



The
EXPERIMENT
in International Living
CELEBRATING **85** YEARS

EXPERIMENTER HANDBOOK SUMMER 2018



WELCOME TO THE EXPERIMENT FAMILY

Your experience with The Experiment in International Living this summer will likely be a pivotal part of your high school years, with lasting impact for years to come. By making the decision to explore another culture firsthand, you've already demonstrated your willingness to step outside of your comfort zone. The Experiment staff and thousands of past Experimenters applaud your decision! We hope you share our excitement as you join a group of young people from all over the United States and the world. Together, you will embark on a shared journey that encompasses the challenges, beauty, and differences of life in another country.

This handbook will help you and your family prepare for your Experiment summer. The first part of the document will provide insight into an Experiment program. In the Getting Ready section, you will find general recommendations about logistics. In the final section, we will share information about our expectations for each participant's behavior.

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GENERAL PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Program Overview

For over 85 years, The Experiment in International Living has been the pioneer in cross-cultural education for young people. Experiment programs introduce students to important local and global issues through homestays, language training, community service, ecology, regional exploration, and the arts. Our group leaders facilitate substantive immersion programs by collaborating with experienced in-country educators, language trainers, artists, ecologists, musicians, and chefs.

In preparing for your Experiment program, it is important to recognize that you will be participating in neither a highly structured tour-based trip nor a strictly classroom-based academic experience. Instead, you will be involved in a program that will ask you to develop a deep understanding of and connection to the people and culture of the host country and that will challenge you to build the confidence, skills, and abilities necessary to connect and engage on this level. You will get the most out of your experience if you approach the summer with an open mind, patience, and enthusiasm.

Cross-Cultural Orientation

Every Experiment program begins with an in-depth cross-cultural orientation, which will introduce you to the host country and culture. Orientation takes place in a major city of the host country and typically lasts 3–4 days. This time enables your group and group leaders to become accustomed to one another and form a network that will provide vital support throughout the summer.

From the moment you arrive in the host country, you will engage in discussions and activities with your group and group leaders as well as with in-country experts to better acquaint you with life in the host country.

Throughout orientation, you will acquire “survival” language skills, discuss cultural differences, become familiar with the orientation city, and prepare for the rest of your program. This fast-paced orientation often includes visits to local markets, museums, and important historical, artistic, or architectural sites. You may go to a bank or post office, or participate in a scavenger hunt to reinforce your communication and navigation skills in a new cultural context. Orientation is designed to foster your confidence and provide preparation for deeper immersion in the host culture.

Experiment Groups

Each Experiment group develops its own identity throughout the course of the program. Most likely, your group experience will be a significant part of your overall experience. During Experiment programs, your group and group leaders usually become like family, sharing in the joys and bonding over the challenges of your summer abroad.

Experiment groups promote an atmosphere of understanding, acceptance, learning, and growth. Just as Experimenters are introduced to the heterogeneity of their host country’s communities by their homestay families, so too do they learn an incredible amount about the diversity within their own country from their fellow Experimenters. Interestingly, many Experimenters learn as much about the United States as they do about the country they are visiting.

Your fellow Experimenters may be from different geographic, socioeconomic, ethnic, religious, or cultural backgrounds. While the size of each Experiment group varies, the average group consists of 14 Experimenters and two adult group leaders. Your group is matched with leaders selected specifically for your program because of their expertise.



Quick Facts about 2017 Experiment Groups

- 499 Experimenters traveled to 25 countries worldwide.
- Experimenters represented 22 nationalities.
- Experimenters came from 37 US states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico, as well as 10 countries outside the US: Australia, Canada, China, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Israel, Kenya, Morocco, the U.K., and Zambia.
- Experimenters played more than 12 sports and more than 8 types of musical instruments and were involved in over 200 student clubs and activities.
- Experimenters attended a wide range of both public and private schools. Groups contained between 9 and 16 students. The average group size was 13.
- During the summer, Experimenters spoke, in addition to English, Chinese (Cantonese and Mandarin), French, German, Italian, Japanese, Kiswahili, Korean, Mongolian, Moroccan Arabic, Setswana, Spanish, Thai, and Xhosa.
- Experimenters and Experiment group leaders contributed more than 250 hours of community service.
- Experimenters lived with 502 different homestay families and spent approximately 250 days in a homestay.

Group Leaders

Your Experiment group will be accompanied by two trained adult leaders who are selected because of their extensive experience living abroad and working with youth. Your leaders are also selected based on their competency in the culture of the region and (depending on the program needs) the language of the host culture.

Before departure, your leaders will participate in a week-long training that prepares them to implement successful programs. On program, your leaders will keep in close contact with our in-country partners, communicate with the US Experiment office, conduct group excursions, guide your group through discussions of your experiences, respond to emergency situations, and facilitate group dynamics.

Your group leaders will do their best to maximize the well-being of all Experimenters, so your group will have a meaningful and memorable learning experience. Throughout the program, your leaders work with you to increase your knowledge of your host country and culture; develop your

communication skills; cultivate new attitudes and awareness; and explore the program theme. At the end of the program, your leaders will help you to evaluate your experiences and consider how you can integrate what they learned about themselves and the world into their lives moving forward.

GETTING READY

Essential Participation Expectations:

The Experiment in International Living intentionally cultivates challenging learning environments and experiences through international travel and cross-cultural connection. Under such circumstances, Experimenters will routinely encounter novel situations that can be both exhilarating and uncomfortable. While challenging participants to step outside their comfort zones, The Experiment remains committed to supporting every Experimenter's safe and successful program experience.

The following expectations include many things that may be taken for granted in daily lives at home, but that also require far more intentionality when traveling abroad with a group in a rigorous educational program. Please read through these items carefully with you Experimenter, and consider how you can support them as they prepare emotionally and physically to handle such things while on program. The Essential Participation Expectations can also be found in the Experimenter Handbook.

A great resource for this reflection is The Experiment Wellness Guide. The Guide is a collection of tips & best practices from decades of Experiment programs and thousands of past Experimenters' experiences. The Expectations and Guide go hand in hand, with the former giving a sense of what to expect on any Experiment program and the latter empowering Experimenters to thrive on any Experiment program. The Guide can be found as an appendix to this Family handbook; it is also appended to the Experimenter Handbook.

If in reviewing these expectations with your Experimenter you have any questions, require any clarification, or would like any additional guidance on how to best prepare for program, please reach out to The Experiment.

Sara Martin, Participant Medical & Risk Assessment Officer, The Experiment in International Living, medicalteam@experiment.org, 802.258.3474

Communication

- You must **communicate proactively** with The Experiment about any concerns you have prior to your program.
- You must **communicate proactively** with your group leaders about any challenges you experience during your program.
- You must be prepared to function effectively in an environment with **reduced access to communication technologies**, including cellular reception, wifi, etc. and the normal routines of connectivity these technologies provide.

Culture

- You must be prepared to function in an environment where you **may not speak the language or where you are not familiar with the culture**.
- You must be prepared to tolerate **significant levels of ambivalence and ambiguity** that naturally occur when encountering a different culture.
- You must be prepared to function and to behave in a respectful manner in an environment that maintains **different arrangements for:**
 - Diet
 - Accommodation
 - Routine & Schedules
 - Communication technology
 - Sanitation
- You must be prepared to function and to behave in a respectful manner in an environment that **constructs cultural norms differently** from your own around:
 - Communications
 - Structures of and relationships to time
 - Personal space
- You must be prepared to function and behave in a respectful manner in an **environment with different predominating cultural views** from your own in areas that may include but are not limited to:
 - Gender roles
 - Sexual identity
 - Religion
 - Individualism
 - Politics

Travel & Day-to-Day Living

- You must be able to navigate and **travel independently to and from program meeting points** at program start and end.

- You must be prepared to function in an environment that may include extremely warm or cold temperatures, extremely humid or arid conditions, dust, tropical sun, air pollution, insects, noise, and/or other **environmental challenges**.
- You must be prepared to **manage your own personal finances**.
- You must be **responsible for all your belongings**.

Health, Safety, & Security

- You must be prepared to **manage all necessary physical self-care**, including maintaining adequate nutrition and hydration, dressing appropriately for environmental conditions, maintaining personal hygiene, and managing your personal prescription medication (if applicable).
- You must be able to understand and you must comply **with all provided health, safety and security information and directives**.
- You must **advocate for your health needs by communicating** with your Group Leader and/or host family.
- You must maintain a reasonable level of **situational awareness appropriate to circumstances**.

