



ADOLESCENTS AND FAMILY- MAINTAINING A BALANCE

Orientation	Pre-Arrival				
Session Overview	<p>This session uses the analogy of a mobile to discuss the family as a unit with the need to find a new balance with the arrival of a new family member. Special attention is given to traits of adolescents and the role of technology in today's society.</p> <p>Note the following lesson icons throughout the session:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ - this indicates a take away point that should not be missed during the lesson • - this indicates a question or idea that can be used to facilitate a conversation 				
Session Objectives	<p>By the end of this session, host families will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Think critically about the balance in their home and develop plans to prepare for their student. 2. Identify challenges faced by adolescents and families in cross-cultural settings 3. Apply tips and best practices from other host families 				
Participants	<table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;"><input type="checkbox"/> Students</td> <td style="width: 50%;"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Host Parents</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Natural Parents</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Host Siblings</td> </tr> </table>	<input type="checkbox"/> Students	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Host Parents	<input type="checkbox"/> Natural Parents	<input type="checkbox"/> Host Siblings
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Duration	20 minutes				
Group Size	Any size				
Minimum Staffing	1 facilitator				
Materials Needed	<p>Flipchart or whiteboard</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity # 1 -Flipchart – Draw a simple mobile, bring a real mobile if you have one, or use handout available at end of this session. • Activity # 2 – ONE copy of Handout - <u>How Do You Do Things In Your Home?</u> 				

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activity #3 - Flipchart- Adolescent Behavior description chart in 2 columns <p>Handout - <u>How Do You Do Things In Your Home?</u>- is also accessible for host families in host family mailed packet. It is also posted in the Host Family account under Resources and in Host Family Handbook p. 60-61.</p>
Preparation	<p>Read lesson to understand concept</p> <p>Create flipchart</p>

INTRODUCTION & THE MOBILE METAPHOR (5 MINUTES)

Facilitator Note: Have a simple mobile or a picture of one as a visual aid.

1. Share Virginia Satir's analogy of relationships in a family:

Family relationships are similar to a mobile - a system that is carefully balanced, "...if the wires on one of the pieces of the mobile are twisted, the mobile would spin improperly. Instead of a delicately balanced mobile, each piece would get entangled and out of balance at the slightest breeze. A well-balance mobile, or family system, could sway and flex with the strong gusts and heavy winds of life."

<http://renaissanceranch.net/virginia-satir/>

✓ With the arrival of the student, the family will need to adjust to rebalance the mobile. The student also must adjust; everyone is responsible to keep the mobile in balance



2. Use these **conversation starters** to help the participants begin to consider their own family's adjustment:

- What do you need to take into consideration as your family prepares for a new family member?
- What kinds of adjustments do you foresee your family making as you welcome a new member?
- What special or unique dynamics occur within your family that may surprise your exchange student?
- How might culture and the iceberg analogy influence the kinds of adjustments your family will need to make?
- What are some of the roles, responsibilities, relationships and rules that are now in balance that may have to be reconsidered in order to accommodate a new family member?
- Why are negotiation and compromise from both the student and host family important tools to be used throughout the exchange?
- What kinds of concrete routines and ways of life in your home will need to be adjusted as you welcome a new teenager?
- How might the morning bathroom routine become complicated with a new family member? (*Having a new family member may mean that someone has to get up earlier than they are used to or take their shower at night or it may mean that someone begins to dress or dry their hair in the bedroom rather than the bathroom.*)
- What if you have a new family member who's talkative while your family tends to keep to themselves?

How might you adjust to find balance within this new family unit?

3. Key notes to include in the conversation and draw out from participants:

- ✓ The family will need to adjust to rebalance the mobile. Student also must adjust, too. Everyone is responsible to keep the mobile in balance.
- ✓ Since no two people in the family are exactly alike, a family doesn't function without attention to the needs and strengths of **all** the members.
- ✓ Remember the iceberg analogy: consider within your own household, what is above the waterline – (routines and behaviors), and what is below the waterline – (unspoken rules or family values)?
- ✓ These unspoken rules and family values need to be communicated and explained.
- ✓ Adjusting to a new teenager in the house can be difficult, especially if you are not often around teenagers. But with careful preparation, understanding, and flexibility, families are able to adjust and your student will feel welcomed!
- ✓ If families are aware of the need to rebalance certain parts, it can be exciting to add someone new to the system. All family members can share in learning about themselves and others as a result of balancing.
- ✓ The more you think about how your family operates and talk with your family about adjusting, the more prepared you will be.
- ✓ Include your exchange student in these conversations once he or she arrives.

