**Mediation Practice Scenarios**

In your group of three and using the five steps learned in the presentation, choose a participant identity (student, host family member or YFU AR-mediator) and practice mediating the situation. Take about 4 minutes for each step, then switch roles to give all group members a chance to be the mediator.

Step 1: Gather Information

Step 2: Set the *Ground Rules* with the participants

Step 3: Clarify the Issue

Step 4: Assist in developing solutions

Step 5: Create and implement the solution

**Scenario 1: Karin (17) from Lithuania**

Karin is a student from Lithuania. She has excellent English and is very bright. Karin’s host family has no children at home and she is attending a small country school in a very conservative community. Karin reports that her host mother, Janice, disapproves of the clothes that she likes to wear, her style of make-up, and where she wants to go, (the small, local music venue). Karin shared that her host mother, Janice, has made disapproving remarks about Karin’s friends and constantly reminds Karin of her curfew (even though Karin always comes home on time). Unlike Janice, who runs three miles every morning, Karin is not an athlete. Karin has chosen not to get involved in school activities but would rather hang out after school with her “music” friends. She spends a great deal of time on the internet listening to new bands; and usually wears her headphones in common areas of the home, especially when she is doing her assigned chores. She has declined the multiple invitations to attend church with her host family. Karin is mostly happy and she is excited to be discovering the “music scene in the US”. She sometimes feels judged by her host family and she is frustrated that they don’t really connect. However, she does her best to follow their rules and do well in school. She had straight As her first semester, and her teachers report that she is an outstanding student. Her community service at the local foodbank has been rewarding and she plans to continue to do this every other Saturday.

Host Mom, Janice, was very excited to have a “daughter” and could not wait for Karin to become part of her family. Janice and her husband don’t have any children of their own and have no experience with teenagers. They expected that the three would bound immediately and they could even teach Sunday School class together at church. Janice was very excited to share her favorite hobby, caring for her plants in the greenhouse. However, she has discovered that though Karin wrote on her application that she “helps her mother in the garden” at home, that meant the lawn, not planting and growing things. Janice does not like that Karin spends so much time in her room on the internet, and she is very disturbed that Janice dresses in all black and wears heavy “Gothic” make-up. Janice feels this look is offensive, especially to her church friends who come by the house. Recently Karin has talked about getting her nose pierced and even shared an email with Janice that her Natural Mom said it was fine and she was happy that Karin was developing her own unique style. Janice told Karin that getting her nose pierced was “out of the question.” Karin rolled her eyes and replied, “OK, no nose piercing.”

A few days later, Janice arrived home to find Karin doing her homework. As she asked Karin about her day, she was horrified to see Karin had a small gold ring piercing her lower lip. Janice called her AR and requested Karin be moved to a new family. As an Area Rep, you suggest a mediation.

* Mediation participants are
  + - Exchange student Karin
    - Host Mom Janice
    - YFU Area Representative

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**Scenario 2: Nao (15) from China**

Nao is a 15-year-old from China with excellent English. His host family consists of two Protestant pastors, Dean and Karen Smith, and two little Chinese adopted children, Ashley and Hannah. The host parents want their kids to learn about their heritage from Nao. For the first few days, everything went swimmingly. Then almost abruptly, communication ceased, Nao refuses to spend any time with the children, grades have dropped from B to D in math and English, and Nao has announced to his Area Rep that he hates the food. He has been with the current host family for a month.

Nao’s host father, Dean, is frustrated that this is not at all working out as YFU had promised. He wants Nao to spend time with his children, to do things with them as a family; that include things Nao doesn’t enjoy, like watching science fiction movies. The host mother also says Nao is eating them out of house and home, and most of all, Nao believes that the 15 minutes of conversation he has with whichever adult happens to be home when he arrives is enough conversation for the day. Nao’s host mother reports that once this 15 minutes of time has passed, Nao ensconces himself in his room, and reappears only after their dinner is over and the kitchen cleaned up, in order to raid the fridge and eat anything and everything in sight.

Today the school called with concerns about his failing grades and has noted that teachers report that Nao refuses to speak. The school wants to know what YFU plans to do about this and has threatened expulsion if his grades don’t improve and he starts participating in class. As an Area Rep, you suggest a mediation.

* Mediation participants are
  + - Exchange student Nao
    - Host Parents Dean &/or Karen
    - YFU AR

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**Scenario 3: Alexandra (17) from Germany**

Alexandra is a 17-year-old girl from Germany. Her host family has hosted two other German girls successfully. Alexandra is less serious and more social than the two former students. Alexandra feels a responsibility to her host parents but wishes she could accept a friend’s offer to be her host family. Alexandra feels that her host parents are comparing her unfavorably to the previous exchange students. Although they don’t object to her friends, they criticize her social life and want her to spend more time at home. Alexandra is doing well in school, but they complain that she doesn’t take school as seriously as the other girls did. Alexandra feels that her host parents don’t accept her as her own person. Moreover, they seem tired of hosting and planning activities that would interest her. They have also gotten lax about preparing meals and Alexandra sometimes goes out to eat with friends because there’s no meal at home.