General

You must **comply with all Experiment program policies** as published in the Participant Handbook.

You must be **responsible for your own behavior**.

LUGGAGE & PACKING

Experimenters are limited to two pieces of luggage. This includes a carry-on. If you have more than two pieces of luggage you will be required to send the excess home from the group meeting place at your expense. Past group leaders have recommended using a traditional hiking backpack as your main piece of luggage and bringing a daypack as your carry-on as these are useful to have throughout the program. Please check with the airlines (both domestic and international) for the most current luggage weight requirements, restrictions, and fees.

Detailed packing instructions specific to your country and program will be provided. The following applies to participants traveling on any program:

Prescription Medications

Make sure to keep any prescription medications or vitamins in their original containers, and bring a sufficient amount for the entire duration of your

program, plus extra in case of travel delays. Bring a paper copy of your prescription from your doctor in case you lose your medication. Travel with all essential medications in your carry-on luggage. If you are diabetic and traveling with syringes, bring a certificate or letter from your doctor.

Rescue Medications

If you use any rescue medications and/or devices (i.e. medications intended for the immediate relief of serious symptoms like an EPI pen or albuterol inhaler) you must travel with one or more backup supplies of this medication or device. (e.g. A participant who uses an inhaler would travel with at least two inhalers, while a participant with a severe allergy might travel with several EPI pens.) Comparable therapies can be very difficult to obtain while traveling.

Other Medications

While you will not need an entire pharmacy, do bring the medication you normally use for minor ailments like body aches, upset stomach, bug bites, common cold, seasonal allergies, etc. A travel first aid kit from your local pharmacy is recommended. All medications should be in original packaging with the package insert if possible to avoid seizure at customs.

Toiletries & Sanitary Items

Please bring the toiletries and sanitary items you are accustomed to using. It is recommended to bring enough feminine hygiene products for the duration of the program. It is often difficult to find the items you are used to using while abroad.

Corrective Lenses

If you wear glasses or contact lenses, please bring extra pairs and extra contact cases, as these are often difficult to replace if lost. If you use contact solution to clean your lenses, bring plenty of the type you prefer as this can also be difficult to acquire abroad. Consider program itinerary and activities when choosing appropriate eyewear.

TRAVEL

All Experiment programs officially begin and end at a specific airport. On the day of departure, you will be responsible for getting to your group's meeting place five (5) hours before the scheduled departure of the group's international flight. When everyone is present, you will check in as a group with your group leaders, who hold your international ticket. The program officially ends when the group returns to their

gateway airport in the US. Upon your return to the US, please allow four (4) hours between your international arrival and your domestic departure. It will be your responsibility to make arrangements beyond this point.

Programs to the following locations begin and end at the following airports:

- Europe and Africa: John F. Kennedy (JFK) International Airport (NY)
- Latin America: Miami International Airport
- Asia and the Pacific: Los Angeles International Airport or San Francisco International Airport
- Mexico: Mexico City International Airport
- United States: Begins in New York City, ends in Atlanta.

Any costs associated with transportation to airports where the program begins are your responsibility.

You will receive program-specific details regarding travel preparation. This information will include:

- your international flight itinerary (except for programs in Mexico and the United States);
- information about your group's meeting time and place;
- information necessary to arrange domestic transportation;
- general travel recommendations, information, and newly established protocols for Americans traveling abroad.

If you received receive financial assistance from The Experiment you are required to travel internationally with your group. The Experiment will contact all participants as soon as our summer travel itineraries have been finalized. If you have any questions about international group travel, please contact Admissions at experiment@worldlearning.org. There is a \$250 inconvenience fee for traveling independently from the group.



COMMUNICATIONS

We have found over the years that too much contact from a participant's friends or family members back home in the US can cause undue pressure on the participant. If you are struggling with adjustments to the local customs, reminders of "how it is at home" can make things even more difficult. Remember that for the duration of the program our group leaders and in-country colleagues are available 24 hours a day and seven days a week to help participants with any problems or issues that may arise.

We understand the need for some direct communication between you and your family at home during the program. We recommend that, before departure, you sit down as a family to discuss the most comfortable and appropriate communication strategy (e.g., by emailing and/or phoning a specific number of times a week). Our recommendation for a reasonable amount of calls home is once a week, to accommodate busy schedules and to minimize homesickness.

Families and friends should note that orientation is a busy time and it may be difficult for Experimenters to find time to call or email home during the first few days of the program. The Experiment office in Vermont will email each family upon soon after each Experimenter's arrival in the host country. In addition, some rural excursions do not have access to internet and there will be areas where cell phone reception is minimal. Expect to communicate less during this period.

General Communication Information & Recommendations

- In our experience, the best and most reliable way to contact the US while abroad is through web-based communication such as: email, Skype, WhatsApp, iMessage, Facebook messenger, etc. We highly discourage you from purchasing an international cell phone plan. In our experience, international cell phone plans are expensive, unreliable, and likely to be lost or stolen. They also make it so that you cannot disconnect from home. This takes away from the immersive experience abroad and makes participants more homesick. Some host families have expressed disappointment if their Experimenters use their phones regularly. If you feel it's necessary to have service, you can contact your long-distance phone provider to see if they have an international calling plan.

- Internet cafés may be a useful resource when available during free time.
- If you wish to use your host family's telephone, please discuss this with them before attempting to do so. In some countries, even local calls incur additional fees.
- If you find yourself feeling sick, homesick, or dealing with other issues in-country, talk to your group leader first, because they are the ones who can immediately help you in-country. If you call your parents, they can only call the US Experiment office, who will call your group leader.



SPENDING MONEY

We recommend that you bring \$300 to \$800. Make your decision regarding how much spending money to bring based on the following: the economy of the country of your program, the length of your program, and, ultimately, your personal spending ability.

How should I bring my spending money?

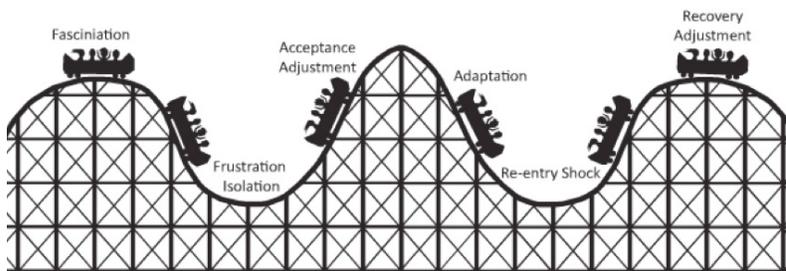
We recommend bringing \$100 in cash for times when ATMs may not be available. ATM cards with individual pin numbers from your bank are the most common way to access money while abroad. If possible, acquire a "chip and PIN" card from your bank. Please check your program-specific packing list and our website for additional information on recommendations relating to your country. Please refer to the personal funds section outlining ways to access cash.

CULTURAL ADAPTATION

You will soon be immersed in your Experiment program, and you are probably wondering how you will adapt to your new environment. After 85 years of sending Experimenters abroad, we have observed a predictable five-step cultural-adjustment curve that occurs in most cases:

- Initial Excitement – honeymoon phase
- Culture Shock – stress of initial adjustment
- Surface Adjustment - coming to terms with differences
- Unresolved Issues - recognizing certain deeper adjustment/integration issues
- Feeling at Home – attaining a level of comfort and acceptance

Cultural Adjustment Cycle



During the “honeymoon phase,” which usually occurs during orientation, everything is new and exciting. Once the homestay begins, you experience an initial culture shock. When meeting your host family for the first time and facing cultural differences, you may have questions about how to relate to their new environment. Fortunately, this period is short-lived, and soon you will make a surface adjustment—the unknowns begin to make sense. Generally, this surface adjustment is followed by a slight downward curve where minor challenges with your host family and group may surface. Finally, all the varied emotional ups and downs are replaced by a sense of feeling at home. You may now accept your new culture as just another way of living—accepting and understanding the differences. If you are feeling challenged at any point during your program, we encourage you to reach out to your group leaders for advice, reassurance, or support.

PREPARING FOR YOUR HOMESTAY

Almost all Experimenters report being the most nervous about the homestay. Experiment alumni also often say that the homestay is the most rewarding part of the program. If you have similar feelings, preparation is key.

Please take some time to discuss the following questions:

Experimenter questions to prepare for homestay: How would you want a host sibling to introduce themselves? How would you like to introduce yourself to your family? What activities would you like to do with your host family?

