
- Get them out and about – go for walks, bike rides, to the grocery store, take them to the library to get a library card, etc.
- Play simple card games, rent videos with closed captions in English
- Encourage participants to talk about life back home but discourage a lot of e-mails and phone calls to home
- Help them find something to occupy them that is the same or similar to something they like to do at home
- Make sure they establish good sleeping habits. They should not over-sleep or sleep too little
- Encourage physical activity/exercise
- Make sure they are enrolled in at least one elective, and encourage extra-curricular activities, to help them make friends at school
- Help them seek out opportunities to help others. Taking their mind off their own situation will actually lessen the homesickness
- Encourage them to be in contact with their liaison

## AFS Terms

- **Hosted Participant** – AFS-USA hosts approximately 2,000 participants annually.
- **Host Family Member** – Many host families have sent their own children abroad, were AFS participants themselves and/or have hosted previously.
- **AFS Liaison** – Each participant and host family are assigned a local volunteer, called a “Liaison”. Throughout your participant’s program, your AFS liaison will initiate separate contact with both you and your participant each month (3 monthly contacts must take place **in your home** for year program participants and 2 must take place in your home for semester program participants). It is important to remember however, that you needn’t wait for your liaison to contact you. In fact, we urge you to ask for assistance at any time, before difficulties and misunderstandings escalate to a less manageable situation.
- **AFS Chapter or Area Team Support Coordinator** – Your liaison will keep the Chapter or Area Team Support Coordinator apprised of any important matters concerning you and your hosted participant. Support Coordinators serve as a resource to help resolve any issues or answer any questions that you or your liaison may have.
- **AFS Duty Officer** – In case of an emergency outside of regular business hours and you are unable to reach your liaison, you would contact the AFS Duty Officer. An emergency might be a car accident, serious illness and/or hospitalization of your participant, any situation in which the police are involved, or any time you feel there is important information that must be communicated to the natural parents immediately.
- **AFS Staff in the U.S. and Partner Country** – AFS staff in the U.S. and in your participant’s home country work with volunteers in their respective countries to resolve those issues and questions that can’t be resolved at the local level.
- **AFS Volunteers in the Home Country** – The volunteer structure varies around the world, but in every AFS partner country you will find volunteers who serve as a bridge between the parent of the participant and the staff in the partner office.
- **Natural Family Members** – Like host family members, natural family members abroad may have been abroad themselves, or have hosted a participant. Some may even be hosting a participant while their child is in your home.

## AFS Orientations for Host Students

- Throughout the year, AFS students **must** attend five (5) AFS Orientations.
  - The orientations are designed to address the following topics.
  - Host families are encouraged to discuss these topics with your student as well.
- 1. Arrival (usually upon arrival in the US, must be within first week of arriving)**
    - discuss laws, cultural attitudes, and common behaviors around alcohol, drugs, smoking and other health issues within their home and host culture;
    - practice refusal skills they can use to stand up to peer or adult pressures to engage in situations that put them at risk;
    - identify sources of support and contact information for help in difficult situations while abroad;
  - 2. Post-Arrival (4-6 weeks after arrival)**
    - convey to AFS volunteers the personal contact and support they have received to date (written form);
    - identify challenges they may face in their exchange experience that could affect their health, safety and ability to stay on the AFS Program
    - identify warning signs that may indicate that they are encountering an inappropriate situation;
    - identify strategies for avoiding and getting themselves out of situations that put them at risk;
    - create a personal safety plan that will guide them through challenges they may face.
    - share their success stories and experiences
    - discuss their cultural values and their host family's values.
  - 3. Mid-Stay (usually in January or February)**
    - convey to AFS volunteers the personal contact and support they have received to date (written form);
    - describe cultural differences and intercultural conflict styles.  
self-assess their experience so far and brainstorm ways to achieve their personal goals.
  - 4. Pre-Return (2-6 weeks before departure)**
    - discuss how they and their values may have changed/remained the same.
    - brainstorm ways to make the most of their remaining time in the US
    - discuss ways to handle the transition from the US back to their home country.
  - 5. End-of-Stay (day before departing the host community)**
    - identify healthy ways to handle the re-adjustment process and reverse culture shock.
    - Reflect on what they learned about themselves, their host family, the US, and their home culture's values.