ACTIVITY # 1 - YOUR FAMILY'S CULTURE & ADOLESCENT BEHAVIOR (10 MINUTES)

1. Display and review the handout [How Do You Do Things In Your Home?](#) Let families know that this handout is a great tool when having a conversation with your family before the student arrives. This should also be used with your student once he or she arrives.

2. After looking at the handout with the families, have a discussion about how the families can talk with their student about how things are done in their homes and expectations of the student. Use these **conversation starters** or develop your own:

- What are the best approaches for sharing the information on this document with your student?
- What are the priority topics that your student will need to understand about how your home and family function?
- What challenges can you expect as you teach your student about your family's culture?
- How will you address situations where the student is not picking up on how your household functions?

During the conversation, weave in these key points if families don't come up with these ideas:

- ✓ With your student, have a conversation about family culture, ways of doing things, and expectations early to avoid miscommunication later on.
- ✓ When talking about family culture, ways of doing things, and expectations with the student, try to keep the conversation lighthearted. This is the time to help the student adjust to your household dynamic and your family culture, which is completely new to them.
- ✓ Encourage the student to share common practices in their country with you to give your family a better understanding of family life in their home country.
- ✓ Be aware that weak language and exhaustion will make learning new routines and rules harder.

- ✓ Students may need to be reminded several times during the first few weeks or months before they actually “get it”.
- ✓ Many parents feel the need to treat the student as a guest and are wary of parenting the student as their own child. YFU recommends that host parents treat the exchange student as their own child.
- ✓ Adding the student’s routines and culture to your family will illustrate that just as your “way” is ingrained in you, so too is your student’s culture ingrained in him...he needs time to adjust.
- ✓ Laugh “with” your student at mistakes and make it an opportune moment to correct behavior

WRAP UP (0-5 MINUTES)

1. Share this Virginia Satir quote:
 - ✓ **“Feelings of worth can flourish only in an atmosphere where individual differences are appreciated, mistakes are tolerated, communication is open, and rules are flexible - the kind of atmosphere that is found in a nurturing family.”**
2. Ask the families to reflect on the tools that they have to a “balanced mobile” within their home. Ask them to recap what was helpful for them during this session.
 - Iceberg analogy
 - How We do Things In Our Home
 - Mobile analogy
3. Close the session reminding everyone about these key points if participants did not already share these:
 - ✓ Each family has developed certain systems by which they balance one another and are able to function.
 - ✓ Each system takes into account all of the family members and their needs. With another member added to the system, some rebalancing will be necessary.
 - ✓ Remember that these students are from another culture in addition to being teenagers, thus this experience will bring its challenges, such as technology and typical teenage behaviors.

OPTIONAL ACTIVITY

1. Lead a discussion to talk in detail about adolescent behavior and do a comparison activity. Use these **conversation starters** or develop your own:
 - What were YOU like as an adolescent? If your parents were to describe you at age 16, what would they say? **Record these words on the left side of the prepared Adolescent Behavior flipchart.**
 - When was the first time you left home for an extended period of time? How did you feel? How important was communication with your friends – probably by telephone or passing notes in class?
 - From your experience as an adult, when you think of adolescents today, what words or descriptive phrases come to mind? **Record these words on the right side of flipchart.**
2. Compare and contrast the words written on the flipchart. *(The objective is for families to realize that not much has changed in a teenager's world from the time host parents were teenagers to today's teens!)*
3. Debrief the activity using these **conversation starters** or develop your own:
 - What are you looking forward to with the arrival of your exchange student?
 - What kinds of expectations do you have? Are these reality based?
 - What about our generational cultural lenses? (Ex: Communication: Communication is important no matter how old you are, only the methods of communication have changed. Encourage families to strike a balance)
 - How do our cultural lenses affect the way we interpret our exchange students' (and other teenagers') behavior? (Ex: Leaving home: As we just discussed, leaving home is challenging no matter what generation you are in...this is something to keep in mind as we welcome these students.)



HOW DO YOU DO THINGS IN YOUR HOME?

The following questions will help you consider some of your family's most basic habits. Each family is different from every other, and that is particularly true when you compare your family to one from another country. The more you can communicate your habits to your new family member, the smoother your adjustment period will be. As a family, take some time the first week or two after your students' arrival to read through the questions below to identify some of your family's patterns and take the natural opportunities you will have with your student to share them.