What would you do if the family doesn't immediately initiate an activity? How can you help “break the ice?”

What activities would you like to share with the family?

How are you feeling about the homestay in general?

Homestay representatives are currently placing your Experimenters with a host family. To find the best possible match, these placements often take time. Thus, final placements are not usually confirmed until mid-late June. After you have departed for your program, we will send you and your family the name and address of the host family that you will be staying with during the program.

Homestay and Homesickness

It is common for Experimenters to experience homesickness during key stages of the program, especially during the homestay. The first few days of the homestay can be challenging as you will be adjusting to a new schedule and family life. This part of the program is intended for participants to really immerse themselves in another culture, way of living, and way of communicating. This new experience can be one of the most challenging and one of the most rewarding aspects of the program. You will experience highs and lows during this stage. Please know that Experiment group leaders are there to support you throughout this process of adjustment. We have found that less communication to and from home will help you to adjust, and be fully present during this part of the program.



RE-ENTRY TIPS

When you return, you may notice a difference in your thinking and perspective. We encourage you to share your story with family members and friends. We have learned that when Experimenters reflect on and communicate what they've learned, their experience returning home becomes easier. We also invite you to share photos with us. If you would like advice on sharing story after the program, please let us know. There are many study abroad resources available online to help support your Experimenter:

- https://studyabroad.sit.edu/documents/studyabroad/parent_reentry_handbook.pdf
- <http://www.worldlearning.org/documents/worldlearning/studyabroad-reentry-toolkit.pdf>

After the program, you will also be invited to participate in The Experiment's re-entry workshops this fall, both in person (select areas) and online. At these workshops, you and your family will have the opportunity to share your experiences with other Experimenters, leaders, and staff members, as well as brainstorm ways to bring your experiences back to your everyday life at home.

We want to give you the opportunity to continue to develop your connections at home. Their participation in The Experiment opens up a network of over 100,000 World Learning alumni from over 140 countries!

The World Learning alumni network is an 80+ year old resource for continual learning and global networking. For example, did you know that the World Learning family includes:

SIT Study Abroad: provides undergraduates academically-rich, semester and summer programs with opportunities for field research and internships and an **International Honors Program** for comparative studies.

SIT Graduate Institute: offers internationally focused full-time and low-residency master's degrees, as well as certificate and professional development programs.

International Exchanges: World Learning brings emerging leaders from 140 countries annually to the United States for to strengthen links to US and international colleagues, provide new insights, and broaden views of core US values and culture.

International Development Programs: prepares communities worldwide to effectively address critical issues such as poverty and exclusion, youth leadership, educational access and quality, the spread of HIV/AIDS, the marginalization of women and children, and government accountability.

One thing these programs all have in common is the development of future leaders. As a member of the World Learning family, you are now eligible for **The Advancing Leaders Fellowship**. This program trains emerging leaders to make real change in their communities through social innovation. Fellows are selected through a competitive application process and have an opportunity to receive funding for their community projects. As an Experimenter, you are now an alum of the World Learning family. We hope that you will consider one of our other international programs in the future.

IN-COUNTRY BEHAVIOR & GUIDELINES

These guidelines have been developed based on our experience with World Learning programs through the years. We always keep in mind students' welfare, parents' expectations of the program, and our educational goals. We expect participants to adhere to these guidelines. Your group leaders may modify these guidelines in order to adapt to elements of the host culture or for special circumstances.

During orientation, when you and your group, and possibly other Experiment groups, are at a hotel or hostel: the in-country Experiment staff establish policies and guidelines in keeping with the host culture.

During the homestay, language study, and/or thematic component: policies and guidelines are those set by the host family and in-country staff and will be in keeping with the laws of the host country.

During city stays, trips/excursions, and other times in public accommodations: during the day, participants must be in a group of three or more at all times. During evening hours, students must be with a group leader. (The group leader may set a curfew if s/he feels a particular situation warrants doing so.)

General Rules

Experimenters are responsible for their own behavior.

The Experiment's Code of Conduct and the Conditions of Participation have been established for our participants and is appropriate for their summer experience. However, an Experimenter's conduct must be consistent with and respectful of what is expected by host families and others in the program's host country.

The Experiment group itself is multicultural, so each member's conduct must be sensitive to and respectful of all others in the group. Participants' conduct must reflect favorably on World Learning as an international educational organization, which has emphasized cross-cultural awareness, sensitivity, and respect around the world for more than 85 years.

The following activities are prohibited for reasons relating to safety, health, and legal liability: hitchhiking, driving any motorized vehicle, riding in a private aircraft, scuba diving, bungee jumping, body piercing, and/or tattooing. Engaging in these behaviors may lead to dismissal from the program.

Note: Please also see the Conditions of Participation and the Code of Conduct later in this handbook for more on the subject of inappropriate behavior that could lead to dismissal.

The Experiment's Code of Conduct & Procedures

While enrolled in any Experiment program, participants are representatives of their home countries and communities, and The Experiment at all times and must abide by the following Code of Conduct for the duration of the program. As a result, anyone enrolled in the program who engages in conduct unbecoming an Experiment participant will be violating this code and will be subject to appropriate review and disciplinary sanctions, up to and including dismissal from the program.

Participants and parents must acknowledge and accept that The Experiment has the authority at all times to establish rules of conduct necessary for the operation of the program, which includes participants' free time. They must also agree to accept the disciplinary action deemed appropriate by The Experiment, which may include, but is not limited to, dismissal from the program.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Attendance Policy

Experiment participants are expected to attend all scheduled orientations, activities, and excursions. In the case of illness, it is the participant's responsibility to notify Experiment group leaders. Any unauthorized violation of the attendance policy will result in disciplinary sanctions, up to and including dismissal from the program.

Technology

Experiment participants are expected to be mindful of the role technology plays in their experience as well as the experiences of participants, host families, and staff members. Cell phones, iPods, personal gaming devices, or other technologies that may distract a participant from group activities or engagement are not permitted to be used during those times. Group leaders will ask students to surrender technology used inappropriately and will complete behavior contracts outlining appropriate use. Devices will be held by the group leader until the end of group activities for the day. Group leaders may permit use of cell phones for academic activities related to curriculum and will notify students when this type of use is authorized.

The Experiment's Alcohol & Drug Policy

Experiment participants may not consume, buy, or possess alcohol at any time or for any reason during the program. Any alcohol infraction or suspected infraction while on an Experiment program will be subject to a disciplinary and administrative review. If it is determined in The Experiment's discretion that a violation of this policy has occurred the result will be disciplinary sanctions, up to and including dismissal from the program, at the sole discretion of The Experiment.

Prohibition of the consumption, possession or purchase of alcohol is in effect for the duration of the program, regardless of legal drinking age or cultural norms/expectations. All program participants and Group Leaders shall abstain from any alcohol use throughout this program and are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with this policy.

Experiment participants are not permitted to buy, sell, use or possess illegal drugs. Any drug infraction while on an Experiment program will be considered a violation of policy and will result in dismissal from the program.

While in a foreign country, U.S. citizens and third country nationals are subject to that country's laws and regulations, which can differ significantly from those of the United States or home country and which may not afford the protections available elsewhere. The Experiment will not assist in legal matters arising from a participant's involvement with or use of alcohol or illegal drugs or other illegal acts.

Online & Social Media Guidelines

The Experiment provides participants and parents with social media platforms, including but not limited to: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube, Tumblr Blogs, and others to gather information about our programs and connect with other Experimenters, parents, and Experiment staff.

Social media channels are important components of The Experiment's/World Learning's marketing and communications strategy and efforts to communicate about our work and mission. Experiment participants and parents are expected to follow the following guidelines. An Experiment participant who is seen to deliberately violate these guidelines, and the spirit of these expectations, may have social media privileges restricted, suspended or terminated. In extreme cases the Experiment may take further action, up to and including possible dismissal from Experiment programs. In the case of involuntary dismissal, The Experiment will not provide refunds.

Be respectful. Do not post statements that are false, misleading, obscene, defamatory, harassing, hateful, inflammatory, discriminatory, or in any respect damage the rights of others. Be aware that laws covering defamation, harassment, and other damaging speech often differ markedly depending on jurisdiction. Keep in mind that online speech is easily misinterpreted – nuance is often lost, particularly when communicating across cultures – so be careful when using humor or sarcasm in public forums.

Be aware that personal is not private. While you may use online platforms exclusively on a personal basis, be aware that anything you post online has the potential to become publicly – and widely – accessible. Even if you lock down a platform's privacy settings, accounts can be compromised. Depending on a platform's terms of service, content you delete may be retained indefinitely.