## Tips for Adjusting

**In the first days** after Arrival, your participant may be tired/hyper, scared/fearless, insecure/overconfident, quiet/talkative, or somewhere in between. This is not the sum total of the child you will host all year!

### What to do...

- Act naturally, be yourself
- Don't assume anything
- Explain the "obvious" - See *Participant and Host Family Questionnaire*
- Speak very, very slowly and clearly
- Establish your participant's "member of the family" status right away – Don't do things in the beginning that you don't plan to do all year
- Break the ice: bring a small gift to give to the participant upon meeting him or her – a journal, balloon, t-shirt from your local area, key to the house, etc.
- Ask to see pictures of the participant's home and family.
- Show the participant a yearbook from the high school he or she will be attending and a course selection book if available

### Some typical challenges...

#### Language

- Even if the participant's English is good, concentrated listening is difficult, extremely tiring and can actually cause headaches!
- Fatigue – from the journey, from the time change, from encountering so many new things and people, and speaking a non-native language
- Participants will fade in and out of conversations
- Once again, speak very slowly, even more slowly than you think is necessary
- Watch for slang or idioms that are clear to us, but totally foreign to our students. For example: "That's a bunch of garbage" or "hop to it!" or "take that chair".
- Be very clear with expectations – don't assume that the participant understood you the first time!

#### School

- Before school starts, take participant to school and show him/her around - how lockers work; where the cafeteria, library, bathrooms are; the bus stop, etc.
- Expect great anxiety – Who to sit with at lunch, how to get from class to class, meeting American kids, how to make friends, the language, not used to electives, changing classrooms, etc. Reassure participant that this is normal and will pass.
- Encourage participants to stick with classes that seem hard at first, otherwise boredom will set in later on
- Let them know teachers often stay after school to assist students
- Make a guidance appointment if you haven't already
- Sometimes a participant has been accepted by school but the Guidance Department isn't aware, so now is a good time to track down the paperwork

- Some schools require you to register your participant, and ask for their passport; explain this is not required for exchange students but copy of passport can be made when participant arrives
- Health form addendum – participant will bring updated form that must go to school nurse
- We have sent immunization requirements with all host family information, but you should email your participant to make sure he/she has gotten required immunizations
- Participant will bring updated school records which should be brought to school as well
- Give/send each teacher a letter or e-mail explaining that participant is an AFS Student before classes start

### **Sports**

- Participants may not be used to rigorous try-outs which may start the day after arrival
- Sports physicals must be scheduled and are not covered by the AFS medical plan (see *Host Family Handbook*)
- Participant may not be aware that they have to go to every practice
- Participants may not be aware of sports “seasons”
- Let coach know what to expect – limited comprehension, need to speak slowly, differences in eye contact ≠ bad attitude, etc.

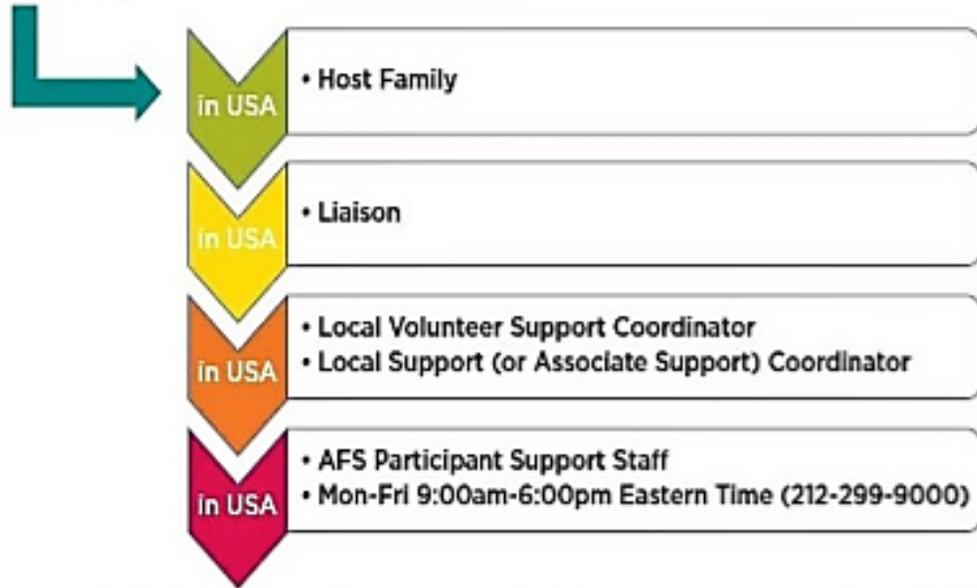
### **What can you do to raise your participant’s spirits in low periods?**

