

Student Protection Policy

DISTRICT POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Statement of Conduct for Working with Youth

Rotary International is committed to creating and maintaining the safest possible environment for all participants in Rotary activities. It is the duty of all Rotarians, Rotarians' spouses, partners, and other volunteers to safeguard to the best of their ability the welfare of and to prevent the physical, sexual, or emotional abuse of children and young people with whom they come into contact.

Adopted by the Rotary International Board of Directors, 11/02

ALLEGATION REPORTING GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS AND ADULTS

STUDENT PROCEDURES

If you are sexually or physically assaulted, abused, or are accused of sexually or physically assaulting or abusing another person, you should follow this procedure:

1. Report the situation immediately where you feel most comfortable:

- ▶ Local host Club Rotary Youth Exchange Counselor, District Student Protection Officer, ESSEX Student Protection Officer, the chair or any member of the District Youth Exchange Committee, District Governor or ESSEX Hotline 1-866-683-0533
- ▶ If you are not comfortable talking to a local person, contact a trusted Rotarian at home.
- ▶ Your call will be received in a sensitive and confidential manner. Each of the above individuals has been trained to deal with this type of situation.
- ▶ Displaying sexually suggestive objects, pictures or drawings
- ▶ Sexual leering or whistling, any inappropriate physical contact such as brushing or touching, obscene language or gestures and suggestive or insulting comments

2. If appropriate action is not taken when you report the situation, report it again and continue until someone takes it seriously. Make sure that it is understood that you are serious.

3. Intuition is not psychic nonsense. Trust your instincts. It is better to be embarrassed than to be a victim.

Rotary International is committed to protecting the safety and wellbeing of Youth Exchange students and will not tolerate their abuse or harassment. All allegations of abuse or harassment will be taken seriously and must be handled within the guidelines provided herein. The safety and wellbeing of students is always first priority.

FOR ADULTS TO WHOM A STUDENT REPORTS AN INCIDENT OF ABUSE OR HARASSMENT

1. Report from student:

- ▶ **Listen attentively and stay calm.** Acknowledge that it takes a lot of courage to report abuse. Listen and be encouraging. Do not express shock, horror or disbelief.
- ▶ **Protect the student.** Ensure the safety and wellbeing of the student. Remove the student from the situation immediately and all contact with the alleged abuser or harasser. Reassure the student that this is for his/her own safety and is not a punishment

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- ▶ **Get the facts, but don't interrogate.** Ask the student questions that establish what was done and who did it. Reassure the student that s/he did the right thing in telling you. Avoid asking 'why' questions. Remember your responsibility is to present the student's story to the proper authorities.
 - ▶ **Be non-judgmental and reassure the student.** Do not be critical of anything that has happened or anyone who may be involved. It is especially important not to blame or criticize the student. Assure the student that the situation was not his/her fault and that it was brave and mature to come to you.
 - ▶ **Assure privacy but not confidentiality.** Explain that you will have to tell someone about the abuse/harassment to make it stop and to ensure that it doesn't happen to other students.
 - ▶ **Record.** Keep a written record of the conversation with the student as soon after the report as you can, including the date and time of the conversation. Use the student's words, and record only what has been told to you.
2. **Report this information** as soon as possible to the hosting Club Youth Exchange Counselor, District Student Protection Officer, or ESSEX Student Protection Officer, providing none are the accused individual. This person will immediately notify the appropriate Law Enforcement Authorities in cases of abuse.
 3. **Avoid gossip and blame.** Do not tell anyone about the report other than those required by the guidelines. Care must be taken to protect the rights of both the victim and the accused during the investigation.
 4. **Do not challenge the alleged offender.** The adult to whom the student reports must not contact the alleged offender. In cases of abuse, interrogation must be left entirely to law enforcement authorities. *In cases of non-criminal harassment, the District Student Protection Officer and District Governor are responsible for investigating, and will be in contact with the alleged offender after the student has been moved to a safe environment.*
 5. **Follow-up.** After appropriately reporting the allegations, follow up to make sure steps have been taken to address the situation.

ESSEX Student Protection Officer: 1-866-683-0533

Department of State: 1-800-383-9090

DEFINITIONS

Sexual Abuse: Engaging in implicit or explicit sexual acts with a student or forcing or encouraging a student to engage in implicit or explicit sexual acts alone or with another person of any age, of the same sex or opposite sex.

This includes but is not limited to:

- ▶ Non-touching offenses
- ▶ Indecent exposure
- ▶ Exposing a child to sexual or pomographic material

Sexual Harassment: Refers to sexual advances, requests for sexual favors or verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. In some cases, sexual harassment precedes sexual abuse. It is a technique used by sexual predators to desensitize or groom their victims. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- ▶ Sexual advances; sexual epithets, jokes, written or oral references to sexual conduct, gossip regarding one's sex life, comments about one's sexual activity, deficiencies or prowess
- ▶ Verbal abuse of a sexual nature

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POST REPORT PROCEDURES

YE Counselors, YE Student Protection Officers, YE District Chairs, and Rotary District Governors

1. **Immediately confirm** that the student has been removed from the situation and all contact with the alleged abuser or harasser.
2. **In cases of abuse, contact appropriate law enforcement** immediately. Cooperate with the police or law investigation. *If the law enforcement agency will not investigate, the District Student Protection Officer, with the Club YE Officer/counselor, should coordinate the investigation into the allegations .*
3. **Ensure the student receives immediate support services.**
4. **Arrange for a Rape Counseling Service** or another appropriate non-Rotarian professional to counsel the student.
5. **Contact the student's parents.** Give the student the option of either staying in the host country or returning home. No student will be sent home unless it is his/her personal desire to return.
6. **Remove the alleged abuser or harasser** from all contact with youth involved in Rotary programs while investigations are conducted.
7. **The ESSEX Student Protection Officer, Rotary International and Dept. of State must be informed** of the allegations by either the District YE Chair or the District Governor within 24 hours, and provided follow up reports of steps taken, outcome of all investigations and resulting actions.

SEXUAL HARRASSMENT REPORTING CHART

Sexual Harassment	Physical or Sexual Abuse and any crimes against person or property
Report to District Youth Protection Officer	Report to District Youth Protection Officer
Investigate	Remove Student from situation
Report to Counselor	Investigate
Report to District Youth Exchange Chair & District Governor	Report to Counselor
If appropriate remove student from situation	Report to District Youth Exchange Chair & District Governor
Report to ESSEX Youth Protection Officer Immediately	Notify natural and host parents
Report Harassment to RI within 72 hrs	Report to ESSEX Youth Protection Officer Immediately
	Report to law enforcement if necessary
	Report to RI and Dept. of State within 24 hrs

District Student Protection Officer:

Name	Tel
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District Youth Exchange Chair:

Name	Tel
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District Governor:

Name	Tel
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ESSEX Criminal Background Check Policy

Policy Statement

In order to ensure the safety and well-being of the participants in the Rotary Youth Exchange Program of any member District within the Eastern States Student Exchange, Inc. (ESSEX), ESSEX and the District reserve the right to disqualify or restrict the duties of any person who has been convicted of certain crimes; who has pled guilty or no contest to certain crimes; who has been placed on probation or deferred adjudication for certain crimes and/or who resides on the same premises as a registered sex offender.

While the intent of this policy applies to all Districts within ESSEX, the specifics referred to apply to districts wholly or partially within the United States and subject to the laws and regulations of the United States of America and the administrative oversight of the Council on Standards for International Exchange Travel (CSIET).

The criminal background check is one component of the Student Protection Policy. One of the purposes of that policy is to screen prospective volunteer representatives and host families and assure that each student is hosted, supported and counseled by responsible adults. Prospective adult volunteers and hosts must complete and sign a form authorizing the District or its agents to conduct a criminal background search. ESSEX will have a criminal background search conducted for all District adult volunteers and hosts who will have direct, unsupervised one-on-one contact with exchange students. This includes all Youth Exchange Officers, counselors, youth protection officers, district committee members and officials and any Rotarian who will have access to student and/or host family records. Failure to authorize a criminal background search will automatically disqualify the individual from serving as a volunteer/host. Individuals must be fully vetted **before** being granted access to students or student/host family records.