As a general rule, do not publish anything online you would not want to become publicly available to The Experiment participants, parents, or staff. In addition, review the privacy settings and terms of service

of platforms from time to time, as these are often changed, decreasing privacy by default.

You are responsible for what you post. The Experiment/World Learning disclaims any responsibility or liability for any errors, omissions, loss, or damages claimed or incurred due to any of your personal postings.

Obey the law. Be sure to observe copyright, trademark, privacy, financial disclosure and other laws.

The Experiment's Water Policy

Water activities, including swimming, wading, boating, and any other activities conducted in and around bodies of water, are inherently dangerous.

In accordance with The Experiment Conditions of Participation, some activities are expressly prohibited, and any activities deemed potentially dangerous to individual or group safety are not permitted and could be grounds for dismissal. Any water activity that is not specifically listed on The Experiment Program itinerary is deemed potentially dangerous and is not permitted, except under the limited conditions outlined below.

Experiment Pre-Approved Water Activities

Water activities that are specifically listed on the program itinerary provided to The Experiment in a timely manner are subject to review. Once approved, these activities must be supervised by a group leader and/or a lifeguard or otherwise qualified individual with access to safety equipment. Partners must be familiar with the location and have determined that, with adequate supervision, the location is safe for the water activity. In addition, water activities must follow the guidelines below in all cases.

Off-Itinerary Water Activities

The Experiment recognizes that during its programs, participants may want to engage in water activities recreationally. Group Leaders must assess the activity using Experiment guidelines and consult with local partners and their co-leader(s) in order to determine whether it is safe to allow off-itinerary recreational swimming, wading or other water activity, and must follow the guidelines below in all cases. The Experiment must be informed of participation in any off-itinerary water activities as soon as possible.

Guidelines for All Water Activities

a. Swimming abilities. Group leaders must conduct a verbal survey of each student's individual swimming abilities during program orientation and document the results. Program participants and leaders who do not know how to swim or who identify as not being strong swimmers may not be in water greater than knee-deep without wearing an approved personal flotation device / life jacket. The only exception to this rule is wading in enclosed swimming pools attended by a lifeguard – in this circumstance; non-swimmers may enter the water up to their waists.

b. Survey the scene. Immediately prior to group swimming, leaders should consider the proposed swimming site (including swimming pools) and consult with local partners and/or The Experiment before entering the water. This assessment could include evaluation of currents, tides, wildlife, geology, local knowledge and depth, etc. Be conservative. If leaders or local partners have any reservations at all about swimming at a location, find another place that has fewer hazards or postpone the outing.

c. Water Conditions. Wading or swimming in moving water may only be done in water in which one can safely stand up. Swimming in enclosed swimming pools or other bodies of water attended by a lifeguard, or itinerary-specific outings facilitated by trained guides such as snorkeling or boating are permitted. Swimming or wading is prohibited on beaches where the current is swift, where there are known riptides, or the area is locally or generally regarded as being unsafe. Participants and leaders should recognize that currents and undertows are often unpredictable and not visible. Participants and staff are required to leave the water immediately if there is any sign of these types of hazards. Swimming, not wading, in rivers and oceans must be part of an approved activity on the itinerary, or approved by The Experiment prior to the activity.

d. Supervision. Program participants and leaders should never swim alone. A group leader must be present at all times when participants are in the water as a group. Participants may not swim alone while in a homestay and an adult must be present.

e. Swimming pools. The use of swimming pools in hotels and during homestays is allowed as long as all the guidelines in this document are followed, including Supervision (Section d) and the rules of the swimming facility

f. Swimming while in homestays. Leaders and partners

should brief homestay parents on Experiment water guidelines contained in this document, as well as the participants' swimming abilities; families should be advised of weak or non-swimmers. A homestay parent must be present for Experimenters to swim, and the same assessment of water safety guidelines should be conducted by said adults.

g. Safety Discussion. Each leader must discuss his/her assessment and the known hazards, water conditions, and activity limitations with students prior to entering the water.

h. Emergency Response & Equipment. Emergency lifesaving services must be available within reasonable proximity and a rescue device (improvised or otherwise) must be available at all times on Experiment-sponsored water activities. This may require planning and purchase of a rescue device. Improvised rescue devices could include a ring buoy, cooler-top, pool noodle, log, etc.

i. No Alcohol. Alcohol consumption and possession is not permitted at any time.

j. Rescue. Neither program participants nor staff may attempt to swim out to rescue a person who may be drowning unless they are certified lifeguards or trained water rescuers. Instead, bystanders should call immediately for emergency response and try to reach the victim with thrown safety devices, if available.

k. Distance From Shore. Swimmers must stay close enough to shore that someone could throw them a rescue device if necessary.

l. Diving, Jumping. The countless dangers inherent in running into, jumping into or diving into water can result in head and spinal injuries, paralysis, and even death. Leaders must educate participants that all of these activities are prohibited.

m. Running. Leaders must let participants know they are prohibited from running near bodies of water. At many locations, terrain may be uneven or rocky, putting participants at risk of turning an ankle or taking a fall by entering an area where there is a rapid drop off.

n. Cold Water. Leaders must be particularly mindful that exposure to cold water for long periods of time can cause hypothermia, a condition which can cause the loss of motor skills, resulting in drowning.

o. Lightning and Inclement Weather. Leaders and participants must exit the water and seek shelter when lightning is 6 miles away (30 seconds between thunder and flash), and must remain suspended for 30 minutes after the last thunder is heard. Leaders must postpone any water activity in inclement weather, especially any weather which obscures visibility or hearing.

p. Indigenous Species. In all bodies of water, leaders and participants should study the area before they swim to make themselves as aware as possible of the various types of aquatic life present and the various inherent dangers these species may pose. Some common species that swimmers encounter range from leeches to eels, jellyfish, sharks, and snakes. Others may include waterborne illnesses, parasites, and microbial life. Keep in mind that animals – like people – often seek the water in attempts to cool off.

q. Schistosomiasis. Schistosomiasis is a parasitic infection that can be contracted in fresh water in certain tropical countries. Participants may not swim or wade in fresh water in countries listed as having Schistosomiasis in the country-specific World Learning Health Guidelines.

r. Say “No.” As discussed throughout this document and during the leader training workshop, leaders should avoid unsafe situations where they may have to act beyond their ability and training.

Sexual Misconduct & Harassment Policy Statement

Sexual harassment, nonconsensual sexual contact, nonconsensual sexual intercourse, sexual exploitation, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking are prohibited, and will not be tolerated by any program of the Experiment in International Living (The Experiment). Any act or attempted act that falls within the definition of sexual harassment, nonconsensual sexual contact, nonconsensual sexual intercourse, sexual exploitation, domestic violence, dating violence, or stalking is a violation of The Experiment policy. Disciplinary sanctions for any member of The Experiment community engaging in such conduct may include suspension or dismissal from The Experiment, termination of employment and referral for criminal investigation and prosecution by local law enforcement. Victims of any such conduct are encouraged to contact the Group Leaders for support and assistance (services are available to all regardless of gender identity and expression or sexual orientation). All other Experiment staff and partners are required to report such conduct to The

Experiment staff in Brattleboro, Vermont, USA. Students and staff from other countries must abide by U.S. federal laws and regulations as well as Experiment policies while members of this community. Students and/or staff involved in programs in countries other than the United States must abide by U.S. laws and regulations while overseas, as well as observe local laws and regulations of their host-country. Sexual harassment and sexual assault, as defined below, are never acceptable, although a special effort is made to explain and clarify the rules for those from other cultures who may not be familiar with such a code of behavior. Please note that The Experiment, a program of World Learning, has no control over the behavior of host country individuals who are not associated with the program and cannot necessarily prevent harassment toward students and others in these locations where it may be considered culturally acceptable or otherwise.

Reason for the Policy

The Experiment is committed to creating and maintaining a community in which its members are free from all forms of harassment, exploitation, intimidation, and violence. The Experiment recognizes the long-lasting and detrimental effects of sexual misconduct and assault on the individual victim, on the entire community, and on The Experiment’s mission to prepare its participants to lead productive, responsible, and creative lives.

Applicability of the Policy

This policy applies to all members of The Experiment community and our overseas partners.