- Encourage participants to stay in living areas of home, not in their bedroom
- Get them out and about – go for walks, bike rides, to the grocery store, take them to the library to get a library card, etc.
- Play simple card games, rent videos with closed captions in English
- Encourage participants to talk about life back home but discourage a lot of e-mails and phone calls to home
- Help them find something to occupy them that is the same or similar to something they like to do at home
- Make sure they establish good sleeping habits. They should not over-sleep or sleep too little
- Encourage physical exercise
- Make sure they are enrolled in at least one elective, and encourage extra-curricular activities, to help them make friends at school
- Help them seek out opportunities to help others. Taking their mind off their own situation will actually lessen the homesickness
- Encourage them to be in contact with their liaison

For additional ideas on how to help you participant adjust to life with your family, and vice versa, please review and discuss ***Straight Talk for AFS Siblings***. In addition, please contact your **AFS Liaison** with concerns or questions, before mole-hills turn into mountains, and encourage your participant to do the same!

# AFS-USA CHAIN OF COMMUNICATION

Student in USA

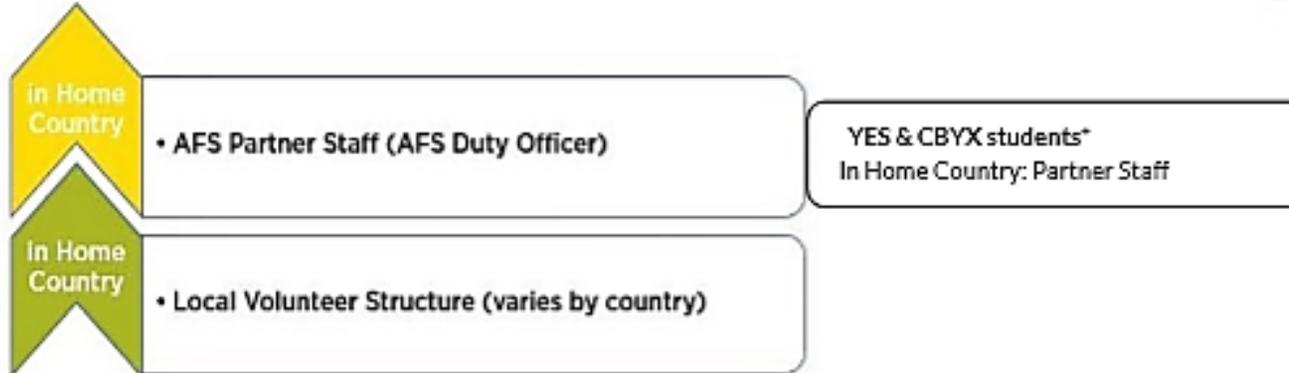


**EMERGENCIES ONLY: FOR STUDENTS**

If students cannot call anyone on this list first AND/OR it is at night/on the weekend, then call the AFS-USA Duty Officer.

(800-237-4636, option 9)

Natural Parent(s)  
In Home country



## AFS Participant and Host Family Questionnaire

When your student arrives in your home, you will have many things to talk about and many questions to ask each other. The following are some questions to help facilitate your student's integration into your family's life and better understand your expectations of them.

### Family and Relationships

1. What should I call you? (Mom/Dad, first names etc.) \_\_\_\_\_
2. If applicable, what is the desired relationship with host sibling(s)? (ex: to teach each other's languages, to be good friends, to do activities together, to study together, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What is an appropriate way to show **appreciation**? (ex: say Thank-you, carry the groceries, help clean the house, hug, give gifts, help with meals, spend time together, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. **To host parents**, what does a "closed" bedroom door mean? (circle which)
  - Accessible = open to interaction with host family
  - Desire for privacy = would like to be alone to study, rest, etc.
5. **To host parents**, what does an "open" bedroom door mean? (circle which)
  - Accessible = open to interaction with host family
  - Desire for privacy = would like to be alone to study, rest, etc.
6. When students are in their room, should their door stay open or be closed (if not sleeping or getting dressed)? \_\_\_\_\_
7. What are the family rules about digital devices and internet usage? (ex: phones must be given to parents at certain time, no use during meals, no Wi-Fi after certain time, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. How much time are students expected to spend with the family, **together in the same area/room**? (mark the line)  
  

