



## ACTIVITY # 1- SHARING THE BEST THING ABOUT MY EXCHANGE YEAR (15 min)

1. Ask the students to share the information on the flipchart titled BEST Thing About My Exchange Year from Session # 1 with the families.
2. Then ask everyone to take a few minutes to view the **Goodbye Timeline** and the **Goodbye Plan Worksheet**. Encourage the students and host families to read the Goodbye Timeline together and work on their Goodbye Plan together in the near future.
  - Be sure to point out the YFU Travel numbers highlighted/embedded in the document as well as discussing the plans for the last day and day of departure and who will go to the airport.
  - Ask families and students to take a few minutes to talk to each other a bit about any special activities they would like to plan for the remaining few months. As families and students are discussing this, circulate the room to answer any questions about departure.
3. After this brief conversation time, ask all participants if there are additional questions about logistics related to the student's return to his/her home country. Have the travel information on hand for additional questions.
4. Review objectives from the Welcome Session and state the activity or handout that accomplished the objective.

### OBJECTIVES OF YFU RE-ENTRY ORIENTATION

1. Identify the skills they have developed during their exchange experience and celebrate how their personal culture has changed.  
(Session # 2- The New Me)
2. Recognize that the end of the exchange brings many emotions and saying goodbye is difficult.  
(Session # 2- The New Me, Session #4 The Goodbye Plan)
3. Make a plan for departure and saying goodbye.  
(Session # 3- Leaving the US, Session #4- The Goodbye Plan)
4. Be prepared for re-entry to their home countries by examining the re-entry process and adaptation strategies.  
(Session # 3- Leaving the US, Session # 4- The Goodbye Plan—optional- Graffiti Wall)

## ACTIVITY - AFTER YOU LEAVE THE ORIENTATION - (5 minutes)

We have provided several documents for the host parents and students to look over once they return home. These documents are: Aspects of Goodbye, Goodbye Timeline, Goodbye Plan and Practical Tips for Readjustment & Handling Reverse Culture Shock. Please give these handouts to

the families/students as they leave so they may use them as a resource as they plan for the last weeks of this exchange experience as well as the departure of the student.

## **OPTIONAL ACTIVITY #2: GRADUATION & OPEN MIC**

(25 minutes, or more as needed)

1. Congratulate the students on their year. Ask the families for some examples of the accomplishments of their exchange students.
2. If any students prepared a poem, song, or “speech” they would like to share, introduce these performers and provide 5-10 minutes for this *Open Mic* time.
3. Once the performances are over, take the time to thank everyone, congratulate the students, and then call each student up to receive their *Honorary American certificate*.

### **WRAP UP** (2 minutes)

1. Thank everyone again and close the session with any final thoughts or words.
2. As people depart, talk with students and families about any lingering concerns.



## GOODBYE PLAN WORKSHEET

List all the things you need to do and the people you need to see. As departure time gets closer check these off under the done column as you complete them.

### **Three to Four Weeks Before You Leave:**

**DONE**

1. Special Items to ship home
2. Addresses & contact information to keep/ Thank You notes to write
3. Activities with special people ( Who, What, When, Where, Why)

### **Two Weeks Before You Leave**

4. Fulfill responsibilities such as banking or other paperwork
5. Gifts for people (Area Rep, Host Family, Favorite Teacher)
6. Who will go to the airport (How do you arrange this?)
7. Other