Notice of Non-Discrimination

The Experiment does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnic or national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, age, ancestry, disability, military status, veteran status, or other non-merit reasons, in admissions, educational programs, or activities and employment, and complies with all applicable federal and state laws regarding nondiscrimination and affirmative action, including Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Definition of Prohibited Acts

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal

communication of an intimidating, hostile, or offensive sexual nature when:

1. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or education; or
2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for academic or employment decisions affecting that individual; or
3. Such conduct has the effect of substantially interfering with an individual's academic or job performance or creating a hostile, intimidating, or offensive employment, educational, or living environment for the person as a participant and/or employee.

A hostile environment is created when sexual harassment is:

- sufficiently severe; or
- persistent or pervasive, and objectively offensive.

Examples of conduct which may constitute sexual harassment include but are not limited to: conditioning a promotion, pay raise, or course grade upon the receipt of sexual favors; unwelcome hugging, kissing, embracing, patting, pinching, or any other unwelcome touching; leering; persistent unwelcome social invitations; use of vulgar language of a sexual nature; graphic comments about a person's body; displaying sexually explicit pictures or other materials; making sexually suggestive comments or telling sexually suggestive or "dirty" jokes or stories; asking an employee or participant questions about his or her sex life; and/or continuing to engage in any such behavior if it is known or should be known that the behavior is unwelcome.

Nonconsensual Sexual Contact

Nonconsensual sexual contact is defined as any intentional sexual touching, however slight, with any body part or object by a person upon another person that is without consent and/or by force.

Examples of sexual contact include, but are not limited to: intentional contact with the breasts, buttock, groin, or genitals, or touching another with any of these body parts, or making another touch you or themselves with or on any of these body parts; or any other intentional bodily contact in a sexual manner.

Nonconsensual Sexual Intercourse

Nonconsensual sexual intercourse is defined as any sexual intercourse, however slight, with any body part or object, by a person upon another person that is without consent and/or by force.

Examples of sexual intercourse include, but are not limited to: vaginal or anal penetration by a penis, finger, tongue, or object, and oral copulation (mouth to genital contact), no matter how slight the penetration or contact.

Sexual Exploitation

Sexual Exploitation occurs when one person takes nonconsensual or abusive sexual advantage of another for his/her own advantage or benefit, or to benefit or advantage anyone other than the one being exploited, and that behavior does not otherwise constitute one of the other sexual misconduct offenses. Examples of sexual exploitation include, but are not limited to: invasion of sexual privacy; prostituting another person; nonconsensual digital, video, or audio recording of nudity or sexual activity; unauthorized sharing or distribution of digital, video, or audio recording of nudity or sexual activity; engaging in voyeurism; going beyond the boundaries of consent (such as letting your friend hide in the closet to watch you having consensual sex); knowingly exposing someone to or transmitting an STI, STD, or HIV to another person; intentionally or recklessly exposing one's genitals in nonconsensual circumstances; or inducing another to expose their genitals.

Domestic Violence

Domestic violence may include violent acts by a current or former spouse; by a person with whom the victim shares a child in common; by a person who is or has cohabitated with the victim as a spouse; by a person similarly situated to a spouse; between a parent and child; between members of the same household in an intimate relationship; or by any other person similarly situated. Domestic violence can be physical, sexual, emotional, or economic in nature.

Dating Violence

Dating violence can be violence or abusive behavior used by one partner to gain or maintain control over another partner. It can be violence committed by a person who is or has been in a social, romantic, or intimate relationship with the victim. The existence of such a relationship will be determined by factors such as the length of the relationship, the type of relationship, and the frequency of interaction between the persons involved.

Stalking

Stalking is a series of unwanted or obsessive attention, behaviors, or actions toward a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to fear for his or her safety or the safety of others or to suffer substantial emotional distress. Stalking may involve following, lying in wait for, or harassing a person by demonstrating a pattern of conduct composed of two or more acts evidencing a continuity of purpose. Stalking may include the monitoring of an individual online or involve the use of social media, email, or other technology. It may also include unwanted observation or surveillance.

General Definitions

Consent

Consent is defined as willingly giving permission or agreement to a particular sexual activity or behavior, without coercion, fear, or threat of harm, or other unwanted consequences. Consent is an informed, voluntary agreement to participate in a specific act. Consent is communicated either by words or clear, unambiguous actions that are not achieved through manipulation, intimidation, fear or other acts that a reasonable person would construe as coercion. Consent cannot be given by one who is mentally or physically incapable of giving clear consent at the time of the sexual activity. It is the responsibility of any person who wants to engage in a sexual activity with another person to ensure that they have the affirmative, expressed, and unequivocal consent of that other person to engage in the particular sexual activity. Silence, lack of protest or lack of resistance does not mean consent. The existence of a dating relationship between the persons involved or the fact of a past sexual relationship is not a sufficient basis to assume consent. Consent is present only where an individual is fully conscious, and is not incapacitated due to physical challenge and/or helplessness, or incapacitation due to alcohol or other substances.

Reporting Party

The reporting party is a person who alleges that they are the victim of a violation of Experiment policy.

Respondent

The respondent is a person who has been accused of an alleged violation of Experiment policy.

Safe Bystander Interventions

Observers of a sexual assault or other types of gender- or intimate partner-based misconduct, such as domestic violence, dating violence, or stalking, may

be able to help the victim. However, it is important that you do so in a positive manner and in a way that keeps you and the victim safe. Appropriate interventions will depend on the situation. Safe and appropriate options for bystanders may include calling the police to report violent or potentially violent situations, intervening if you believe someone is in a potentially uncomfortable or unsafe situation, and/or encouraging the target of such conduct to report the incident and seek support.

Retaliation

The Experiment prohibits retaliation against any individual who reports discrimination or harassment or participates in an investigation of such reports. Any attempt by a member of The Experiment community or our overseas partners to intimidate, penalize, or threaten a person who reports or who is otherwise involved or cooperating in, a report of discrimination, misconduct, or harassment is strictly prohibited. Any person found to have participated in an act of retaliation will be disciplined accordingly.

Procedures

The Experiment's greatest concern is for the safety and physical and mental health of all its participants, partners, and staff. The Experiment is committed to maintaining a welcoming and supportive educational climate. Therefore, the following procedures are available to all participants, group leaders, and staff who feel they have experienced or witnessed gender-based misconduct, including sexual harassment and gender discrimination as discussed above.

Reporting Misconduct

All members of The Experiment community who experience, witness, or hear about an incident of sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment and sexual assault, are encouraged to immediately contact the appropriate Group Leaders or, if necessary, The Experiment management team in Vermont. In an emergency, please call 911 or contact local law enforcement in the case of overseas programs. There is no time limit on how long after an incident you can make a report of misconduct; however, The Experiment's ability to respond to a report may be hindered by the length of time between the alleged misconduct and the report itself.

Once The Experiment is informed of alleged misconduct, The Experiment staff and risk management team will work with the relevant parties on next steps. The Experiment will always reach out to the reporting party to both gather more information and to provide support. All reports of alleged misconduct will be investigated thoroughly, impartially, and promptly, whether reports of such misconduct are made formally or informally. The Experiment will facilitate the implementation of measures to stop the behavior, and take steps to prevent its recurrence. Appropriate corrective action will be taken, including, but not limited to, termination or expulsion. Parental notification will occur in accordance with Vermont law and The Experiment/World Learning policy.

The Experiment management team will help the parties involved access appropriate medical and/or mental health services; discuss possible interim arrangements during the investigation process; help students understand and be part of the parental notification process; and answer questions along the way.

Experiment students, staff, and overseas partners will receive a copy of the Sexual Harassment Policy and will be informed that any incident of harassment and/or assault should be reported to one of the following persons:

On-site contacts: Group Leaders
Designated Partner Contact – in-country
Experiment On-call emergency team: 802-258-3481

Kirstin French, Operations Manager: 802-258-3418,
kirstin.french@worldlearning.org

Christina Thomas, Director of Operations: 202-464-8542, christina.thomas@worldlearning.org

If an individual who makes a report insists that his or her name or other identifiable information not be revealed, and The Experiment is able to respect that request, the individual must understand that The Experiment will be unable to conduct an investigation into the particular incident or pursue disciplinary action against the alleged perpetrator.

Upon receipt of a report, The Experiment will make all reasonable efforts to maintain confidentiality and respect the privacy of those involved. The Experiment understands that reports of this nature can be difficult, emotional and stressful. Therefore, The Experiment will only share information as is

needed to conduct a prompt, thorough and effective investigation. Even if the reporting party asks that The Experiment not pursue an investigation, or decides to attempt to resolve the situation informally, The Experiment may still investigate the allegations and address the conduct as may be warranted under the circumstances.