Food

- When does your family eat meals? Is everyone expected to be there? Do you eat breakfast and lunch on your own or with the family?
- Is snacking allowed? What types of food can you snack on (candy, fruit, leftovers, etc.)?
- Can you eat in the living room, bedroom, etc.?
- Is it important that your exchange student uses American table manners?
- Is it important that everyone eat basically the same thing (same menu) at the table?
- What appliances do you use in your home? Your student may not be familiar with American appliances.
- What's for lunch on a school day? Host families will provide 3 meals a day. Clearly define what the family will pay for or at school and/or if food will be available at home for your student to bring lunch.

Dishes

- Who does the dishes, (or loads and unloads the dishwasher)?
- Are dirty dishes washed immediately, or is it acceptable to leave them in the sink or on the counter until a later time?
- What soap is used for dishes, in the dishwasher, etc.? You may need to explain that only dishwasher soap is used in the dishwasher.

Telephone

- Are there specific hours of use? For example, no calls after 9:00 PM.
- Are there limits on the duration of telephone calls?
- Who pays for long distance calls? Exchange students are responsible for their long distance charges. Explain



the costs before your student makes a \$50 phone call to tell the natural parents s/he has arrived!

- Does your student need a cell phone? Help him/her find a stand-alone plan (not part of your family plan).
- Note: Answering machines and telephones differ from country to country. Make sure to explain the use of your answering machine, and telephone features like call waiting.

Pets

- Is your dog, cat, or other pet allowed inside or outside?
- Do you allow your pet(s) on the furniture or bed?
- Who feeds and cares for your pet(s)?
- May your pet eat the table scraps? May they eat from regular dinner plates?



TV, Music, etc.

- What is the tolerated noise level?
- Who decides which TV channel to watch? Can you change the channel if someone falls asleep or leaves the room, etc.?
- Is there a specific time you want the TV or music turned off?
- Is the TV only allowed on weekends or after homework is completed?
- Do you have rules for playing video games, watching DVDs, playing the Wii or using headphones/iPods?

Internet and Email

- What are your rules about computer/internet use?

- If your student has a laptop, where should it be used and left when not in use?
- Does your family have limits on the use of e-mail or social networking? See YFU Policies in the Host Family Handbook.
- Is there an electronic curfew? (A time for ALL electronics to be charging in a public room for the night)
- If using your family computer - can computer programs be added/deleted? Are computer games permitted? May a student's friends use the family computer?
- Are there printer supplies (paper, ink, etc.) that your student is expected to furnish?

Bathroom

- Who uses which one(s)?
- What is the most convenient time to use the bathroom for showering/ bathing and how much time is allowed?
- How long is too long?
- Do you expect everyone to shower every day?
- Should the toilet seat and cover be up or down?
- Where should wet towels be put? How often are they washed?
- Should the door to the bathroom be open or closed when not in use?
- Exchange Students should buy their own personal hygiene products, such as deodorant, etc.

Laundry

- Where should dirty laundry be left? In a hamper, bathroom, bedroom floor, etc.?
- Does everyone do their own laundry, or does one person take responsibility?
- How often are sheets changed and who is responsible for changing them?



Bedroom

- Should the door be left closed or open?
- Do you knock before entering bedrooms or just open the door?
- Does the bed have to be made every day, never, or just on special occasions?
- Is it acceptable for your student to pile his or her clothes on the bed, chair, or floor? Should

clothes be put away at all times?

- Who is responsible for cleaning the bedroom(s)?
- Is your student allowed to hang things on the wall with tacks, tape, or other materials?
- If your student is sharing a bedroom, how can each individual adapt to each other smoothly?
- What are the concerns about lights, keeping windows open or closed, etc.? When do you get up and go to bed? How will everyone study and where?
- What are the rules surrounding friends (of both sexes) in the bedroom?

Odds and Ends

- Who uses the living room and for what purpose?
- Can you put your feet on the furniture?
- Are shoes to be worn in the house or taken off?
- Do you have a curfew? What are the "house" rules? What are the consequences of breaking them?
- Are there assigned household chores, weekly, daily, rotating, etc.?
- Who brings in the mail and pays for stamps? Show your student how to address an envelope and where to place the stamp.
- Does the family attend a place of worship together? Every week or only on certain occasions? Should your student wear his or her best clothes to the place of worship?
- Are there designated "family times" daily or weekly? Explain when family members are encouraged to be together in common areas to play games, watch TV, etc.
- Is there a central family calendar?
- When are the family birthdays? What is your family's culture around celebrating and gift giving?
- What should your student call you - Mom, Dad or by first name?
- What transportation is available - school bus, public bus, bicycle? Is it safe to walk around the area alone?
- What are the unwritten family rules? Think of iceberg and those rules below the water line.