### **Two to Three Days Before You Leave**

8. Carry-on Items to pack
9. Activities with Host Family
10. Other

### **Departure Day:**

11. Plan for the day



## THE GOODBYE TIMELINE

### **Three to Four Weeks Before You Leave:**

- Go through your possessions. Play "keep, throw away, or give to charity"
- Box up and mail those items you will no longer need while you are here (winter clothes, souvenirs, mementos). You can only check one bag (less than 50 lbs) when you travel home, so make arrangements in advance if you have a lot of baggage. Consider buying and checking a 2<sup>nd</sup> suitcase, as that will be less expensive than mailing 50 pounds of your belongings home.
- Do a "practice run" of packing your suitcase and carry-on. Make sure everything fits in the proper sized suitcases. You are usually allowed only one checked bag without any extra fees. This bag cannot weigh more than 50 Lbs. Additional bags and additional weight will require a payment at the ticket counter. Weigh your packed luggage and carry on to see if there are more things you will need to send home by mail.
- Write and mail thank you notes to your counselor, principal, favorite teachers, YFU Area Representative, and anyone else who has played an important role in your life while you were here.
- Email yourself a list of everyone's addresses, phone numbers and email addresses of host family members, friends and others who you might want to contact after you leave home. Make sure these same people have your address, phone number and email.
- Write down special dates like birthdays and anniversaries of your host family members and friends. Get recipes of your favorite foods, take pictures of your host family, friends, home, school and neighborhood.
- Think about the important people that you want to make sure you can have a thoughtful goodbye. Talk with them about a special activity that you can do together- set a date for this.

### **Two Weeks Before You Leave:**

- Close your bank accounts. Be sure to leave money with your host family to pay for phone bills or other expenses they may have after you leave.
- Write a thank you letter to your host family.
- Visit a local place or two that you really enjoy.
- Call friends to say good-bye (you should spend your last day or two with your host family).

- Start packing
- Think about leaving a nice gift or memento for your host family members.

### **Two to Three Days Before You Leave:**

- Finish packing.
- WEIGH YOUR BAGS!!!!
- If they are too heavy, you need to mail some more stuff or plan to pay for an extra bag.
- Call the airline and ask about the airline regulations about what you can and cannot take. NO fruits, meats or plants are allowed. Make sure the items you wish to take in your carry-on bag conform to your airline regulations. You will risk losing anything that is not allowed on the plane.
- Make sure your passport, YFU travel emergency numbers and e-ticket are in your carry-on luggage.
- Emergency travel numbers: Students can reach YFU toll-free 24 hours a day from any payphone anywhere in the U.S at 1-800-705-9510 and in Frankfurt, Germany at 0800-759-5465. From outside the U.S and Germany, YFU can be reached at 1-202-774-5690 (not toll-free). If you get the recording when you are in the airport, press 1.
- Call the airlines to confirm your travel plans. Check in on-line up to 24 hours in advance.
- Make sure you have written a nice letter to your host family.
- Spend the last night at home with your host family and say your goodbyes
- REMEMBER TO SAY THANK YOU!

### **Departure Day:**

- Check on-line for any updates or changes to your flight information.
- Make sure you get to the airport **at least** 2 hours before your flight departure time.
- Make sure you have your Passport, other paperwork, and your e-ticket
- Hugs and kisses good-bye at the airport (take Kleenex)
- Remember, this is not an ending. It is another new stage of your YFU experience.

Don't cry because it's over;  
Smile because it happened!



# PRACTICAL TIPS FOR READJUSTMENT & HANDLING REVERSE CULTURE SHOCK

## Tips for You:

- Remind yourself that Reverse Culture Shock is difficult and normal. Stay positive and know that just like you adapted in the US, you will feel comfortable again in your home country.
- Keep in touch with your American friends and family; they will also remind you that you adapted well, and you can do it again.
- Keep in touch with the other exchange students that you met through YFU. They are facing the same challenges and understand what you are going through. Get involved and volunteer with YFU in your home country.
- Ask a close friend or family member to help you readjust. Explain that you need a special friend to help you through what can sometimes be a difficult time. Explain the concept of reverse culture shock so this friend knows why you may feel certain ways.
- Remember that you have changed a lot; it may take some time for friends and family to get to know the new you. Be patient as this occurs and be active in strengthening your relationships.
- Journal and write down your feelings; think about what you learned about reverse culture shock and recognize your progress in adapting back to your home country. If you wrote a journal or blog during your exchange experience, review it now as some of the strategies you used to adjust to your American life may help you again back in your home country.
- Keep a sense of humor; laugh at your mistakes as you readjust.
- Seek out opportunities to share your experiences with others. Ask teachers if you can do a presentation about your experience; talk with the local library or community center about opportunities to showcase your photos and souvenirs.
- If you enjoy writing, offer to write an article about your experiences in the US for your school newspaper, or your local newspaper.
- Seek out new relationships with the international community; find new restaurants or cultural centers to learn more about other cultures; volunteer with service groups that serve international clients.
- If you are very sad and are often crying, talk to your doctor. Sometimes people can become very depressed and it is a good idea to get some professional help.