The Experiment will contact participants' parents in the case of a report of sexual misconduct.

Depending on the type of conduct and the parties involved, The Experiment may contact local law enforcement. The Experiment will continue its own investigation into the alleged conduct, regardless of whether the police decide to pursue their own investigation. The Experiment will cooperate with all police investigations and will honor and enforce any judicial no-contact, restraining, or protective orders the parties may obtain outside The Experiment process.

Dual Relationships

Employees and participants should be aware of conflicts of interest that are inherent in personal relationships where professional and educational careers are also involved, as well as potential abuses of authority. This is especially true of amorous or sexual relationships between group leaders and participants or between staff/administrators and participants, given the inherently unequal structure of power between them, and the fact that most Experiment participants are minors.

It is the policy of The Experiment that group leaders, overseas partners, and administrators are not permitted to engage in consensual sexual relationships with participants of The Experiment. Should a charge of sexual harassment arise from such a relationship, the burden and cost of providing a defense falls on the group leader or staff/administrator. Members of The Experiment community should know that, in such instances, defenses are extraordinarily difficult to prove.

Prohibited Behavior/Reasons for Dismissal

Violations of the Experiment Code of Conduct that can result in dismissal from the program include, but are not restricted to, the following:

- Violation of any of the Experiment Conditions of Participation including but not limited to leaving the scheduled program at any time without express written permission from the program director and, because of the possible danger involved, driving motor or motorized vehicles; riding in noncommercial airplanes, any type of aircraft, or motorized motorcycle; hitchhiking; bungee jumping; scuba diving; and any other activity designated by World Learning, the parent organization of The Experiment in International Living, as dangerous.
- Violation of the alcohol or drug policy
- Criminal behavior or violation of local laws
- Violation of host family guidelines and/or rules
- Self-endangerment, including involvement in activities/behavior that could result in personal harm, including, but not limited to, frequenting dangerous places, associating with criminals, being intoxicated, etc.
- Abusive language toward Experiment staff, host families, or other participants
- Any form of sexual harassment
- Disorderly, indecent, or obscene conduct, gestures, or actions
- Violent behavior directed toward others
- Theft or vandalism
- Participation in strikes, demonstrations, or other political gatherings
- Property damage to any of the following: Experiment/partner facilities, hotels/hostels, and the host family's property
- Conduct unbecoming an Experiment participant, including, but not limited to, violation of any Experiment policies

Procedures for the Violation of the Experiment Code of Conduct and Other Experiment Policies

In the event of a violation of the Experiment Code of Conduct or any other Experiment policies, there will be an investigation of the circumstances, and the participant(s) involved will be subject to an administrative review process.

The procedures following a violation include:

1. Incident Reporting

If a participant violates the Experiment Code of Conduct, the group leader(s) or in-country partner will contact World Learning staff who will complete an on-site incident report outlining the details of the incident. Involved participants will be provided with the opportunity to give any additional information pertaining to the incident. Any additional information (police reports, photographs, etc.) will be sent to Experiment headquarters in Brattleboro, Vermont, for the administrative review process.

2. Administrative Review Process

The incident report will be reviewed by The Experiment's directors. During this review, disciplinary sanction(s) may be taken against the participant(s). If the participant(s) denies involvement in the Code of Conduct violation, the review will focus on the available reports and other pertinent information. The Experiment notifies parents/guardians of a behavior contract once it has been created. Participant(s) and parents/guardians will be notified in writing as soon as possible after a decision has been reached. Disciplinary sanctions for violations are in effect as soon as the participant(s) and parents/guardians have been notified either verbally or in writing.

3. Disciplinary Sanctions

Disciplinary sanctions include, but are not restricted to, the following:

- Restitution: Charges to be paid for damages or theft
- Loss of privileges: Use of facilities, participation in activities or excursions. No refund will be given for missed activities or excursions.
- Disciplinary probation: Violation of probationary terms and conditions will result in immediate dismissal from the Experiment program.
- Immediate dismissal: The immediate removal of a participant from the Experiment program

Consequences of Dismissal

Parents and/or guardians of a dismissed participant are responsible for purchasing a one-way return airline ticket and for covering all transportation fees to the airport for their child and accompanying Experiment staff. Dismissed participants will not be entitled to a refund of fees and are responsible for all non-recoverable costs incurred by The Experiment.

APPENDIX: THE EXPERIMENT WELLNESS GUIDE

Welcome to The Experiment Wellness Guide. The Guide offers points of consideration and preparatory tips relevant to all Experimenters. The considerations and tips collected here are rooted in The Experiment's educational philosophy, our decades of experience supporting youth traveling abroad, and recent research into adolescent development. The Guide is intimately related to our Essential Participation Expectations (EPE): the EPE let you know what to expect from any Experiment program, while the Wellness Guide empowers you to thrive on any Experiment Program.

The Guide is organized into sections which mirror the EPE so that you can use these two resources together. If something raises a question or concern for you in the EPE, there are considerations or tips to be found for it here in the Guide!

Each section of the Guide contains a combination of:

- **Things to Consider** – Perspectives on traveling abroad you might not have thought about before.
- **Questions to Ask Yourself** – The answers to these questions may offer insight into your own tendencies or preferences.
- **Things to Do** – Activities, exercises, and best practices to prepare you for a successful program experience.

Some sections will include all three of these categories, others only one or two. Most Things to Consider and Questions to Ask Yourself pertain to your preparation for program before you depart, while Things to Do include suggestions both for before and during your program.

As an Experimenter, your wellness and success on program are your responsibility, but you never need to shoulder that responsibility alone. Your Group Leaders, fellow Experimenters, Host Families, Experiment Staff, as well as family and mentors at home are all engaged in supporting your experience in different capacities. This Guide is not your ultimate resource: it is a starting point for your ownership of your wellness and for great conversations with your support network before, during, and after program.

Remember that Experimenters and families can reach The Experiment Team at **1-800-345-2929** before the

program and **1-802-251-1700** during the program. Our Admissions (before program departure) and On-Call (during program) Teams are here to answer your questions and address your concerns. Please reference Family Handbook Section IV: Program Safety and Communications Abroad for full instructions for contacting out Teams.

Let's prepare for an incredible summer!

COMMUNICATION

Proactive Communication

Things to Consider

- The Experiment is best able to support your wellness on program if we have thorough information regarding your physical and mental health, anticipated challenges, and expectations before you depart for program.
- It is far easier to change a plan than to make a plan: Wellness Plans are an appropriate tool for participants and families interested in structuring their approach to participant wellness on program.
- While Experimenters are on program, Group Leaders should be their first point of communication for any concern or question.
- If an Experimenter calls home with a concern while on program before communicating with a Group Leader, families then call staff at The Experiment Office, who in turn call the Group Leader. Help us close this loop by communicating directly with your Group Leaders.
- *For Experimenters:* Your Group Leaders will set clear expectations for how and when to communicate with them while you are on program (e.g. check-ins with the group, individual check-ins, homestay visits, etc.).
- *For Families:* While your Experimenter is on program, please do not communicate directly with their Group Leaders; this can be a distraction from the Leaders' focus on the group. Please contact The Experiment Team directly at 1-802-251-1700.

Things to Do

- Reach out to The Experiment with any concerns prior to your program. (1-800-345-2929)
- *For Experimenters:* While on program, if you are in doubt about anything at all, communicate with your Group Leaders.
- *For Families:* While your teen is on program, reach out to The Experiment Team with any updates, questions, or concerns at 1-802-251-1700.

- *For Families:* While your Experimenter is on program, **follow along with our blog!**

Communication Technologies

Things to Consider

- While on your Experiment program, you may or may not have access to communication technologies you use at home and the comfort and connectivity these can provide.
- Technologies like smartphones provide us with a constant source of stimulation and reward and can lead to challenges with impulse control and addictive behaviors.
- The ability for Experimenters to keep in constant contact with home through phones and social media on some programs may inhibit group dynamic development and homestay integration on program, and may increase feelings of homesickness.
- The Experiment prioritizes an intentional culture of presence in the experience. Constant connectivity to home can undermine this culture in the group.

