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| C:\Users\rotz\Desktop\Webinar Power Point trainings\signatureLogo.png | **SESSION # 6**  **REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS**  **(2 options for this session)** |

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| Orientation | Pre-Arrival | |
| Session Overview | **There are 2 options for Session 6; read all options and choose one.** The options are *Panel Discussion* or *Realistic Expectations.* Both sessions apply cultural knowledge to realistic examples of how the experience might play out in real life.  Note the following lesson icons throughout the session:   * - 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 | By the end of this session, host families will be able to:  1. Identify challenges faced by adolescents and families in cross-cultural settings  2. Apply tips and best practices from other host families | |
| Participants | Students  Natural Parents | Host Parents  Host Siblings |
| Format | Highly Active / Interactive  Some Activity / Interactivity | Discussion  Independent |
| Duration | About 30 minutes | |
| Group Size | Any size | |
| Minimum Staffing | 1 facilitator | |
| Materials Needed | Flipchart or whiteboard   * Option #1 – Share topics with panelist/write them on the flipchart * Option # 2- Post-its / Index Cards or Scrap paper, large poster paper | |
| Preparation | Choose one of two options for session 6 in advance.  Read lesson to understand concepts and activities.  Create flipchart.  For Option # 1- At least one week prior to the orientation, carefully select your panelists and ask returning host parents or former exchange students who had positive experiences if they’d like to participate. As much as possible adequately represent a variety of models of different family configurations - i.e., adults with no children of their own, only younger children, one-parent families, same sex couples, etc. In advance, discuss the purpose, format and discussion topics of this session with the panelists and supply them with the basic format of the session and handouts to guide their preparation to participate on the panel. Also remind panelist to keep things positive! | |
| Handouts for participants: | None | |

**Introduction** (0-5 minutes)

1. Use a few of the following ***conversation starters*** to have an open dialogue with the families about expectations.

* Why did you decide to host an exchange student?
* What do you know about your student’s culture/country? What is this information based on (news, movies, research, etc.)?
* Why is it important to think critically about stereotypes and cultural biases?
* What kinds of cultural misunderstanding are you anticipating? Or what have you heard from others about cultural misunderstandings?
* What kinds of expectations do you have about this experience and your student? Are these realistic?
* What kind of expectations do you think your student might have, based on stereotypes of the US and/or movies and TV shows?
* Why might having expectations not be a good idea for both students and families?

During the conversation make sure the participants are directed to these ideas. Highlight these concepts if participants do not mention these:

* Because you have selected your specific student and you have chosen to be a host family, it is likely you have already developed expectations.
* Your culture influences your expectations. However, often our expectations are not based on reality or facts.
* Stereotypes are common and based on our own cultural perspective; often stereotypes are not true or they are very exaggerated. Stereotypes can be dangerous and we need to be careful and mindful about how one speaks about groups of people. It is best to build relationships with individuals and not generalize to large groups.
* Many families suggest letting go of all expectations.
* Your individual student brings his or her own personal culture that is much deeper that one can see.
* Cultural misunderstandings are normal and can be expected. Cultural misunderstanding is a great way to learn and have meaningful conversations about different cultures.

**activity - choose one of the following ACTIVITIES**

**option # 1 – Panel Discussion** (20 minutes)

1. **Introduce the panel.** Tell participants that this panel will discuss expectations, cultural misunderstandings, and tips. Before getting started, ask each of the panelists to briefly introduce themselves.

* Include the year(s) that they hosted
* Where their student(s) were from
* What motivates them to be a host family

**2. Set the tone** for the panel discussion by explaining the following key points:

* There is no one “best way” to be a host family.
* Listen and ask questions, and consider how this advice will work in your own home; perhaps the advice will not work with your family, and that is OK.
* Remember, every family has their own culture, and every family with have their own experience hosting. There is no one size fits all!

3. Point out the specific topics that are posted on the flip-chart and let participants and panelists know that other topics can be brought up as well. Encourage questions from the participants, and let the conversation flow. **Topics to discuss:**

* Sibling rivalry/ family dynamics
* The new baby syndrome / Be sure to treat them as your own child

**Note to facilitator:** Throughout the panel discussion highlight key themes to a successful hosting experience: **flexibility, patience, understanding, positive attitude, and letting go of preconceived expectations about the student.**

* Ways your student can become a family member
* Electronic curfew and YFU technology challenges
* Open communication to include natural parent communication, relationship, and visits
* Don’t make the assumption that students understand everything. Be aware of assumptions about the student’s emotions. Ask students how they feel, or what they want/need, don’t assume.
* Students often have trouble adjusting and or understanding the following:
  + Asking their host mothers/fathers for permission to do things. Some students come from families where they are very independent; curfew.
  + Lack of public transportation, relying on others for transport; asking for a ride
  + American teenager views on friendships. Many American teenagers use the term friend, whereas the International Student would call the relationships acquaintance.
  + International students need to initiate invitations with new American friends. It is not advisable for them to sit back and wait for an invitation.
  + Air conditioning and/or heat
  + School culture, school lockers, having limited time to change classes.
  + Making change (coins and understanding our system of money)
  + Severe weather (tornado drills/snow days)
  + Medical options- urgent care versus the emergency room (this is important because a trip to the ER is really expensive)

**Close the discussion** by summarizing some of the best practices that families offered. Emphasize again that each family has their own experience and new host families can ask for assistance at any time.