## Tips for Interacting with Friends and Family

- Often friends and family are overwhelmed by all your stories. Develop “short” stories about your life as an exchange student. Think about how you can share little tidbits about your life in the US, without overwhelming people with too many details that do not make sense to them.
- Share photos, videos, music and souvenirs with friends and family; but be prepared, they may not be ready to spend hours trying to understand why all of these items are so significant to you.
- Reassure people that there are many stereotypes about America, but they are not all true. Explain some of your own surprises as you built relationships with Americans.
- Reassure people that there are no “dumb questions” and that your whole experience was about learning new things about America. Encourage friends and family to ask questions.
- Show interest in others and don’t feel the need to tell everything to everyone all at once.
- Ask friends and family about what you missed while you were away. How did the local sports teams do, what were the big events at school, are there any new shops or restaurants in town?
- Ask friends and family about what significant things they experienced while you were away? How did they feel about you being gone for so long?
- Make plans with friends and family to do new, exciting activities together. This will help you develop new memories and strengthen your relationships.



## ASPECTS OF GOODBYE

**(Facilitator should read this prior to the beginning of the Re Entry orientation to be able to speak about these stages during the course of the orientation.)**

**Denial:** You do not want to say goodbye. In fact, you pretend that it is not happening at all. You deny that that you are actually leaving. This is a defense mechanism that protects us from the shock, disappointment and sadness of this stage of the experience ending. We block out the reality and hide from the facts. This is a temporary response that carries us through the first wave of saying goodbye.

*Possible behaviors or actions: Not wanting to pack, not wanting to make arrangement to ship luggage home. Avoids discussion about plans for the airport. Does not make arrangements to say goodbye to important people. Today, one might be thinking: I don't need this Re-Entry orientation.*

**Anger:** When you feel scared, nervous, anxious, and sad, you might deal with all of these emotions by being angry. Arguing, fighting, and being rebellious are all defense mechanisms. You are not ready to leave, and sometimes it is easier to be angry with people rather than looking at the real cause of the anger- which is actually sadness.

*Examples: Reacting impatiently to host family requests. Arguing with family and friends. Not wanting to listen to others. Being tempted to break rules. Easily frustrated and on edge.*

**Bargaining:** The normal reaction to feelings of helplessness or anxiety is often a need to regain control. This sometimes occurs by trying to “bargain” and change the situation.

*Example: Wanting to change your travel plans. Looking for ways to prolong the departure. Making plans that are not realistic- I will get a job this summer and stay in the States. If I get all As, I can I just stay and go to college here in the US.*

**Sadness/Sorrow:** Feeling of sadness and regret are a normal reaction to this stage of your exchange experience. These feelings can happen before or after you have left the US.

*Example: Not wanting to talk to anyone, isolating oneself. Staying away from friends and family, and just wanting to be alone.*

**Adjustment:** Let others be there for you and help comfort you through the process of saying goodbye. The best thing you can do is to allow yourself to feel the emotions as they come over you. Resisting it only will prolong the natural process of healing.

*Example: Make plans to continue interacting with the international students that you have met. Figure out ways to stay in touch with your American family and friends. Realize how much you have grown and recognize that this special experience will be with you forever.*