Questions to Ask Yourself

- *When I am feeling excited, stressed, bored, etc. do I automatically reach for my phone to let someone know about it, play games, or browse?*
- *Am I able to go to sleep at night without your phone close by?*
- *How important is it for me to be up-to-date on what friends and family are doing via social media?*
- *How do I feel when I misplace my phone or do not have service?*

Things to Do

- Before program, work with your family to make a communication plan outlining how and how often you will communicate with home. The Experiment Team recommends once a week as a good option.
- Before program, practice disconnecting from your normal technology use for periods of time (e.g. a few hours a day, one full day, a week, etc.)
 - o *Pay attention to how you feel while disconnected from technology and whether you find it easy or difficult to meet your practice goals.*
 - o *Let friends and family know why you are practicing disconnecting.*
 - o *Try reaching out to the people with or near you while you are practicing. (e.g. Talking with a sibling instead of texting a friend.)*

o Go to bed at night with your phone left in another room and practice using an alarm clock that is not your phone.

- Before program, prepare to connect with the people you care about in different ways while you are traveling:
 - o *Get prints made of special photos of your family and friends from home to share with your host family and fellow Experimenters.*
 - o *Collect addresses to send postcards or letters. (Everyone loves getting mail with an international stamp on it!)*
 - o *Ask family and friends to write and seal letters for you to carry with you and open on program.*
 - o *Ask a language teacher to write you a letter in the language of the country in which you will be traveling to carry on program and read a few weeks in after you've been practicing your language skills.*
- On program, invest in your group and in being present in the experience:
 - o *Think about leaving your phone at home entirely.*
 - o *If you do bring your phone, try leaving your phone on airplane mode: you'll still be able to take amazing pictures!*
 - o *Bring a camera that isn't your phone (e.g. instant, digital, single use, etc.) or art supplies (e.g. sketching pencils, watercolors, etc.) to capture your memories.*
 - o *If you feel an impulse to text someone at home or to post to social media, talk to a fellow Experimenter instead.*
 - o *Write what you would text or post on a post card instead.*
 - o *Make a deal with fellow Experimenters to support each other in being present with your group and experience on program.*
 - o *Suggest creating a group agreement around intentional presence and technology use on program when your group is developing norms.*

CULTURE

Language & Cultural Familiarity

Things to Consider

- We use language to interact with the world all day, every day and can easily come to take its central role for granted.
- Home cultures structure our norms, views, and assumptions in ways which may not be immediately apparent to us and only come to

- Culture is more than country. No home or host country is a monolith of uniform culture.
- Similarly, individuals in the culture of a program destination have their own norms, views, and assumptions structured by that culture.
- As a visitor to another culture, you may have a worldview fundamentally different from the worldview of individuals within that culture.
- This difference can be uncomfortable.
- Encountering different worldviews also provides opportunities for reflection on home community cultures.
- As an Experimenter, you are not only encountering the cultures of your program country, you are also engaged in building the culture of your Experiment group.
- Your fellow Experimenters and Group Leaders also represent unique cultural backgrounds and experiences, and cultural diversity within the group will add another lens of cultural encounter to your Experiment experience.

Questions to Ask Yourself

- *What defines my own culture? What does culture mean to me?*
- *Imagine explaining your culture to someone: What would they need to know? Would I want to know the same kinds of things about the culture of my program country?*

Things to Do

- Before program, practice your language skills:
 - o *Practice speaking with teachers, mentors, friends, and family in a language of your program country.*
 - o *If available, watch TV or movies in a language of your program country to exercise your comprehension skills.*
 - o *If available, watch TV or movies in a language with which you have no familiarity at all. Pay attention to how much you can understand about the story from context, facial expressions, outcomes, etc.*
- Before program, exercise your cultural skills:
 - o *Consume media (books, music, movies, TV, news) produced in your program country and reflect on how well you feel you understand the characters and ideas represented. Make note of questions that come up for you.*
 - o *Consume media (books, music, movies, TV, news) produced in a country or culture with which you have no familiarity at all. Pay attention to what you learn and what questions come up for you.*
- On program, challenge yourself and support your fellow Experimenters in immersing in the local language and culture:

- o *Use local language whenever possible, even if you speak only a few phrases.*
- o *Try speaking with your fellow Experimenters and Group Leaders in the local language to increase your level of immersion.*
- o *Engage with your host family around language and culture: practice your language with host siblings and share insights into each other's cultural norms and views.*
- o *Learn some jokes in the local language.*

Ambivalence & Ambiguity

Things to Consider

- When traveling internationally and cross-culturally, we routinely encounter the unexpected in various contexts (e.g. changed travel plans, customs and behaviors very different from our own, new settings and environments, etc.)
- When one or two unexpected things come up in daily life, it is easy to focus attention on addressing them while everything else continues as expected.
- It is more challenging to manage the multitude of new and unexpected things that can come up while traveling on an Experiment program.

Questions to Ask Yourself

- *Do I like to know and fully understand everything that is happening?*
- *How do I react when schedules and plans change?*
- *How do I react when I don't understand a social or cultural situation?*

Things to Do

- Before program, practice expecting the unexpected and encountering ambiguity:
 - o *Try spending a day without having a plan. Or have your friends or family plan a day you know nothing about and then go along for the ride.*
 - o *If you like board games, try playing a new one without reading the rules.*
 - o *Open a book you've never read before to the middle and start reading. How do you feel about not having backstory and context?*
- On program, remember that it is completely normal to feel overwhelmed when encountering a lot of new people and situations:
 - o *Avoid making assumptions.*
 - o *Listen carefully.*
 - o *Be patient with others and with yourself.*

Differing Living Arrangements

Things to Consider

- There will always be a difference between your life at home and your life on program.
- You will be doing some or all of these things:
 - *Eating new kinds of food – your digestion may take time to adjust.*
 - *Sleeping in a different arrangement – your sleep routines may take time to settle out.*
 - *Conducting your day at a different pace or with a different structure – you may not be able to follow certain routines from home and you may be expected to participate in routines totally new to you.*
 - *Your technology use will be different – please see the Communication Technology section above.*
 - *Managing hygiene and sanitation differently – new routines may take time to adjust in each location you visit in your host country.*
- Be wary of the assumption that your arrangements for these things at home represent the “right way” and that arrangements on program are inferior. Living arrangements on program will be different, and the challenge of transition can make difference feel like *inferiority*.
- Your fellow Experimenters may have different arrangements for all these things at home as well.

Differing Cultural Norms

Things to Consider

- Culture structures the ways in which we communicate, how we think about time, and what we consider our personal space. Within our own cultures and communities, these norms are often pervasive and not immediately obvious to us.
- Communication is much more than the words we say. It can also involve:
 - *Body language*
 - *Gesture*
 - *Tone of voice*
 - *Form of address*
 - *Order of speaking*
 - *Context of situation*
- Time is a way to mark the passage of experience (e.g. we spent three hours at the school, or we wandered around the market until sunset) and a way to coordinate plans with others (e.g. I’ll meet you in the square at 8:30am, or we should go for a run once it’s light out).

Personal space expectations and standards vary from individual to individual and across cultures.

Questions to Ask Yourself

- *How do I communicate with and without words?*
- *How do I think about time? Can I imagine other ways to use or understand time?*
- *How do I feel about my personal space? Have I ever experienced a mismatch in personal space preferences in my life at home?*

Things to Do

- Watch a movie on mute or listen without watching the visuals. Think about what aspects of the situation you might miss or misconstrue without access to all avenues of communication.
- Try organizing your day with a different time structure:
 - *If you schedule a lot of things by specific numerical times, try not looking at any timepieces for the day and instead do things when the sunlight changes, when you get hungry, or at other significant markers in your day.*
 - *If you generally do not look at timepieces throughout the day but rely on other cues, try checking the time and paying careful attention to how you know when to do things.*
- Research the conventions around personal space in the culture where you will be traveling.
- Practice greeting family and friends at home with the conventions of your host country (e.g. kisses on the cheek, bowing, etc.)
- Pay close attention to your own comfortable boundaries of personal space: How do you feel or react when someone enters your personal space or you enter someone else’s?



Differing Cultural Views

Things to Consider

- Different cultural views of gender roles, sexual identity, religion, individualism, politics, etc. represent different ways of looking at the world.
- These views can cause tension when generalizations and assumptions about views or persons overwhelm our experiences.
- This tension can be both a challenge to navigate and an opportunity to build connection across different views and to critically examine our own.

