YFU Webinar Training Tips & Instructions

With a national constituency, multiple time zones, and the ability for people to connect across great distances, the webinar format is a great way for YFU to train its volunteers and support students and host families. Here are some tips and guidelines to help make our webinar trainings effective, enjoyable, and fun!

As a Community Trainer, you are asked to lead at least two webinars before June 30. We hope you will lead more as these are cost-effective and useful to volunteers all over the US. 2018 Community Trainer Webinar Topics:

* YFU Guiding Principles and Tools For Success- Advanced training for Area Representatives on the Support Structure and working directly with families and students (90 minutes).
* YFU Compliance Overview- Important rules and regulations related to all aspects of working with students and families (60 minutes).
* Host Family Placement Overview- General overview on the placement process and basic info on how volunteers can talk with families about hosting (60 min).

Technology and Preparations

Schedule the webinar

Inform E&T on the date, time, and topic that you will lead. E&T and Volunteer Programs will circulate training information to the volunteers. Provide at least three weeks’ notice so YFU can get the word out.

Download, save, and print your training

Ahead of time, download the training you will use (usually a PowerPoint format) from the my.yfu.org Community Trainers’ section of the website and save it on your own computer. The printed “Notes” version of the PowerPoint, is necessary so that you have facilitator notes available during the training. While your participants are looking at a clean slide on the screen, you will use this paper copy in order to reference your notes. Read the notes and study the content.

Prepare YOUR webinar presentation & practice

Using the notes, make the webinar your own and incorporate your personality and style. With the help of the YFU notes, use your own words to explain the concepts and provide examples from your experiences whenever possible. Some people create their own written talking points in addition to the YFU notes.

Review additional resources such as handbooks (Area Rep Manual, Host Family Handbook, etc) to develop a comprehensive understanding of the topic. Call an E&T or Volunteer Programs staff person to review the content with you (please do this at least two weeks in advance of the scheduled webinar), if necessary. When co-training with a partner (this is highly recommended), set-up a time to talk about the content, split-up the presentation of the slides, and do a “dress rehearsal.” Practice, practice, practice!

Invite a special guest. To make your webinar more engaging, invite a special guest to join you and provide more insight on the topic. Invite a representative from Education & Training, Volunteer Programs, SSM, or other YFU staff to bring additional perspectives to the discussion. This special guest will likely not have time to practice with you, however, the idea is that they participate and add additional thoughts and answer questions.

Log into GoToTraining well before your first session

Turn on your computer and log in to GoToTraining (GTT) so that your computer will boot up, install any automatic updates, and load GTT. Depending on your computer, this may take 15-20 minutes.

Login: Training@yfu.org

Password: training2014

Log in before your session and chat

Be online at least 15 minutes before the training is scheduled to begin. This will give you time to change settings, open the PowerPoint, and say hello to early attendees. Use this time to chat with participants and set a friendly tone.

Provide technology tips

Before delving into the training content, provide some tips to the participants about the technology. Also provide some “ground rules” to help the session go smoothly. The size of your group may determine your “rules.” Some webinars have few participants; others may have 15 or more participants

1. Check and see if you have any phone-only participants; you’ll want to tell them how to speak and ask questions.
2. Explain that feedback noise and other background noise (such as the TV, the dog, or a toddler) can be distracting. Therefore you may ask that everyone keeps themselves muted during the webinar. Remind them that they’ll need to unmute themselves to speak.
3. An alternative is for you (the presenter) to “Mute All,” and then unmute when you pause for questions. This is especially important with a large group and more chances for background noise.
4. Sometimes you will be able to identify the source of the background noise, and you can ask that participant to mute themselves.
5. Point out the “Chat” feature and the “Raise Hand” feature. Practice the “Raise Hand” as a way to engage participants. If you have more than 4 or 5 people, you will want to have them use the raise hand function so you can manage the conversation and not have people start speaking at the same time. Often participants use the chat feature to ask a question or share information. Recently the Chat feature has been very popular. .
6. You may want to let participants know that periodically you will ask for questions. Tell them you will pause for responses, or they can use the raise hand feature (be sure to watch your control panel!) if they want to speak. There will be times when you ask if there are any questions and there are not; so after a pause, just keep going to keep the training moving along.