The primary concern of the District and ESSEX is always to safeguard the best interests of the exchange students. The criminal offenses that will disqualify a person from volunteer/host participation in the District, as well as the process used to determine disqualifications of a person are set out in greater detail below. As a general matter, the decision whether to exclude altogether or limit a prospective volunteer's/host's interaction with exchange students will be discussed between ESSEX and the District. The legal and administrative responsibility for background checks and the resultant decision making is shared between ESSEX and the member District. Factors to be considered in making such determinations include, but are not limited to, the nature, disposition, severity of the criminal conduct, and the length of time since the criminal conduct occurred.

Criminal Background Check Procedure

- 1. Applicant Disclosure and Authorization Form.** Volunteers/hosts must complete an Application Disclosure and Authorization Form which provides information and authorization for the District or its agents to search local, state, and national records in order to ascertain the applicant's criminal history. The form asked for name, address, e-mail address, date of birth, driver's license and Social Security number of the individual being vetted. Background information is used for reference checks by the district. Payment for youth exchange background checks is made through the regular student fees. **Payment for non-youth exchange background checks must be sent with the background check form.**
- 2. Accuracy of Application and Authorization Form.** Providing false information on the application, including arrests/convictions, driver license number, address, date of birth, or social security number is grounds for automatic exclusion from participation in the District, regardless of the results of the Criminal Background Search.
- 3. Indemnification.** ESSEX and the District have no control over the information received from reporting agencies. We can not be liable to any person or entity for the information provided by any agency to ESSEX/District or any of its agents, or for any actions taken by ESSEX and the District in reliance on such information. In order to assure the safety of exchange students, ESSEX and the District are entitled to and shall rely upon the information contained in the criminal history report until such time as a corrected criminal history transcript has been provided.
- 4. Decision Process:** Upon receipt of the background check information from ESSEX, personal references, and other information available, ESSEX Compliance Officer and the District Chair are responsible for the decision as to who can serve as a volunteer or a host. In the event of a failure to develop agreement between the ESSEX Compliance Officer and the District Chair, the Chair of ESSEX will make the final decision. Any disqualification should be discussed with the District Governor before the individual is notified. The individual must be notified before and after any potential adverse action is taken. The person will be provided with his/her rights under the Fair Credit Reporting Act and also a copy of the background check from the vendor.
- 5. Disqualification from Volunteer/Host Participation.** The following rules shall apply if ESSEX and the District learn (via a criminal background search, personal reference, or otherwise) that a prospective volunteer/host has been convicted of, has pled guilty to, has deferred adjudication for, or has pled no contest to one of the following crimes under the laws of any State within the United States, the United States, or any other nation:

A. Automatic disqualification:

- Crimes against children
- Felony offenses against persons, public welfare, or personal/private property (theft, fraud, embezzlement, forgery, etc.)
- Felony offenses against the family
- Crimes defined as public indecency
- Arson
- Any violent crime or crime involving the use or possession of a weapon
- Felony drug-related offense other than those identified below
- Residing on the same premises as a Registered Sex Offender

B. Possible Disqualification:

1. The decision whether to allow participation shall be made between ESSEX and the District Chair for first offense DWI, DUI, or possession of drug paraphernalia/controlled substance under two ounces, within the preceding five years. The date of disposition, severity, and final disposition will be the determining factors.

C. Other: An individual who has multiple convictions for speeding, driving too fast for condition, reckless driving, or similar offenses within the preceding five years may be approved for hosting or counseling a student but will be prohibited from transporting exchange students in a vehicle. All other traffic violations and misdemeanors will be reviewed by the ESSEX Compliance Officer on a case-by-case basis and discussed with the district as appropriate.

If a person is charged with any criminal offense, other than traffic violations classified as a misdemeanor, involvement with the District as a volunteer or host will be temporarily suspended pending disposition of the case.

6. **Challenging the Accuracy of the Criminal Background Record:** Any individual who disputes or desires to contest information the information provided by any agency must provide a written notice to the District within ten days of being advised that her or his application for participation has been denied. It is the individual's responsibility to challenge the report received from the agency and to arrange for any corrections, if necessary.
7. **Confidentiality:** ESSEX and the District will maintain the confidentiality of all criminal background search information, including information regarding disqualification decisions.
8. **Frequency of Background Checks:** Checks will be done for volunteers and hosts at least every year (365 days). In the event of any significant change
9. **Background Checks Conducted for Other Organizations:** Checks done for Rotary Youth Exchange purposes must be conducted by agents operating on behalf of ESSEX with authorizations obtained by the Rotary clubs/districts. It should be noted that we are required to perform *national* criminal background and sex offender registry checks. Therefore, state background checks are *not* sufficient.
10. **Selection of Agents:** ESSEX determines the qualified agent to process the background checks.¹
11. **Charging Rates for Background Checks:** The Eastern States Student Exchange through cooperation with CSIET, RI, and other Rotary organizations will endeavor to arrange for the lowest possible rates for background checks that meet reasonable standards.

¹ As of 4/1/15, ESSEX has agreements with OneSource. The system has been tested with acceptable results. The results may need to be supplemented by local county courthouse searches depending on preliminary results.



United States Department of State
Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs
Washington, DC 20522

January 8, 2019

Dear American Host Family:

On behalf of the U.S. Department of State, I welcome your decision to host a secondary school student. The secondary school student program is one of many ways foreign nationals participate in people-to-people exchange programs in the United States. People-to-people exchanges are a valuable tool of foreign policy. The secondary school student program offers a unique opportunity for you to experience firsthand the richness and diversity of a culture different from your own, and for you to exemplify American values and culture to a foreign visitor. Through this program, you will join thousands of American families who serve as citizen ambassadors of the United States. Many families have found the secondary school student program to be a rewarding and enjoyable experience.

High School programs have been a part of U.S. public diplomacy efforts since 1949. Approximately 25,000 high school students from around the world participate in this program each year. The good will of American host families in opening their homes to these young international visitors is vital to this program's success.

The health, safety, and well-being of the young people who participate in this program are our highest priority. A host family has many responsibilities, the most important of which is properly caring for an international student during the course of his/her program. The student is a guest in your home and in our country and you may be the first "real Americans" this young person meets. How you relate with this student will create a lasting image of our country and its people.

The regulations governing the secondary school student program are found at eCFR — [Exchange Visitor Program regulations](#) (22 CFR 62 - Exchange Visitor Program). These regulations address the most frequently asked questions about the program and provide the rules under which the program operates. It is extremely important that you notify your sponsoring organization if you have any concerns or if the student's personal health, safety or well-being is threatened in any way. If the sponsoring organization is not responsive to your concerns, you should contact the Department of State directly through our J-1 Visa Emergency Helpline (1-866-283-9090), which is also available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, or by e-mail at JVisas@state.gov.

The secondary school student program offers you, your family, your exchange student, your local school and community the opportunity to create a strong lifelong relationship. I hope this will be a positive and rewarding experience for all of you. The Department of State is deeply appreciative of your part in ensuring the program reaches its maximum potential as a quality educational and cultural exchange experience.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "G.K. Saba".

G.K. Saba
Director, Policy & Program Support
for Private Sector Exchange



The Exchange Visitor Program

WELCOME BROCHURE

Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs
United States Department of State

The Department of State welcomes you to the United States. We are pleased to receive you as an exchange visitor. As an Exchange Visitor Program participant, you will acquire an experience in the United States, and as an ambassador of your country you will help educate the American people about your home country and culture.

This brochure will help you understand the purpose of the Exchange Visitor Program, provide you with information on contacting the Department of State, and introduce you to some of the major requirements of the Exchange Visitor Program regulations.

THE EXCHANGE VISITOR PROGRAM

THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE administers the Exchange Visitor Program under the provisions of the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, as amended. The Act promotes mutual understanding between the people of the United States and other countries by means of educational and cultural exchange. The Exchange Visitor Program provides foreign nationals opportunities to participate in exchange programs in the United States with the expectation that on completion of their exchange program, they will return home to share their experiences.

