

Best Practices in Rebound Orientation

Larry Kubiak, Ph.D.
Licensed Psychologist
Larry.Kubiak@tmh.org
Walter Lundstrom

- Why need?
- When held?
- How long?
- Who leads?
- What need to conduct?
- Large vs. small group activities?

Pre-weekend

- Banner at last outbound training entitled:
“During my exchange I plan to . . .”
- Banner during rebound weekend entitled:
“During my exchange I . . .”

Banner results

- Ate ant eggs
- Pet a camel
- Age coagulated chicken’s blood
- Got hit by a dead fish on a pole for good luck
- Drank bird saliva
- Pulled hair off a dragon
- Climbed Mount Fuji
- Grew up

Banner results

- Rode a yak in the Himalayas
- Learned Chinese, Taiwanese, Japanese and Portuguese
- Met Santa at the North Pole
- Accidentally yelled inside a temple—oops
- Gave dinner to orphanages with my host family
- Visited a holocaust camp

Banner results

- Got lost in the most populated city in the world
- Went to 9 countries
- Went to a 900 year old school
- Fell in love
- Learned how to ski above the Arctic Circle
- Found myself
- Made the best friends I’ve ever had

Banner results

- Lived in the moment
- Enjoyed every moment as much as possible because it ends way too soon
- Lived to be my own person and be more open-minded and curious to the world around me
- Had an open mind and accepted and appreciated others culture

Pre-Friday

- Prior to weekend all Rebounds alerted to importance of experience as essential part of exchange
- Rebounds asked to send in top 10 photos from exchange for slide show before general sessions
- 2-3 Rotex selected for each small group (8-10) with 50% having served before. Provided curriculum guide to prepare for weekend

Pre-Friday

- Folders prepared with insert materials for all Rotex and Rebounds
- Materials needed include pens, hula hoops, swimming noodles, masking tape, colored pencils and magic markers, blank paper, lined paper, Kleenex and name tags

Friday

- Rotex training and assignment to small groups
- --Review curriculum and answer questions
- --Discuss strategies for addressing challenging Rotarians, Rotex or Rebounds
- --Flexible rigidity in regard to schedule
- --Rotex critical in success of small groups
- --Clarify my role as consultant
- Have rebounds complete post-resiliency test

Opening

- Overview
- Goal
- Objectives
- Hoops Around a Circle exercise
- Introduce country coordinators
- Youth self introductions—providing name, country and city they lived in and one memorable experience. Say something in that language and explain its meaning
- Rotex introductions—same as rebounds but explain why they decided to be a Rotex
- Placed into small groups randomly with max of 12

Small group meeting

- Post ground rules
- 1. Only 2 Rotarians present
- 2. Must sit in circle and participate
- 3. Don't monopolize
- 4. What said in group stays in group
- Discussion guide—review and emphasize encouraged, compassionate participation and sharing
- Distribute folders and embellish cover in way meaningful for them. Folders are to stay in the group room until end of the weekend.
- Discuss 10 contents of folder

Small group meeting

- Have each member introduce themselves:
- 1. Name
- 2. Where they went
- 3. Highlights
- 4. Best and worst experiences
- 5. What you learned about yourself
- 6. What you learned about others

Small group meeting

- Human shield exercise—draw or write something in each quadrant addressing following:
- 1. Something proud of
- 2. Something about USA that bugs you
- 3. Something about self since came home
- 4. Something want to accomplish this weekend

Human Shield

- Tape shield to chest and mill about room discussing shields
- After 5 minutes have them pair up and get to know partner for 10 minutes
- Have them introduce each other to group
- Have group ask questions of them
- Continue until everyone is introduced
- Debrief with entire group

Small group meeting

- Have each complete “Reflections On Rebounding” exercise then share with group and debrief
- Biggest surprise since coming home, + & - things, hardest aspect, relationship with family and friends, other issues since return
- Rotex explain when and where of next activity
- Free time until lights out