<b>Very little</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Often</b>
<i>(Just meals)</i>	<i>(meals and after school)</i>	<i>(meals, free time, weekends)</i>
9. What are your expectations for family interactions? (ex: have conversations, watch TV/movies together, play sports/do activities together, go to religious services together, go shopping together etc.) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. How often do you communicate as a family? (ex: Throughout the day, mostly during meals, when we are not busy, on the weekends, while watching TV etc.) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
11. How does your family usually communicate? (ex: verbally, through texting, telling jokes, discussion on current events, talking about school, non-verbal such as hugging, debating, sarcasm, story-telling etc.) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
12. Does the family share certain activities in which I will also be expected to participate? (ex: sports games, community events etc.) \_\_\_\_\_
13. Does the family attend religious services? If so, may I attend them as well? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

14. **For students who attend religious services different from the family**, is it possible to attend them locally? How is transportation handled? \_\_\_\_\_

15. Are there any other household rules that have not covered? (ex: being on time, cleanliness, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

## Around the Home

### Host Parents:

• **Please demonstrate how to correctly use the bath/shower and household appliances to be used by students, such as the microwave, vacuum cleaner, washing machine etc.**

• **Please show and explain what your expectations of “Clean” and “Tidy” are, depending on the room (ex: bathroom, bedroom, kitchen) or situation (ex: before school, after meals, if guests are coming over etc.)**

16. What chores am I expected to do on a daily basis? (ex: tidying my bedroom, make my bed, feed the dog, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

17. Are there any chores that I will share with my siblings? (ex: set/clear the table, wash dishes, take out the garbage, vacuum etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

18. What appliances may I use around the house? (ex: stove/oven, microwave, computer, washing machine, TV etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

19. May I personalize my room by moving the furniture, putting up pictures, etc.? (circle) **Y/N**

• If yes, what should I use to place items on the walls? \_\_\_\_\_

20. Where should I study? (ex: in my room, in the living room, in the dining room etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

21. Are there any areas of the home in which I am not allowed? (ex: master bedroom, basement, garage, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

22. How should I leave the bathroom after I am finished (door open or closed, fan, lights, heater off/on etc.)? \_\_\_\_\_

23. May I take a **bath OR shower**? **When** (AM/PM) and **for how long**? \_\_\_\_\_

• Where should I put my towel, toothbrush, shampoo etc. after I use them? \_\_\_\_\_

24. **For girls**, how/where do I dispose of sanitary napkins and tampons? \_\_\_\_\_

25. Which personal toiletries are shared by the family? Which should I buy for myself? \_\_\_\_\_

26. At what time/s do family members wake up (weekdays/weekends)? \_\_\_\_\_

27. At what time should I wake up (weekdays/weekends)? \_\_\_\_\_

28. Will someone wake me up or is there an alarm clock I must set? \_\_\_\_\_

29. At what time do you expect me to go to bed (weekdays/weekends)? \_\_\_\_\_

30. **What time** and **for how long** may I:

Activity	At What Time	For how long	Where (in what room)
Watch TV/movies			
Do homework/study			
Listen to music			

Use the computer			
Read a book			

31. What are typical meal times (weekdays/weekends)?

Breakfast		Lunch		Dinner	
-----------	--	-------	--	--------	--

32. May I help myself to food from the refrigerator/cupboards between meals? (circle) **Y/N**

- If yes, what food may I eat as a snack? \_\_\_\_\_

33. May I eat food outside of the kitchen? (circle) **Y/N**

- If yes, in which rooms? \_\_\_\_\_

34. What will be my school lunch? (circle which)

- A packed lunch from home (**prepared by whom?** \_\_\_\_\_)
- Lunch from the school cafeteria (**lunch money provided by host family**)

35. How much time am I allowed to spend online [chatting, social media etc.] per day? (ex: a few hours after school, all day, only in the evenings etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