Sponsors – The U.S. Department of State designates U.S. organizations such as government agencies, academic institutions, educational and cultural organizations, and corporations to administer exchange visitor programs. These organizations are known as sponsors. Sponsors screen and select exchange visitors to participate in their programs based on the regulations governing the exchange activity and stated in 22 CFR Part 62. Sponsors provide exchange visitors pre-arrival information, an orientation, and monitor activities throughout their exchange program. Sponsors offer or identify cross-cultural activities that will expose exchange visitors to American society, culture, and institutions. You are encouraged to participate in activities that provide them with an opportunity to share their language, culture, and history with Americans.

Responsible Officers – Sponsors appoint individuals as responsible officers and alternate responsible officers to advise and assist exchange visitors. These officers issue the Certificate of Eligibility (Form DS-2019), and conduct official communications with the Department of State and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) on your behalf. Your sponsor's role is to help you manage your program. If problems arise or you have questions, your sponsor is there to help you. Should you have any questions about the regulations or any aspect of your exchange program, your initial and primary contact is your sponsor. Unless provided specific contact information by your sponsor you should contact the person whose name and telephone number can be found on your Form DS-2019.

Exchange Visitor – An exchange visitor is a foreign national selected by a sponsor to participate in an exchange visitor program and who is seeking to enter or has entered the United States temporarily on a J-1 visa.

Spouse and dependents - Some categories of the Exchange Visitor Program permit a spouse and/or unmarried children, under 21 years of age, to accompany an exchange visitor to the United States. These individuals may apply for J-2 visas with the permission of your sponsor.

REGULATIONS – RULES

IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOU understand and abide by the Exchange Visitor Program regulations, U.S. laws and sponsor rules. Regular contact with your sponsor will help you keep current with any change which may affect your J-1 visa status. Some requirements of the Federal regulations and where to find them are indicated below.

Register with your sponsor – Your Form DS-2019 was created in a computerized system known as the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS). This System is administered by the Department of Homeland Security and is used to collect and maintain information on the current status of non-immigrants and their dependents in the sponsor's program during their stay in the United States.

When you arrive in the United States, you must contact your sponsor to ensure that your data in SEVIS is accurate and updated. Failing to maintain your status could result in serious consequences and may affect your ability to remain in or return to the United States.

Activities and Program Provisions – You entered the United States in a specific program category, and are required to engage in that category and the activity listed on your Form DS-2019. You must comply with the specific program provisions of the regulations relating to your exchange category.

Insurance – You are required to have medical insurance in effect for yourself (J-1), your spouse and any dependents (J-2) for the duration of your program. Some sponsors provide the required insurance for their exchange visitors. Other sponsors may allow you to make your own arrangements or may help to identify insurance carriers. Consult with your responsible officer before the start of your program.

(a) Minimum Insurance Coverage – Insurance shall cover: (1) medical benefits of at least \$100,000 per person per accident or illness; (2) repatriation of remains in the amount of \$25,000; and (3) expenses associated with medical evacuation in the amount of \$50,000.

(b) Additional Terms – A policy secured to fulfill the insurance requirements shall not have a deductible that exceeds \$500 per accident or illness, and must meet other standards specified in the regulations.

(c) Maintenance of Insurance – **Willful failure on your part to maintain the required insurance throughout your stay in the United States will result in the termination of your exchange program.**

Maintenance of Valid Program Status – You are required to have a valid and unexpired Form DS-2019. Sponsors may terminate an exchange visitor's program for violating U.S. laws, Exchange Visitor Program regulations, or the sponsor's rules governing their particular program.

Required Notifications to Sponsors – You must immediately inform your sponsor if you change your address (residence) or telephone number, or complete or withdraw from your exchange visitor program early. Doing so assists your sponsor in complying with their notification and reporting requirements to the U.S. Department of State and the Department of Homeland Security. Failure to keep your sponsor informed could result in the termination of your program status.

Current Regulations – The Exchange Visitor Program regulations are located in the Code of Federal Regulations, (22 CFR, Part 62) and can be found at the J-1 Visa website: <http://j1visa.state.gov/sponsors/current/regulations-compliance/>.

Contacting the Department of State – The Exchange Visitor Program is administered under the oversight of the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Private Sector Exchange, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA).

Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs
U.S. Department of State
State Annex SA-5, Fifth Floor
Washington, DC 20522-0505

Report Abuse or Exploitation – If you are mistreated and/or your rights are violated, and your sponsor is not providing the help you need, contact the Department of State for assistance:

J-1 Visa Emergency Hotline: 1-866-283-9090.*

This line is for use by exchange visitors and third parties in the case of urgent situations. *A Department of State representative is available 24 hours a day.

Regular Communications or questions: jvisas@state.gov.

This e-mail address is to communicate non-emergency issues, questions, and concerns.

§ 62.25 Secondary school students.

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(a) *Purpose.* This section governs Department of State designated exchange visitor programs under which foreign secondary school students are afforded the opportunity to study in the United States at accredited public or private secondary schools for an academic semester or an academic year, while living with American host families or residing at accredited U.S. boarding schools.

(b) *Program sponsor eligibility.* Eligibility for designation as a secondary school student exchange visitor program sponsor is limited to organizations:

(1) With tax-exempt status as conferred by the Internal Revenue Service pursuant to section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code; and

(2) Which are United States citizens as such term is defined in §62.2.

(c) *Program eligibility.* Secondary school student exchange visitor programs designated by the Department of State must:

(1) Require all exchange students to be enrolled and participating in a full course of study at an accredited academic institution;

(2) Allow entry of exchange students for not less than one academic semester (or quarter equivalency) and not more than two academic semesters (or quarter equivalency) duration; and

(3) Ensure that the program is conducted on a U.S. academic calendar year basis, except for students from countries whose academic year is opposite that of the United States. Exchange students may begin an exchange program in the second semester of a U.S. academic year only if specifically permitted to do so, in writing, by the school in which the exchange student is enrolled. In all cases, sponsors must notify both the host family and school prior to the exchange student's arrival in the United States whether the placement is for an academic semester, an academic year, or a calendar year.

(d) *Program administration.* Sponsors must ensure that all organizational officers, employees, representatives, agents, and volunteers acting on their behalf:

(1) Are adequately trained. Sponsors must administer training for local coordinators that specifically includes, at a minimum, instruction in: Conflict resolution; procedures for handling and reporting emergency situations; awareness or knowledge of child safety standards; information on sexual conduct codes; procedures for handling and reporting allegations of sexual misconduct or any other allegations of abuse or neglect; and the criteria to be used to screen potential host families and exercise good judgment when identifying what constitutes suitable host family placements. In addition to their own training, sponsors must ensure that all local coordinators complete the Department of State mandated training module prior to their appointment as a local coordinator or assumption of duties. The Department of State training module will include instruction designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the Exchange Visitor Program; its public diplomacy objectives; and the Secondary School Student category rules and regulations. Sponsors must demonstrate the individual's successful completion of all initial training requirements and that annual refresher training is also successfully completed.

(2) Are adequately supervised. Sponsors must create and implement organization-specific standard operating procedures for the supervision of local coordinators designed to prevent or deter fraud, abuse, or misconduct in the performance of the duties of these employees/agents/volunteers. They must also have sufficient internal controls to ensure that such employees/agents/volunteers comply with such standard operating procedures.

(3) Have been vetted annually through a criminal background check (which must include a search of the Department of Justice's National Sex Offender Public Registry);

(4) Place no exchange student with his or her relatives;

(5) Make no exchange student placement beyond 120 miles of the home of the local coordinator authorized to act on the sponsor's behalf in both routine and emergency matters arising from that exchange student's participation in the Exchange Visitor Program;

(6) Make no monetary payments or other incentives to host families;

(7) Provide exchange students with reasonable access to their natural parents and family by telephone and e-mail;

(8) Make certain that the exchange student's government issued documents (*i.e.* , passports, Forms DS-2019) are not removed from his/her possession;

(9) Conduct the host family orientation after the host family has been fully vetted and accepted;

(10) Refrain, without exception, from acting as:

(i) Both a host family and a local coordinator or area supervisor for an exchange student;

(ii) A host family for one sponsor and a local coordinator for another sponsor; or

(iii) A local coordinator for any exchange student over whom he/she has a position of trust or authority such as the student's teacher or principal. This requirement is not applicable to a boarding school placement.