Questions to Ask Yourself

- *Have I ever encountered groups or individuals with views different from my own?*
- *Have I ever experienced generalizations or assumptions made about me and my views?*
- *Have I ever discussed my views with someone who holds different views? Hold similar views? How did each conversation go? What was important to me in each conversation?*

TRAVEL & DAY-TO-DAY LIVING

Travel

Things to Consider

- International travel, especially for the first time, can be understandably daunting.
- The Experiment Team is available to support you throughout your travel experience, on-call as you make your way to the group meeting location (call 1-802-251-1700), and through the Group Leaders once you join the group.
- Careful preparation on your part will make your travel go smoothly and help us support you quickly and efficiently if you need it.

Things to Do

- Make a travel-day checklist to account for all things you need to do that day and all the documents you need to carry.
- Leave copies of all travel documents (e.g. passport, visa, vaccination certificates, etc.) at home in case of loss or other problems.
- Program The Experiment on-call number (1-802-251-1700) into your phone and write it on a slip of paper which you keep with your passport or wallet.
- Practice with your luggage and carry-on to

determine the best way of accessing the travel documents you will need to display in the airport easily.

- Review the layouts of any domestic airports you will be transiting to familiarize yourself with routes you will need to take.

Environmental Challenges

Things to Consider

- The environment of your host country may be very different from that of your home, and you may be traveling between very different environments within your host country.
- Preparation and flexibility are crucial as you navigate environmental transitions and extremes.
- Practicing intentional self-care makes encountering environmental extremes easier.
- Certain environmental conditions may feel familiar from home, but consequences of exposure may be different in your host country. (e.g. You may not mind getting mosquito bites in temperate locations, but in tropical areas mosquito species may be vectors for various diseases.)
- Some of your fellow Experimenters may have more experience with an environmental condition than you, or vice versa.
- Your host family may have excellent strategies for managing challenging environmental conditions, and they may be consciously aware of these strategies or use them subconsciously as parts of their daily routine.

Questions to Ask Yourself

- *Are there any environments I find particularly challenging or enjoyable?*
- *What do I do to manage environmental challenges in my home or familiar locations?*

Things to Do

- Before program:
 - o Pack layers with sun and thermal protection in mind.
 - o Practice a sunscreen routine at home to establish good sunscreen habits for program.
 - o Practice an insect repellent routine at home to establish good application habits for program.
- On program:
 - o Support your fellow Experimenters—exchange advice on how to manage environmental challenges.

Personal Finances

Things to Consider

- Your Experiment program covers all the necessities of food and accommodation.
- Proactive communication with your bank is the best way to prepare for smooth experiences with a debit card abroad.
- Personal finances are personal. Be aware that finance availability and accessibility will be different for every member of your Experiment group. Keep this in mind not only when discussing funds, but also when spending them.
- Your trip is several weeks in length and involves multiple destinations! Bear this in mind when you budget and when you are spending.

Things to Do

- Consult the Personal Funds Abroad resources provided by The Experiment.
- Have a family discussion around personal finances and create a budget plan for your trip.
- Contact your bank to set up a debit card for your trip or to place a travel notice on any accounts you will be using while abroad.
- Research exchange rates to get a sense of how much local currency you should expect to receive.
- Research the denominations of currency in your host country to get a sense of what bills or coins you should be getting as change when you make a transaction.
- Practice using a money belt.
- Do not carry large amounts of cash while on program.
- Practice budgeting and monitoring how much you spend (and on what) in your daily life at home.

Managing Your Belongings

Things to Consider

- Actions, their impacts, and personal responsibility are magnified in group environments.
- On your Experiment program you will be completely responsible for managing your belongings and packing your bags as you move from place.
- You will be moving between multiple locations throughout your Experiment program (e.g. orientation, homestay, excursions) and will thus be

packing and unpacking your bag multiple times.

- Your host family—particularly younger host siblings—may be curious about your luggage and belongings.

Questions to Ask Yourself

- *Have I ever lived in a shared space before?*
- *Have I ever been completely responsible for my belongings while traveling before?*
- *Do I own anything that I would be sad about for more than one day if I lost it? Leave that thing at home.*
- *What do I really need?*

Things to Do

- Carry with you only what you need. This applies both to packing at home for the whole trip and packing day-to-day for excursions to museums, schools, etc.
- Create a personal packing list based on your program packing list at home. List the specific items you will be bringing and create multiple copies of the list to bring along for multiple relocations on program.
- Assign crucial items (e.g. passport, medications, glasses, etc.) to specific locations in your bag and always repack them in that location.
- Practice packing and unpacking your bag.
- Practice living out of your bag for a few days at home.



HEALTH, SAFETY, & SUPPORT

Physical Self-Care

Things to Consider

- Proactive self-care practices (nutrition and hydration, environmentally appropriate dress and sun-protection, personal hygiene, medication routines, etc.) are the best way to stay comfortable and healthy on program.
- In new environments, you may need to take care of yourself in new ways, different from your routines at home.
- While traveling, small discomforts and minor problems can be magnified quickly. Hot spots can become blisters, blisters can become open, painful, and susceptible to infection. Think about all aspects of physical self-care as ways to catch issues at the hot-spot stage.

Questions to Ask Yourself

- *What physical self-care routines do I practice at home?*
- *Is sole responsibility for any aspects of my physical self-care new to me?*

Things to Do

- Nutrition and Hydration:
 - o *Pay attention to the foods you normally eat at home and how they make you feel. Pay particular attention to types of food (e.g. veggies, grains, meat, dairy) rather than specifics. Make thoughtful food choices on program based on what you know makes you feel healthy.*
 - o *Try new foods to broaden your palette and increase your options while traveling.*
 - o *Practice using the water bottle you will bring on program to establish strong hydration habits.*
- Dressing appropriately for environmental conditions:
 - o *Pack and dress in layers.*
 - o *Bring clothes that are appropriate, will keep you comfortable, and that you like wearing—a sunshirt will not protect your skin and a fleece will not keep you warm if you leave them in the bottom of your bag.*
- Personal hygiene:
 - o *If you will be using different toiletries or your own toiletries in different containers on program, practice using these for a few days before you travel.*

- Managing medication:
 - o *If you take critical medication regularly, make a plan for how and when you will take your medication on program.*
 - o *If you are concerned about managing your medication routines on program, please reach out to The Experiment Medical Team (medicalteam@experiment.org, 802-258-3474) for support before you travel.*



Information & Directives

Things to Consider

- If situations arise which may impact Experimenters' health, safety, or security in their host countries, information and directives may come through your group leaders from The Experiment Team, International SOS (our medical and travel security consulting organization), and/or US Embassies and Consulates.
- The Experiment Team is continually monitoring health, safety, and security risk factors in our program locations and making program decisions accordingly.

Program Policies

Things to Consider

- Policies have been developed to safeguard all Experimenters and Group Leaders on program.

Things to Do

- Read and review The Experiment Program Policies in the Participant Handbook.
- Read and review The Experiment Conditions of Participation.
- Contact The Experiment if you have questions about anything contained in the Conditions of Participation or Program Policies.

Self-Advocacy

Things to Consider

- Only you can know how you feel or what you are experiencing.
- Health concerns and situational challenges are often easiest to address when they are new or small—a great reason to communicate with your Group Leaders early and often.
- Your host family is also an excellent resource for support, even if communicating your needs across language hurdles and new relationships may seem daunting. Respect and compassion between you and your host family will ultimately result in stronger bonds and a more meaningful homestay experience.
- As a part of your Experiment group, your needs are closely connected with the needs of the entire group.

Questions to Ask Yourself

- *Are there situations at home or in school in which I communicate my needs or advocate for myself?*
- *Do I find it easy or challenging to advocate for myself?*

Situational Awareness

Things to Consider

- An awareness of surroundings and situations is important to both your safety and success on program as well as your enjoyment of the immersive experience of travel.
- In the new environment of your host country, heightened situational awareness is especially important as you will not be able to take the familiar surroundings and patterns of home for granted.
- You may be traveling to a country where driving is done on the other side of the road. The habit of which direction to check before crossing a street is deeply ingrained in most of us, and can provide an example of the habits of mind and behavior we rely on in daily life.

Questions to Ask Yourself

- *In which situations at home do I consider myself most situationally aware?*
- *In which situations at home do I “operate on autopilot” with habits and routines?*

Personal Responsibility

Things to Consider

- Your Experiment program is yours to shape, and your engagement and investment in the experience are directly proportional to its impact on you.
- Your Experiment program will be challenging. Your responses to these challenges will shape your experience and perspective both during and after the program.

Questions to Ask Yourself

- *What am I excited to learn and experience on my Experiment program?*

Things to Do

- Take ownership of your amazing Experiment experience.



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