36. What are the rules regarding internet usage. Should I ask first? \_\_\_\_\_

37. What should I know about internet safety, protecting my privacy and that of the family? \_\_\_\_\_

38. May I invite classmates or friends to come over to the house? \_\_\_\_\_

- **If yes**, at what time/s and under what conditions? (ex: only same gender friends, only when siblings or parents are home, only on weekdays, only until dinner time etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

39. What are the rules about spending time with friends/classmates who are the opposite gender? (ex: only with mixed/large groups, not allowed in the home, not alone together, can meet socially, can study together etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

40. May I go out with friends at night during the week or on weekends? (circle) **Y/N**

- **If yes**, what time is the curfew [the time should I return home] on weekdays/weekend? \_\_\_\_\_

### Transportation

41. How far is the school from home? \_\_\_\_\_

42. How will I get to and from school? (indicate which)

Public transportation	By Car	Other
Method (ex: train, bus): _____	Name of Driver(s): _____ _____	(ex: walking, by bicycle, etc.) Route: _____ _____
Cost ( <b>provided by host family</b> ): _____	Time of Departure: _____ Time of Return: _____	_____
Stop/Station Location: _____	Duration of Trip: _____	_____

Time of Departure: _____	_____
Time of Return: _____	Duration of Trip: _____
Duration of Trip: _____	

43. How difficult is it to get around the community by myself (by walking or biking)? \_\_\_\_\_
44. Is there a bicycle that I may borrow? \_\_\_\_\_
- **If yes**, under what condition? (ex: must wear helmet, carry lock and bike chain, ask permission first, ride on sidewalk etc.) \_\_\_\_\_
45. Is there public transportation that I may use? (ex: bus, train, subway etc.) (circle) **Y/N**
- **If Yes**, what are the restrictions? \_\_\_\_\_
46. Who will be able to give me a ride to/from after-school activities? \_\_\_\_\_
- **If yes**, how much advanced notice is needed? (ex: a few days, a week, a few hours etc.) \_\_\_\_\_
47. What are the family expectations about providing transportation? \_\_\_\_\_
48. What are the rules or restrictions for me to arrange for friends to give me a ride? (ex: only friends approved first by parents, only friends with *Full Privilege* license, only friends over 17 or 18, only host siblings etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

### In the Community

49. Is there anything I should know about safety in certain parts of town? \_\_\_\_\_
50. What are the guidelines about where it is safe/unsafe to walk during the day, after dark? \_\_\_\_\_
51. What do we do in the event of a fire or other emergency? \_\_\_\_\_
52. What are the telephone numbers of related emergency services? **[in USA, it's 911]** \_\_\_\_\_
53. Where is the nearest hospital or clinic? \_\_\_\_\_
54. How do you secure the home? Lock the doors and windows? \_\_\_\_\_
55. How do I keep my belongings safe such as passport, money, and camera? \_\_\_\_\_
56. If home alone, how should I answer the phone or someone at to the door? \_\_\_\_\_
57. What do I need to know about traffic and pedestrian safety? \_\_\_\_\_
58. What do I do if I get lost in town? \_\_\_\_\_
59. What do I do if I don't have a key and nobody is home? \_\_\_\_\_
60. Is there anything I should know about the high school culture, school rules, peer relations, social tensions? \_\_\_\_\_
61. Are there activities, people, places I should avoid? What should I find out about a party, concert etc. before deciding to go? \_\_\_\_\_

**Money Matters**

62. How much money might I need for personal purchases? (ex: jeans/clothing, snack foods, movie tickets, fast food, electronics etc.) \_\_\_\_\_
63. What kind of expenses will I need to pay for myself? \_\_\_\_\_
64. Where is the nearest ATM or bank? \_\_\_\_\_

**Budget Sheet for AFS Participants**

Your host family has volunteered to support you throughout the year with food, housing and school transportation as a minimum. Expenses beyond that are optional and depend somewhat on the relationship you develop. It is generally helpful to discuss what you have available to spend on a monthly basis as part of the budget discussion.

In order to help budget your personal spending money, please consider which of the following optional items you would like to purchase yourself and plan accordingly. Sometimes local AFS Volunteers have funds available to help cover the cost of such items. Find out if your local AFS Volunteers have funds available to help you cover these costs and make a note of this here.

	Amount needed	Do I want to purchase?	How covered?
School yearbook	\$		
Class photos	\$		
Class ring	\$		
School trips	\$		
Graduation expenses	\$		
Prom expenses	\$		



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.

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