(11) Maintain, at minimum, a monthly schedule of personal contact with the exchange student. The first monthly contact between the local coordinator and the exchange student must be in person. All other contacts may take place in-person, on the phone, or via electronic mail and must be properly documented. The sponsor is responsible for ensuring that issues raised through such contacts are promptly and appropriately addressed.

(12) That a sponsor representative other than the local coordinator who recruited, screened and selected the host family visit the exchange student/host family home within the first or second month following the student's placement in the home.

(13) Maintain, at a minimum, a monthly schedule of personal contact with the host family. At least once during the fall semester and at least once during the spring semester, (*i.e.* , twice during the academic year) the contact by the local coordinator with the host family must be in person. All other contacts may take place in person, on the phone, or via electronic mail and must be properly documented. The sponsor is responsible for ensuring the issues raised through such contacts are promptly and appropriately addressed.

(14) That host schools are provided contact information for the local organizational representative (including name, direct phone number, and e-mail address), the program sponsor, and the Department's Office of Designation; and

(15) Adhere to all regulatory provisions set forth in this Part and all additional terms and conditions governing program administration that the Department may impose.

(e) *Student selection.* In addition to satisfying the requirements of §62.10(a), sponsors must ensure that all participants in a designated secondary school student exchange visitor program:

(1) Are secondary school students in their home countries who have not completed more than 11 years of primary and secondary study, exclusive of kindergarten; or are at least 15 years of age, but not more than 18 years and six months of age as of the program start date;

(2) Demonstrate maturity, good character, and scholastic aptitude; and

(3) Have not previously participated in an academic year or semester secondary school student exchange program in the United States or attended school in the United States in either F-1 or J-1 visa status.

(f) *Student enrollment.* (1) Sponsors must secure prior written acceptance for the enrollment of any exchange student in a United States public or private secondary school. Such prior acceptance must:

(i) Be secured from the school principal or other authorized school administrator of the school or school system that the exchange student will attend; and

(ii) Include written arrangements concerning the payment of tuition or waiver thereof if applicable.

(2) Under no circumstance may a sponsor facilitate the entry into the United States of an exchange student for whom a written school placement has not been secured.

(3) Under no circumstance may a sponsor charge a student private school tuition if such arrangements are not finalized in writing prior to the issuance of Form DS-2019.

(4) Sponsors must maintain copies of all written acceptances for a minimum of three years and make such documents available for Department of State inspection upon request.

(5) Sponsors must provide the school with a translated "written English language summary" of the exchange student's complete academic course work prior to commencement of school, in addition to any additional documents the school may require. Sponsors must inform the prospective host school of any student who has completed secondary school in his/her home country.

(6) Sponsors may not facilitate the enrollment of more than five exchange students in one school unless the school itself has requested, in writing, the placement of more than five students from the sponsor.

(7) Upon issuance of a Form DS-2019 to a prospective participant, the sponsor accepts full responsibility for securing a school and host family placement for the student, except in cases of voluntary student withdrawal or visa denial.

(g) *Student orientation.* In addition to the orientation requirements set forth at §62.10, all sponsors must provide exchange students, prior to their departure from their home countries, with the following information:

(1) A summary of all operating procedures, rules, and regulations governing student participation in the exchange visitor program along with a detailed summary of travel arrangements;

(2) A copy of the Department's welcome letter to exchange students;

(3) Age and language appropriate information on how to identify and report sexual abuse or exploitation;

(4) A detailed profile of the host family with whom the exchange student will be placed. The profile must state whether the host family is either a permanent placement or a temporary-arrival family;

(5) A detailed profile of the school and community in which the exchange student will be placed. The profile must state whether the student will pay tuition; and

(6) An identification card, that lists the exchange student's name, United States host family placement address and telephone numbers (landline and cellular), sponsor name and main office and emergency telephone numbers, name and telephone numbers (landline and cellular) of the local coordinator and area representative, the telephone number of Department's Office of Designation, and the Secondary School Student program toll free emergency telephone number. The identification card must also contain the name of the health insurance provider and policy number. Such cards must be corrected, reprinted, and reissued to the student if changes in contact information occur due to a change in the student's placement.

(h) *Student extra-curricular activities.* Exchange students may participate in school sanctioned and sponsored extra-curricular activities, including athletics, if such participation is:

(1) Authorized by the local school district in which the student is enrolled; and

(2) Authorized by the state authority responsible for determination of athletic eligibility, if applicable. Sponsors shall not knowingly be party to a placement (inclusive of direct placements) based on athletic abilities, whether initiated by a student, a natural or host family, a school, or any other interested party.

(3) Any placement in which either the student or the sending organization in the foreign country is party to an arrangement with any other party, including receiving school personnel, whereby the student will attend a particular school or live with a particular host family must be reported to the particular school and the National Federation of State High School Associations prior to the first day of classes.

(i) *Student employment.* Exchange students may not be employed on either a full or part-time basis but may accept sporadic or intermittent employment such as babysitting or yard work.

(j) *Host family application and selection.* Sponsors must adequately screen and select all potential host families and at a minimum must:

(1) Provide potential host families with a detailed summary of the Exchange Visitor Program and of their requirements, obligations and commitment to host;

(2) Utilize a standard application form developed by the sponsor that includes, at a minimum, all data fields provided in Appendix F, "Information to be Collected on Secondary School Student Host Family Applications". The form must include a statement stating that: "The income data collected will be used solely for the purposes of determining that the basic needs of the exchange student can be met, including three quality meals and transportation to and from school activities." Such application form must be signed and dated at the time of application by all potential host family applicants. The host family application must be designed to provide a detailed summary and profile of the host family, the physical home environment (to include photographs of the host family home's exterior and grounds, kitchen, student's bedroom, bathroom, and family or living room), family composition, and community environment. Exchange students are not permitted to reside with their relatives.

(3) Conduct an in-person interview with all family members residing in the home where the student will be living;

(4) Ensure that the host family is capable of providing a comfortable and nurturing home environment and that the home is clean and sanitary; that the exchange student's bedroom contains a separate bed for the student that is neither convertible nor inflatable in nature; and that the student has adequate storage space for clothes and personal belongings, reasonable access to bathroom facilities, study space if not otherwise available in the house and reasonable, unimpeded access to the outside of the house in the event of a fire or similar emergency. An exchange student may share a bedroom, but with no more than one other individual of the same sex.

(5) Ensure that the host family has a good reputation and character by securing two personal references from within the community from individuals who are not relatives of the potential host family or representatives of the sponsor (*i.e.* , field staff or volunteers), attesting to the host family's good reputation and character;

(6) Ensure that the host family has adequate financial resources to undertake hosting obligations and is not receiving needs-based government subsidies for food or housing;

(7) Verify that each member of the host family household 18 years of age and older, as well as any new adult member added to the household, or any member of the host family household who will turn eighteen years of age during the exchange student's stay in that household, has undergone a criminal background check (which must include a search of the Department of Justice's National Sex Offender Public Registry);

(8) Maintain a record of all documentation on a student's exchange program, including but not limited to application forms, background checks, evaluations, and interviews, for all selected host families for a period of three years following program completion; and

(9) Ensure that a potential single adult host parent without a child in the home undergoes a secondary level review by an organizational representative other than the individual who recruited and selected the applicant. Such secondary review should include demonstrated evidence of the individual's friends or family who can provide an additional support network for the exchange student and evidence of the individual's ties to his/her community. Both the

exchange student and his or her natural parents must agree in writing in advance of the student's placement with a single adult host parent without a child in the home.

(k) *Host family orientation.* In addition to the orientation requirements set forth in §62.10, sponsors must:

(1) Inform all host families of the philosophy, rules, and regulations governing the sponsor's exchange visitor program, including examples of "best practices" developed by the exchange community;

(2) Provide all selected host families with a copy of the Department's letter of appreciation to host families;

(3) Provide all selected host families with a copy of Department of State-promulgated Exchange Visitor Program regulations;

(4) Advise all selected host families of strategies for cross-cultural interaction and conduct workshops to familiarize host families with cultural differences and practices; and

(5) Advise host families of their responsibility to inform the sponsor of any and all material changes in the status of the host family or student, including, but not limited to, changes in address, finances, employment and criminal arrests.