Style and Tone

Training materials

As trainers, we use trainings developed by YFU - usually by your fellow volunteers, Area Reps, and trainers! For the webinars, they are always in PowerPoint format. YFU PowerPoints tend to have relatively little content on the slides, with extensive trainer’s notes. You will need to have access to the printed version of the PowerPoint that includes the trainer’s notes. That is where you can highlight text, add notes for yourself, and ***add your own special touches that reflect your style.***

Meet the participants.

At the very beginning, ***ask everyone to introduce themselves by name and location.*** Pending the size of the group, ask participants people how long they’ve been involved in YFU or what their experience level is. This has two functions:

* It allows you, as the trainer, to gauge the level of experience in your group. For example, if you have a mixed group of Area Representatives (some with extensive experience, and others who are new), you can invite ARs to share short anecdotes from their own experience. (Be careful to keep stories short and to the point.) Another example is that some volunteers have hosting experience or have gone on exchange and are familiar with the culture of YFU. Others have come to YFU from volunteer fairs, or finding volunteer opportunities online. ***Knowing your participants will help you tailor your comments and anecdotes for the group you are training.***
* Introductions are a way of engaging the participants. You are aiming for high participant engagement. Introductions set a friendly tone and participants are comfortable to ask questions and share their experiences.

Engage the participants.

Add some interaction to the session rather than simply giving a lecture. Since you cannot read participants’ body language, you must engage them when you can. A conversational presentation can be effective. ***Every two to three slides incorporate an engagement strategy*** such as:

* ***Ask participants to analyze a slide or share their ideas*** about a slide (ex. what is the significance of the graphic; why is this image important; read a bullet from the slide; provide examples related to this image, etc). Do this orally, or ask them all to share their ideas in the chat box.
* When providing examples, ask participants to ***use the hand-raising function*** to show if they have experience with the example provided. Ask the individual to share.
* ***Call people by name*** if no one is responding to a prompt. Ask others if they have additional ideas to add.
* Use Yes/No questions or True/False questions with responses in the chat box to quickly (and briefly) engage participants.

Ask for questions.

As you go through the training, you will want to periodically pause and ask if there are questions. It’s ok, if you don’t know the response. It is better to tell participants you will find out and send a follow up communication, rather than guessing. ***YFU rumors spread fast, so be cautious when you are not sure of an answer.***

Use your time deliberately.

Even though you want to conduct the training in a conversational, relaxed way, it is important to move through it efficiently. Try to speak clearly and avoid “ums” and “uhs” as much as possible. Feel free to tell real stories from your YFU experience, but keep them brief, to the point, and as a ***concrete example to illustrate a point*** in the training.

Maintain confidentiality

Remember, if you use anecdotes, to maintain confidentiality. When referencing a student, family or volunteer in a “story” don’t use their real names (or country if this makes it possible to identify the student). You may want to say things like, “a student I am rep-ing this year…” or “a student I have rep-ed in the past…” to tell a story to illustrate a point. ***Use positive stories and think critically about the use of “negative” stories, or stories about struggles- is the story really proving a point and will it be useful to the volunteers?***

Wrap Up

Once you have moved thru all the content, invite participants to ask questions. Let them know that the training is over, but you are ***happy to stay on the line and answer additional questions***. Also, inform them that you will be sending them some follow up information, including any handouts associated with the training. If there were questions that you were unsure on how to answer, let attendees know that ***you will be trying to find out the answer and will let them know in your follow-up communication.***

Follow Up

Using the gototraining attendee list, email all participants within a few days. Thank them for participating and answer any questions. Also ***provide a “call to action”*** – now that the volunteers have some training, tell them what to do next to use their skills.