Alexandra’s host parents have loved hosting with YFU and keep in very close touch with their former students. They were very excited to choose Alexandra since she ‘fit the mold’ of their other international kids, with whom they got along very well. Now they feel that Alexandra is too independent. The host mother does not work and would like to welcome Alexandra home from school every day and have a little time together, to work on her English and talk about the day. This routine always worked well in years past. Alexandra’s host father always makes himself available to help with homework after dinner. He is discouraged that Alexandra hasn’t taken him up on it yet.

Today Alexandra came home to find her host mom in tears, and her host dad is not sure what to do about the situation. The host dad called the AR and the AR suggested a mediation.

* Mediation participants are
  + - Exchange student Alexandra
    - Host Parents
    - YFU AR

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**Scenario 4: Greta (17) from Sweden**

Greta is a 17-year-old girl from Sweden. She lives with a farming family in the country - two host parents and two younger siblings (8 and 10). Greta is very social and participates in many school activities, because she loves to be busy and to be with her friends. The high school is about 15 minutes from the family’s home and the nearest city with a mall is about half an hour away. Greta likes her host parents but does not want to hang out with them. Greta’s siblings keep barging into her room and wanting her attention when she is busy chatting or texting with friends. She doesn’t feel like there is anyone in the home to talk to. She was hoping to be placed with a family in the city who had children her own age. Greta is becoming more and more frustrated with her living situation, especially when recently, Greta was not able to go to the basketball game because the host parents couldn’t take her.

Greta’s host parents spend a lot of time working their land and taking care of the livestock and house. They do not want to spend their spare time running Greta to the mall 20 miles away to be with her friends. The host parents are quiet people who communicate by doing not by talking. They generally like Greta. Sometimes they feel like they are just a bed and breakfast and/or a taxi for Greta as she is always asking to go out with friends or go to the mall. They worry that their children are getting on Greta’s nerves because she is always telling them to get out of her room.

When she came home from school today, Greta asked her host father for a ride to a friend’s house to stay the night. The Host Father replied that he did not have time. With this response, Greta ran up the stairs and slammed her door, screaming, “I hate this place.” Fifteen minutes later, Greta and the ten year-old sibling are yelling at one another, and the ten-year old bursts into tears. Greta then locked herself in her room, started packing her bags, and called her Area Rep to ask to be moved. The Area Rep suggested having a mediation.

* Mediation participants are
  + - Exchange student Greta
    - Host Parents
    - YFU AR

**Notes for the Trainer when debriefing the situations.**

**When debriefing, use these questions:**

* What was the most challenging aspect of the mediation?
* Where there any “steps” that were extremely difficult, why? How did the Mediator handle this?
* Do you feel that the mediation was successful and the family is on a track for improving? If not, what could have been done differently in the mediation?

***Additional notes to consider:***

**Situation one- Karin:**

This is tricky, Karin is happy for the most part; however her host parents are not. As a Mediator, it might be tempting to “side” with the parents, as Karin found a “loop hole” and didn’t follow the rules. Take note of being neutral, and seeing all sides of the situation. Also recognize that expectations are at play in this case. It is also noteworthy that aside from the piercing issue, Karin is doing well at school, follows the rules, and has connected with American friends.

**Situation two- Nao:**

There are multiple issues. Did the Mediator help the group focus on the most critical problem- the potential expulsion from school? In this case, the Mediator needs to be careful as there are several issues and it is best to focus on one problem at a time. In addition, there are multiple cultural issues and the impacts of culture shock should not be underestimated.

**Situation three- Alexandra:**

During the mediation, did the Mediator stay solution focused? In this case, there could be very simple, concrete actions that would improve the situation, like the family designating time to spend together doing something new; or a specific rule that the host parents do not bring up the names of past students. It might be easy to place blame, make sure that as a Mediator, you are directing the mediation in a positive way with the mindset that a mutually agree-able solution can be found.

**Situation four- Greta:**

While there are many dynamics and personality challenges in the background, the Mediator needs to help the family and student figure out the most critical issue to solve. Defining the most critical issue might be the most challenging aspect of this scenario. Being balanced and providing support to both the student and family are key. Important questions to understand might include: did Greta’s behavior of slamming the door cause stress to the family, or is this a typical behavior in the home? Would some guidelines around how often the family can provide transportation help the family live more peacefully together? What kinds of compromises might the mediator suggest?