(l) *Host family placement.* (1) Sponsors must secure, prior to the student's departure from his or her home country, a permanent or arrival host family placement for each exchange student participant. Sponsors may not:

(i) Facilitate the entry into the United States of an exchange student for whom a host family placement has not been secured;

(ii) Place more than one exchange student with a host family without the express prior written consent of the host family, the natural parents, and the students being placed. Under no circumstance may more than two exchange students be placed with a host family, or in the home of a local coordinator, regional coordinator, or volunteer. Sponsors may not place students from the same countries or with the same native languages in a single home.

(2) Prior to the student's departure from his or her home country, sponsors must advise both the exchange student and host family, in writing, of the respective family compositions and backgrounds of each, whether the host family placement is a permanent or arrival placement, and facilitate and encourage the exchange of correspondence between the two.

(3) In the event of unforeseen circumstances that necessitate a change of host family placement, the sponsor must document the reason(s) necessitating such change and provide the Department of State with an annual statistical summary reflecting the number and reason(s) for such change in host family placement in the program's annual report.

(m) *Advertising and marketing for the recruitment of host families.* In addition to the requirements set forth in §62.9 in advertising and promoting for host family recruiting, sponsors must:

(1) Utilize only promotional materials that professionally, ethically, and accurately reflect the sponsor's purposes, activities, and sponsorship;

(2) Not publicize the need for host families via any public media with announcements, notices, advertisements, etc. that are not sufficiently in advance of the exchange student's arrival, appeal to public pity or guilt, imply in any way that an exchange student will be denied participation if a host family is not found immediately, or identify photos of individual exchange students and include an appeal for an immediate family;

(3) Not promote or recruit for their programs in any way that compromises the privacy, safety or security of participants, families, or schools. Specifically, sponsors shall not include personal student data or contact information (including addresses, phone numbers or email addresses) or photographs of the student on Web sites or in other promotional materials; and

(4) Ensure that access to exchange student photographs and personally identifying information, either online or in print form, is only made available to potential host families who have been fully vetted and selected for program participation. Such information, if available online, must also be password protected.

(n) *Reporting requirements.* Along with the annual report required by regulations set forth at §62.15, sponsors must file with the Department of State the following information:

(1) Sponsors must immediately report to the Department any incident or allegation involving the actual or alleged sexual exploitation or any other allegations of abuse or neglect of an exchange student. Sponsors must also report such allegations as required by local or state statute or regulation. Failure to report such incidents to the Department and, as required by state law or regulation, to local law enforcement authorities shall be grounds for the suspension and revocation of the sponsor's Exchange Visitor Program designation;

(2) A report of all final academic year and semester program participant placements by August 31 for the upcoming academic year or January 15 for the Spring semester and calendar year. The report must be in the format directed by the Department and must include at a minimum, the exchange student's full name, Form DS-2019 number (SEVIS ID #), host family placement (current U.S. address), school (site of activity) address, the local coordinator's name and zip code, and other information the Department may request; and

(3) A report of all situations which resulted in the placement of an exchange student with more than one host family or in more than one school. The report must be in a format directed by the Department and include, at a minimum, the exchange student's full name, Form DS-2019 number (SEVIS ID #), host family placements (current U.S. address), schools (site of activity address), the reason for the change in placement, and the date of the move. This report is due by July 31 for the previous academic school year.

[75 FR 65981, Oct. 27, 2010]



About Cultural Insurance Services International (CISI)

Cultural Insurance Services International (CISI) is the leading provider of study abroad and international student insurance coverage. Since 1992, we have insured over 1 million international students and cultural exchange participants worldwide. Our relationships with financially stable insurance carriers, all **rated A or better by A.M. Best**, permit us to provide you with wide-ranging coverage you require at affordable prices.

Our participants travel to more than 100 countries annually - from Costa Rica, to Italy, to Brazil, to Egypt, to China, to the United States and more. Our own international and sister offices give CISI direct connections in the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, South Africa, and Australia

No matter where you choose to study, travel, visit or tour, we've got you covered.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is your contact information and how can I obtain an updated application form reflecting your premium rates?

Our offices are located at:

CISI-BOLDUC
River Plaza
9 West Broad Street
Stamford, CT 06902-3788.

You can also reach us at the following numbers/email:

Phone: 800-303-8120
Fax: 203-399-5596
E-mail: cisiwebadmin@culturalinsurance.com

To access our most current applications, please click on the following link: [Rotary Youth Exchange Insurance Application](#)

Once I send my application and payment, will I get anything back to confirm I have insurance?

Upon enrollment, you will be sent an insurance ID card, Summary of Benefits, and claim form(s). These insurance materials will be mailed to your U.S. address when applicable. If you enroll online, your materials will be e-mailed to the address indicated on the application.

How long does it take for you to process my insurance application?

Once we receive your completed application and payment, your insurance enrollment should be processed within five business days. Online enrollments will be processed instantly.

When can my insurance begin?

Complete application and payment should be received prior to the departure date of the exchange in order for insurance to begin that day. Otherwise, insurance will begin upon receipt of the complete application and payment in our office. All students inbound to the U.S. have 31 days from their arrival to apply for insurance, at which time coverage will be back-dated to their original departure date from their home country, or else upon receipt of the application in our office.

What is the fastest way to enroll?

The fastest way to enroll is online. A credit card payment is required. Insurance materials are e-mailed back to the participant instantly. CISI-Bolduc encourages students inbound to the U.S. to contact their credit card company or bank prior to purchasing the insurance via credit card due to a heightened risk of international





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River Plaza

9 West Broad Street

Stamford, CT 06902

ATTN: RYE # 10 N0106096A

Telephone:

Toll-free in the U.S.A.: 800-303-8120 x5130

Outside the U.S.A.

(Call Collect): 203-399-5130

Fax: 203-399-5596

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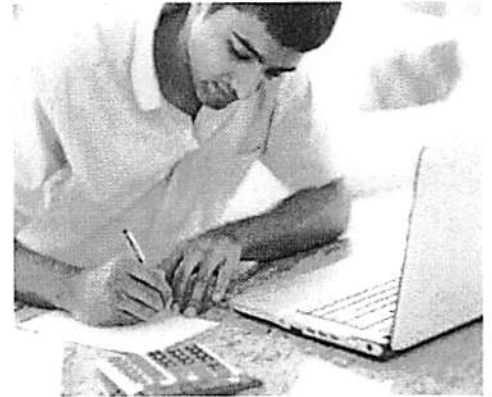
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To access our most current applications, please click on the following link: [Rotary Youth Exchange Insurance Application \(http://www.culturalinsurance.com/pdf/RYE-Enrollment-Brochure-2018.pdf?v1\)](http://www.culturalinsurance.com/pdf/RYE-Enrollment-Brochure-2018.pdf?v1)

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- 80% payment of all medical expenses up to \$1,000,000 limit (maximum out-of-pocket = \$200,000)
- \$100,000 Accidental Death, principal sum
- Personal Liability up to \$500,000
- Pre-existing conditions up to \$500
- \$100 maximum for Emergency Sickness Dental treatment
- Sports coverage
- Trip Delay \$500
- Trip Interruption \$3,000
- Security Evacuation \$100,000
- Family Reunion \$5,000
- Trip Cancellation \$3,000
- Medical Evacuation \$100,000

- Repatriation \$50,000
- Meets and Exceeds RI Insurance Requirements

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Plan B Inbound



- Medical Coverage up to \$1,000,000
- One-Time deductible of \$100
- Covered Accident or Sickness payable 80% to \$1,000 out of pocket limit; plan pays 100% thereafter
- Sports Coverage
- \$100,000 Accidental Death, principal sum
- Personal Liability up to \$500,000
- Pre-existing conditions up to \$500
- \$400 maximum for Emergency Sickness Dental treatment
- Trip Delay \$500
- Trip Interruption \$3,000
- Security Evacuation \$100,000
- Family Reunion \$5,000
- Trip Cancellation \$3,000
- Medical Evacuation \$100,000
- Repatriation \$50,000
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Plan B+ Inbound