**or option #2--Realistic Expectations** (20-25 minutes)

* Begin by having participants split up into groups based on what country their student is coming from (use your discretion and split groups into two if too large). Hand a large poster paper to each group and instruct participants to write the name of the country on the top. Tell participants they will have 3 minutes to complete the following task: write down every word/ picture that they would associate with their student’s home country.
* Next, have each group turn their paper over and complete the same task with the United States. Once again give them 3 minutes to complete.
* Come back as a large group to debrief. Have participants share some of the things they wrote on their paper about their student’s home country. **Topics to discuss:**
  + What comments surprised you? Which comments were less surprising?
  + Did you recognize bias or misconceptions you or your group members might have about your student’s country?
    - What are some of the influences in our culture that guide you to have these misconceptions?
* How the media portrays different cultures is often inaccurate. Movies, videos, etc are often exaggerated.
* Even if you have spent time in the student’s country, that does not mean you fully understand the culture. Be ready for surprises and be excited about surprises.
* Students use an exchange as an opportunity to try new things; the student that you read about in the profile might be very different.
* Stereotyping and making generalizations can be dangerous- get to know your individual student, let go of what you think you already know about his/her culture.
* Now, share some of the comments you wrote as a group about the United States.
  + - Do you think what you wrote will coincide with your student’s expectations of what the United States is like?
* Have participants begin to think about the expectations that they have about this experience. Hand out post-it notes to participants. Couples and partners can work together, or people can work independently and write them down. Let families write their ideas for just a few minutes (5 minutes).
  + - Discuss common themes.
    - How can expectations like these impact your families and students experience?
* After sorting them, have a discussion about expectations and how families’ expectations can reflect their own cultural bias or stereotypes. Weave the following ideas into the discussion:

**Wrap up and ORIENTATION Closure** (10 minutes)

* + Quickly go through the True/False questions:
    - As a facilitator, instruct participants that you will be reading through some true and false questions. Ask them to stand on the side of the room (one side true, one side false, and middle (neutral) that they agree with. After reading each question, ask one or two people why they thought it was (true, false, neutral). Then read off the answer.
  + **Our student will be just like the student profile that we read, and the student will match the picture we conjured up in our minds.** True or false?
* FALSE. Student profiles give only a glimpse into the personalities, goals, attitudes, and perspectives of YFU exchange students. Also, most students filled out their profile over a year ago, meaning the interests and likes mentioned in their profile might no longer be the case. Keep in mind that the exchange year is a year of growth—both for student and host family!
  + **Our student will be perfect - more of an adult than a teenager.** True or false?
* FALSE. Exchange students are brave and can be more mature than their peers in their home country, but they are still teenagers. They will worry about what usual teenagers worry about (school, social acceptance, trying to fit, etc.).
  + **Our student will be best friends with our own children.**
* PROBABLY NOT. Just as with natural siblings, it is normal that they develop their own friendships outside of the home. Many host siblings become friends—but it is also perfectly natural for your student to have their own social circles.
  + **Our student will fit right into our family.**
* MAYBE. Fitting into the family can take some time as personalities and expectations fall into balance. However, keep in mind that the exchange experience can still be worthwhile even if personalities do not mesh completely.
  + **Our student and family will experience challenges together and will overcome these challenges together, and it will be worth it.**
* TRUE. Challenges will happen, requiring patience and understanding. In the end, however, you will help a student to grow beyond him/herself in the course of a remarkable year. (Encourage parents to read the list of “How to Be a Loveable Host Family”)
  + **We will have challenges with our student, but once we overcome our first hurdle, it will be smooth sailing from there.**
* PROBABLY NOT. All families have hurdles from time to time, and must adapt to new experiences throughout the year.
  + **Our student will understand our family, our culture, and our community because we have exchanged emails.**
* FALSE. The exchange experience is a year-long process, and your student will come to understand your family and environment through living in it. It will take time.
  + **Our student has excellent English skills in his/her emails! Our student will speak and understand English without any problems.**
* FALSE. Mastery of a second language takes time! Listening to, writing, understanding, and speaking a second language are all very different skills. Your student may excel in one area, and need more practice in others.

Note to facilitator: As you wrap up, be sure to emphasize the following important points for comprehension if the families do not talk about these:

* You have already developed expectations, this is normal.
* Your culture influences your expectations.
* Stereotypes are common and based off of our own cultural perspective
* Try to let go of expectations and think critically about stereotypes.
* It is probably not going to be exactly what you expect, so it is helpful to try to go into the experience with …**flexibility, patience, understanding and a positive attitude.**

3. Wrap up the session and the orientation by thanking everyone for attending.

* Make sure all participants, including YFU staff and volunteers, have signed the signed-in sheet.
* Encourage families to share their contact information with each other and let everyone know about any upcoming social events.
* If the Post Arrival date and other orientations dates have been established, ask the families to mark their calendars.



**Panel Discussion Topics**

(Write bulleted points on flipchart paper)

* Sibling rivalry/ family dynamics
* The new baby syndrome / treat them as your own child
* Helping you student become a member of the family
* Electronic curfew and conflicts related to technology
* Open communication, communication with natural parents
* Be careful of making assumptions
* Ask students how they feel, or what they want/need.
* Adjustment challenges
  + Asking their host mothers/fathers for permission to do things. Some students come from families where they are very independent; curfew can be a problem.
  + Lack of public transportation, relying on others for transport; asking for a ride
  + American teenager views on friendships. Many American teenagers use the term friend, whereas the International Student would call the relationships acquaintance. This can cause a student stress as it is difficult to make “real friends”.
  + International students need to initiate invitations with new American friends. It is not advisable for them to sit back and wait for an invitation.
  + Air conditioning and/or heat
  + School culture, school lockers, having limited time to change classes.
  + Making change (coins and understanding our system of money)
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