- 100% payment of medical expenses up to \$1,000,000 limit
- \$100,000 Accidental Death, principal sum
- Sports Coverage
- Personal Liability up to \$500,000
- Pre-existing conditions up to \$500
- \$400 maximum for Emergency Sickness Dental treatment
- Trip Delay \$500
- Trip Interruption \$3,000
- Security Evacuation \$100,000
- Family Reunion \$5,000
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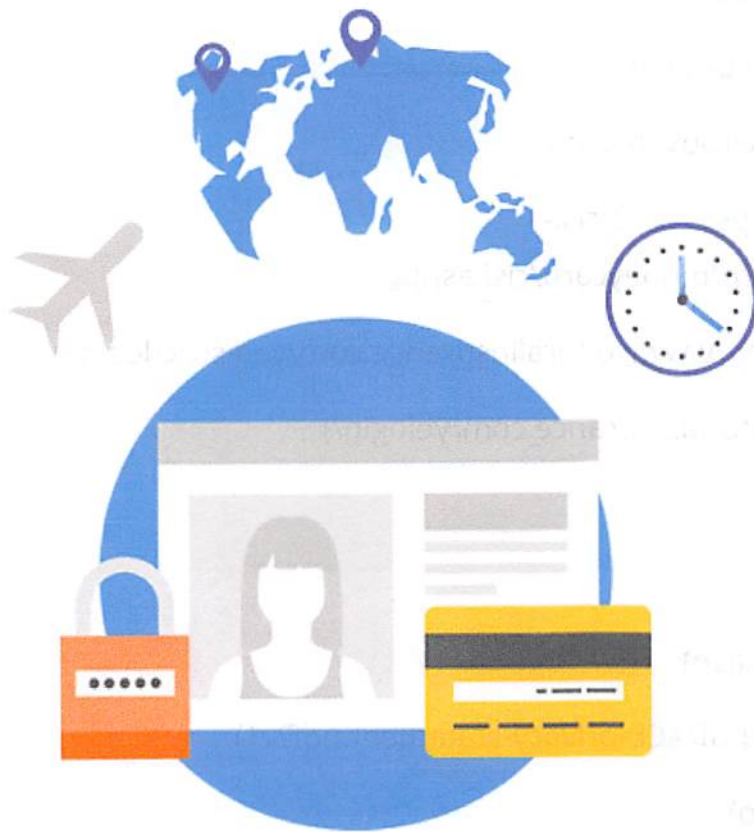


Why do you need insurance during your Rotary Youth Exchange?

- Many insurance plans are not designed to cover students during a period of study in a foreign country.
- Rotary International has specific minimum requirements for their participants' insurance coverage.
- CISI-Bolduc provides a choice of comprehensive plans that meet and exceed the Rotary International regulations.

Self-Enrollment Overview

- You will need your credit card details, home Rotary District number and an exact or tentative exchange start date.
- To pay by check or wire transfer, please download an application form (</rotary/pdf/RYE-Enrollment-Brochure-English.pdf?v1>) or contact us for assistance.
- When you complete your online enrollment, you will receive an email from rye@culturalinsurance.com (<mailto:rye@culturalinsurance.com>) with your personalized ID card and consulate letter, as well as a detailed coverage brochure with claim form.



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Seven Lessons In Intercultural Communications

We learn from experience that not everything which is incredible is untrue.
Cardinal de Retz

There's every chance you'll emerge from any intercultural awareness exercise or other experience a bit rattled, humbled, and perhaps even taken aback by the workings and power of culture. And a good thing that is, too, for the central message here, after all, is that in dealing with people unlike us we can't afford to be too sure of ourselves. This general truth can be subdivided into several lesser ones, pieces of practical advice to keep in mind when communicating across cultures. We offer these seven lessons as a kind of summing up of the notion that is at the heart of this book and is likewise the key to successful intercultural communication.

Lesson One

Nevertheless, when you go abroad or meet people from abroad, try to entertain the notion that they might be very different from you. If it turns out they aren't, all the better; and if it turns out they are, score one for your side.

Lesson Two

What you think of as normal or human behavior may only be cultural. A lot of behavior is universal, of course, and doesn't differ from country to country. But not all. Before you project your norms onto the human race, consider that you might be wrong.

Lesson Three

Familiar behaviors may have different meanings. The same behavior-saying yes, for example-can exist in different cultures and not mean the same thing. Just because you've *recognized* a given behavior, don't assume you have therefore *understood* it.

Lesson Four

Don't assume that what you meant is what was understood. You can be sure of what you mean when you say something, but you can't be sure how this is understood by someone else. Check for signs that the other person did or did not understand you.

Lesson Five

Don't assume that what you understood is what was meant. You are obliged to hear what others say through the medium of your own experience. You know what those words normally mean, but whose norms are we following here: yours or the foreigner's? If they're the foreigner's, do you know what they are?

Lesson Six

You don't have to like or accept "different" behavior, but you should try to understand where it comes from. You may never get used to some of the things foreigners do (even as they are occasionally put off by you), but it can't hurt to try to figure out why they behave in such irritating

ways. Once you realize, for example, that the reason Hispanics use go-betweens is because they don't want to hurt your feelings, you may be able to make your peace with that behavior. Or at least you may not react so strongly to it. In other cases, even when you know the cultural explanation for a certain behavior, you may still not like it. Fine. But what have you lost by trying to understand?

Lesson Seven

Most people do behave rationally; you just have to discover the rationale. Foreigners aren't acting this way just to get your goat. This is really how they are. They come by their crazy norms the same way you come by yours: through the process of cultural conditioning. You may not think much of a particular bit of irritating behavior, but can you really say it isn't legitimate?

This, then, is our story: even though we know better, we all look around us and see not other people, but ourselves. And while we accept, intellectually, that others-especially foreigners can't possibly be like us, we behave for all the world as if they were. Oddly enough, our experience of the world doesn't always change our understanding of it; that is, our deeply felt notion of how things must be often prevails over our experience of how things are.

In time, however, through simulations, discussions and reflection we can begin to change our view of ourselves and the world and come to believe that they are not one and the same. Once we have done that, we will truly be citizens of the world.

Adapted from *Figuring Foreigners Out* by Craig Storti.

The Rotary Youth Exchange Experience:

Culture Shock

By Dennis White, Ph.D.

Most of us are familiar with the term "culture shock". We may think of it as the temporary disorientation that comes from being exposed to a different language, different customs, food, etc. What we don't often realize is that it is usually a rather profound reaction to fairly significant other differences; in the way people view the world, in the way they think and what they value. Tourists often experience culture shock at a superficial level. People who actually live in another culture can experience culture shock as an on-going reaction and adaptation to basic differences. Rotary Youth Exchange Students, living and studying in a different culture, living in the homes of host families, often experience significant culture shock, sometimes on a continuous basis, throughout their stay abroad.

Most exchange students in year-long programs go through a fairly identifiable progression of adjustment to culture shock, although each student's experience is unique. It must be emphasized that while culture shock can be very uncomfortable, there is nothing wrong with it, or with the person experiencing it. It is also quite common for students to have a very positive and rewarding experience, despite having on-going adjustment problems with culture shock. Many would argue that the most rewarding exchanges come only when there is a pronounced experience of culture shock.

Culture shock usually involves at least four stages. It is quite common for these stages to repeat themselves as students become more and more successfully immersed in the host culture. These stages are:

- 1. Excitement and Enthusiasm.** This is the feeling of excitement and enthusiasm that accompanies travel to a new place, seeing and doing so many new and different things, and meeting new people. It is most prominent at the beginning of the exchange year, but can repeat itself as students continue to have new experiences, like changing host families, meeting new students, or continued travel. Sometimes it can be the excitement that comes from developing a new skill or increased understanding of the host culture.
- 2. Irritability.** This is the stage most readily associated with culture shock and occurs when the initial excitement wears off and real differences become evident. These are differences that go beyond food and language, and they are often indescribable to the person experiencing them. No matter how understanding and accepting the student may try to be, there will be many times when they just don't like or understand why their host culture is the way it is, and they can't seem to make the feeling go away. Irritability can come at any time that a student is confronted with differences they may not have experienced or perceived previously.
- 3. Adaptation.** This is the longest, most difficult and most rewarding stage. This is when students learn to accept that they will have to adapt if they are going to be successful in their host culture. They work at adapting to customs and habits that they may not understand, and may not like. Sometimes even when they try very hard, they have difficulty, because so much of this adaptation depends on learning the native language. They know they are adjusting when they begin to think and speak using idiomatic expressions (expressions that have meaning beyond a literal translation). They know they are adjusting when they notice

that they are doing things without thinking, and these are the very things they never thought they could become comfortable with. An example would be when someone from a very formal culture becomes comfortable standing very close to other people, frequently touching them and being touched, during a conversation. Adaptation is a continuous process, and it requires added attention as some of these newly discovered differences become apparent to the student.

4. **Biculturalism.** This stage comes very near the end of the stay, or sometimes doesn't really emerge until the students returns to their native countries. This is when they realize that they have become competent in another culture, and can see the world and function from another, very different point of view. When this stage emerges toward the end of the exchange year, it all seems very unfair to the student. Just as they are getting to experience the benefits of really knowing how to function well in their host culture, they have to go back home.

In Table 1 below, a model of a typical year of adaptation and adjustment to culture shock is pictured. The bold line that waves up and down represents the high and low feelings that students experience as they go through the various stages of adjustment to culture shock.

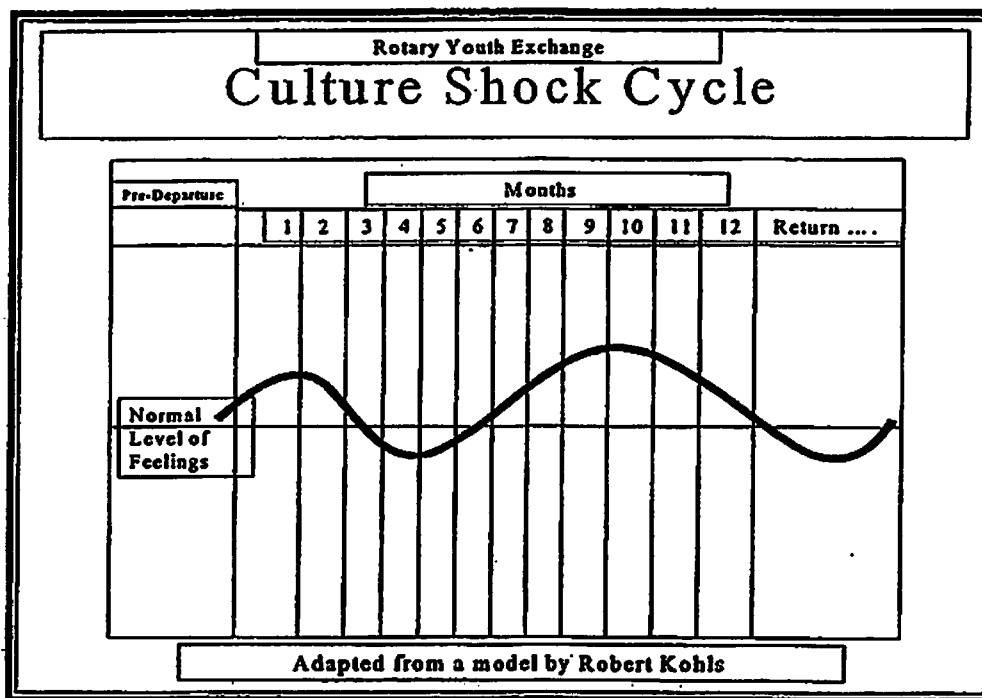


Table 1.

The first few months, including the period just before departure, coincide with the initial excitement stage. This peaks when the excitement wears off, or what is sometimes referred to as the time when the "honeymoon" is over. This is when reality sets in. This is when differences beyond superficial ones emerge, and irritability sets in, often verily quickly. At times, however, this irritability can come fairly slowly, but it is almost inevitable as the confrontation of one's own ethnocentrism occurs.

The lowest point typically comes at about four months, or near the middle of December, for students who start their exchange in August. For Christian students, this also coincides with what is probably the first Christmas they have spent away from their families. As a result, there is a sort of double negative of culture shock and homesickness.

Following the irritability stage is the much longer stage of gradual adjustment and adaptation where the student really learns the cultural tools necessary to function competently in the host country. This stage can actually involve the recycling of prior stages, with deeper and deeper understanding following periods of confusion, frustration and irritation.

The final stage, shown as coming around the time of returning home, can involve another plunge into a period of feeling low. If the student is not already sad at the prospect of returning home, "just when it's getting good", they will almost inevitably feel sad shortly after they return, when they go through a "reverse culture shock". This phenomenon is less well understood, and less often anticipated, but just as common as initial culture shock. The degree to which students go through reverse culture shock is a rough measure of the success of their immersion in the host culture, and not a sign that something is wrong. Only after experiencing reverse culture shock can students really appreciate the extent to which they have changed, and, as a result, the extent to which they have become truly bicultural.

The journey through culture shock has also been described as moving from Ethnocentrism to Ethnorelativism. All cultures are ethnocentric. They teach their members that their way is the right, natural and preferred way of doing things. When someone is exposed to another culture, with different values, behaviors and beliefs, there is a tendency to respond with defensiveness, labeling one's own practices as right and the other culture as wrong, silly or even stupid. Ethnorelativism is the awareness that develops as one realizes there are other valid ways of dealing with the world – whether we agree with them or not. When the exchange student gets through the initial denial (which is what happens in the irritability stage) they can begin to develop the skills necessary to adapt and be competent in the new culture. They then develop an ethnocultural world view. Their thinking may follow this progression:

1. I don't like the way they do this – it's stupid.
2. But they seem to be doing o.k. doing it this way.
3. If I want to survive here, I'd better learn to do it this way.
4. Now that I can do it this way, it doesn't seem so bad, even though I may still prefer to do it my way.

Developing the competence to succeed in another culture – that is – going through the process of culture shock, may be better understood by analyzing the process of developing competence at anything. Essentially, we go through four stages:

1. **Unconscious Incompetence.** This is a stage when we not only don't know how to do something, we don't even know that we don't know how to do it. We are ignorant. Most of us think we know the proper way to greet someone. For example, when we go to another culture where greetings are done quite differently, we may just breeze along doing it our way, not even knowing that what we are doing may be perceived as rude or insulting.
2. **Conscious Incompetence.** In this stage we may be aware that we are doing something wrong, but we just may not have the skills yet to do it properly. We may know that

- another culture spends more time in greetings inquiring about one's relatives, but if we are not skilled at the language, we may have trouble doing it, even if we want to.
3. **Conscious Competence.** In this stage we have developed the necessary skills to do what is necessary, but we still have to consciously remind ourselves to do it. We may think it is a waste of time to stop and discuss the well-being of all of our family members when we greet a friend, but we know how to, and more importantly, we know it is important to do so in this culture in order to appear "civilized" and polite.
 4. **Unconscious Competence.** In this stage we have become so skilled at the new cultural behavior that we do it without thinking. We may find that it becomes very natural to stop and chat with friends as we greet them, inquiring about the mutual health of both families, as if it is the most natural thing in the world to do.

When exchange students get to this point – unconscious competence, they have gotten to the bicultural stage of adjustment to culture shock. They have developed an effective ethnorelative world view. So one can see that culture shock is not a problem to avoid. Instead, it is a necessary discomfort that one must go through to really experience the rich and varied joys of intercultural living.

(note: Additional articles by Dr. White on related topics include "The Middle Stage of Culture Shock" and "So You Think You're Home Now". Both may be obtained by contacting Dr. White.)

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ONE WORLD... OR MANY?

by Dennis White, Ph.D.

In discussing the purpose and many benefits of international exchange programs, one of the most commonly heard assumptions is that when people from different cultures live together, they can eventually cut through the barriers of language and custom to find that, all over the world, people are basically alike. This has been dubbed by some to be the "One World" theory - the idea that language and other cultural differences are relatively superficial, and that basically people are the same.

This widespread belief is one of the motivating factors for many of the thousands of people, around the world, who dedicate countless hours of time to promoting and organizing a wide variety of exchange programs. It is also a belief that seems to be largely validated by the experiences of those people who see how much understanding and brotherhood are enhanced, at a person-to-person level, by these programs. The close and lasting relationships that are developed in exchange programs are legendary. There is probably not a person with experience in exchange programs that does not have stories of students, host families or parents returning for weddings or other events, years after the initial exchange.

While the "One World" theory may be a positive motivator, there are some fundamental obstacles in it that make approaching intercultural relation from another point of view worth considering. In fact, it may be that some of the problems in international exchange programs come from an over emphasis on the "One World" theory. For example, most people are relatively familiar with the concept of culture shock - the physical, emotional and intellectual disorientation that often accompanies immersion in a totally new cultural environment. While most exchange students are trained to expect and cope with this phenomenon and eventually get through it, many do not. They experience what might be termed a chronic culture shock. Although there may be complex reasons for this, and each case is unique, this never-ending shock may be in part due to being stuck in the "One World" approach.

After adjusting to superficial differences, and after finding some common ground, some exchange students become frustrated by differences that appear to be at a very fundamental level. They are confronted with the new reality that, at a very basic level, different cultures may view the world differently in how they think, what they value and how they view relationships, among other things. When confronted with these differences, they may react by rejecting the host culture. This may be as "mild" as never really liking it but sticking it out, or as severe as returning early. As a part of this rejection they may either think that there is something wrong with them or wrong with the host culture, when, in fact, it is not a question of right or wrong, good or bad, but just different.

Another problem that can come from this unexpected confrontation of fundamental differences is when exchange students over-adapt to the host culture, rejecting their own culture as bad and adopting the new as good. This is sometimes referred to as "going

native." While this may appear to be a positive adjustment, it is often only when it is time to return home that problems appear. While they may physically return home, psychologically they feel homeless. Does this mean that the "One World" theory is bad and must be abandoned? Not necessarily. In fact, it is almost always the initial point of view of exchange students when they first get involved in exchange programs. Instead, it may be more helpful to look at the "One World" theory as an important developmental stage, but not the final stage, in intercultural awareness and sensitivity. Instead of beginning with the basic assumption of similarities, it may be helpful to take the approach of cultural anthropologists and experts in intercultural communication who, instead, make a basic assumption of differences. This means, for example, that people differ not only in language, but that they differ in how they answer such basic questions as the character of human nature, the relationship of humans to nature, the importance of time in human activity, the purpose of human activity and the nature of human relationships. While all cultures address these questions, they don't all answer them the same way.

As people grow up in their own cultures, they view the way they do things as right, natural, and possibly the only way to respond. This is the basis of what is called ethnocentrism - the tendency to view one's own culture as the right, natural and only way. When one encounters another culture that is different, one then unconsciously judges that culture by one's own cultural frame of reference. The very first encounter with the culturally different almost always provokes an extreme ethnocentric response of defensiveness toward people of the other culture, by criticizing or feeling superior to them.

After repeated exposure to another culture and the development of some cultural awareness, some people move on to a position where they can no longer deny the existence of differences between cultures, but neither can they accept the fundamental nature of those differences. This then becomes a stage of minimization of those differences, essentially recognizing they are there but are not as important as the basic underlying similarities between people. The "One World" theory is an example of this. The similarities are sometimes viewed in terms of physical needs (such as, we all have to eat, procreate and die) or in universal transcendent terms (such as we are all God's children, or all people want and need to realize their individual potential). While people in this stage are able to recognize and accept cultural differences, they are uncomfortable with emphasizing those differences and resolve them by minimizing their significance. But the resolution is still basically ethnocentric, in a more subtle way.

For example, an American exchange student preparing to go abroad might be advised, "When in doubt, just be yourself and you'll do okay" (because people are people, and if you act "natural" others will respond in kind). This is subtle ethnocentrism in that it assumes that one's natural self will be automatically understandable to others, and further, that the natural self will be valued and appreciated in another culture. In fact, being "natural" on the part of an American may be seen as being rude and disrespectful in another culture. When similarities are seen, they are also more commonly seen as "They are just like us". Seldom does one hear the phrase, "We are just like them". People in this "minimizing of differences" stage of cultural awareness are certainly interested in other cultures. And many are able to participate effectively in most aspects of exchange

programs. It is just that their tendency to resolve differences in this fashion is still ethnocentric, and thus, limits their potential for further understanding. The limiting factor is their own cultural frame of reference.

There are further potential stages of cultural sensitivity, and they almost always come only after extended immersion in another culture, along with the development of substantial cultural competence. As a result there is a major shift from ethnocentrism to ethnorelativism. Ethnorelativism is conceptually different in that it assumes that cultures can only be understood relative to themselves. There is no natural, right standard that can be applied to all cultures. This assumes that one's own culture is no more central to reality than any other, regardless of one's own preferences.

The move from ethnocentrism to ethnorelativism, is usually difficult, both intellectually and emotionally. If no one culture is inherently right or wrong, but just different, many people mistakenly conclude that they must necessarily approve of all aspects of all cultures. Although there is no necessity of ethically agreeing with all cultures in this stage, many people believe that is what they must do. As a result, they are often overwhelmed by this apparent dilemma, and either move on to a more developed stage of sensitivity, or fall back to some form of ethnocentrism.

On the other hand, moving to ethnorelative thinking can be liberating and exciting. One learns to expect and look for differences, knowing that understanding those differences will help give the new culture meaning and help make sense of it. Instead of judging another cultural practice as bad, because it is different, one looks for differences in behavior and values and tries to understand why they occur from the point of view of that culture. For example, Americans tend to pride themselves on punctuality, especially in matters of business. In trying to make a business appointment in another culture, an American might find that his or her business counterpart arrives late, keeps them waiting, and then allows all sorts of interruptions, other business and social events to interfere. An ethnocentric interpretation might be that the other person isn't very businesslike, is rude, disrespectful and disorganized. An ethnorelative view might be to try to understand why those behaviors and values are present, and what they mean. It assumes that the above behavior is normal for that culture and that the person is behaving exactly as he or she should. In that culture, it may be that time is very past or future oriented, not present oriented. It may be that business and social life are constantly mixed, not separated. It may be that no disrespect whatsoever has been shown, and the other person may be behaving quite ethically, within the values of that culture.

Acceptance of these differences and trying to understand them leads to the ability to learn to adapt to them, when operating in that culture. Adaptation then becomes another developmental stage in ethnorelativism. It is more than the adage, "When in Rome, do as the Romans do," because such behavior comes with an understanding of why it is important. As one might expect, this stage takes a considerable degree of cultural competence and the time in which to develop it. Many exchange students are just getting comfortable with this stage when their exchange year ends.

The final stage of ethnorelative awareness is an open-ended one. It usually doesn't come until an exchange student returns to his or her own native culture for a while. It is a stage of true integration of a multicultural point of view. The person is essentially at home and

competent in at least two cultures, often ones with radically different points of view on many basic aspects of life. Paradoxically, the person is also not really at home in either culture. This is the comment of countless students, even years after their return. Because they can now see their own culture from another point of view, and because they have lived life from that point of view, they can never be exactly as they were before. On the other hand, no matter how well they adapted to the host culture, they know that is not completely "them" either. Without some help in understanding this process, these returned exchange students can spend a long time only experiencing the negative side of this cultural "no man's land".

In time, and with some help interpreting their experiences, they can come to see that they now view their own culture more clearly, often appreciating it much more, while also being more critical of it. They develop a sharper concept of who they are and what they stand for. At the same time, they understand and appreciate at least one other culture that is different from theirs, and different at some fundamental levels. They have learned to appreciate those different behaviors and values as being just as right and valid for that culture as theirs are for their own culture.

People with a true multi-cultural or at least bi-cultural orientation, who have integrated those awarenesses, think not in terms of one world, but instead, of many worlds. But they are not so concerned that these differences exist. They not only tolerate differences, they appreciate them. They become part of an ongoing process of moving in and out of their own cultural context. Since they are not bound by their native cultural frame of reference at all times any more, they are able to shift, appropriately, among points of view.

When we send exchange students around the world and tell them it will be the experience of a lifetime, we are speaking the truth. By learning to be culturally competent and by developing a high level of cultural sensitivity, we are helping them change so much that they will never really be the same. They can learn that people are basically alike in many ways, as in the "one world" theory. But they can also learn to function in, and think of the world, as many very fundamentally different cultures. They can learn to understand and value the "many worlds" of our planet.