Saturday morning large group

- Yurt circle exercise and debriefing covering the following:
- 1. What was the task?
- 2. How successful were you?
- 3. What worked well?
- 4. What didn't work well?
- 5. Was your exchange a balancing act like this?
- 6. Were there times you had to coordinate your efforts to keep from falling?
- Reverse Culture Shock game show by small group—demonstrate—break ties with cultural dance
- Meet as small groups and Rotex discuss their experience and facilitate discussion on RCS—focus on challenges, successes and failures, what most helpful, relationships

Saturday morning small group

- Tangle knot exercise—demonstrate and reflex as follows:
- 1. Were there times in exchange you felt in a knot?
- 2. How resolve?
- 3. Who most helpful and what did you learn?
- 4. What did you learn from that experience?

Saturday morning group

- Complete “How Have I Changed From My Experience?” exercise
- 1. Identify ways different due to exchange
- 2. Identify 3-4 changes that were most significant
- 3. Write sentences elaborating on how change came about, how it affected your life today and how it may affect your future

Saturday morning group

- Complete “Goals for my rebound year” and discuss with group including:
- 1. What you want to accomplish
- 2. Expected major impediments
- 3. Resources available to overcome these
- 4. How you’ll know you’ve been successful
- Meet with country coordinators to improve exchange for next year’s outbounds

Saturday afternoon

- Large group “Where do I go from here?” presentation and discussion
- Small group—trust circle exercise and reflection on the following:
- 1. What was it like to be falling?
- 2. What was it like to keep someone else from falling?
- 3. During exchange were you falling and who helped?

Saturday evening

- Work individually on essay and/or letter to the editor
- Rotex arrange room and selves to best facilitate process
- Use items checked on “How I have changed” as an outline and elaborate with specific experiences from the exchange
- Try out essay in pairs and give and receive feedback and then with entire group

Saturday evening

- Be prepared to give presentation to entire group on Sunday
- Assist others in group in completing theirs

Sunday

- Review resiliency test findings—why did some go down?
- Presentations before entire group recorded
- Empathic listening and constructive feedback
- Complete Rebound Weekend Evaluation
- Present Rotex T shirts for group photo
- Closing remarks

Rebound Survey Summary

- Support from club
 - Received monthly allowance on time
 - Expectations of club realistic and attainable
 - Felt welcomed by host club
 - Had regular contact with Rotarians
 - Sufficient support by District and YEO
 - Had regular contact with counselor
 - Included in club activities

- Support from host family
 - Felt accepted
 - Expectations were realistic
 - Had good relations with host siblings
 - Felt overburdened by home duties

- Support at school
 - Felt welcomed in school by teachers
 - Participated in extra school activities
 - Did my best to get good grades
 - Was easy to make friends in school
 - Accumulated unexcused absences

- Support from home
 - Had minimal contact
 - Spent little time on Facebook and such
 - Greatly missed family and friends
 - Had a romantic involvement with someone back home

Factors enabling a successful placement

- Mastering the language
- Good relationship with host parents
- Successful at making new friends
- Positive contact with other RYE students
- Had realistic expectations about what the exchange would be like

Dealing with problems

- 24% considered an early return
- For 50% was within first 2 months
- Most due to host family, next club and people back home
- Counselor and other inbounds most helpful
- Most helpful intervention would have been getting a new host family
- 90% would do exchange again if possible

Biggest self changes

- Deeper understanding of problems that all humans face
- More confident, assertive and positive when meeting new people and situations
- Greater capacity to accept difference in others
- More flexible and able to adjust
- Understand own strengths and weaknesses

How better prepare outbounds?

- Teach them to have realistic expectations
- More interaction with other inbounds
- Teach creative problem solving and resilience
- Reach out to those who can help
- Nothing, fine as it is
- “Make sure they’ re really dedicated before they go.”

- “Make sure they’ re not in relationships”.
- “They have to rely on themselves, no more coddling from families”.
- “No way to prepare for this experience”.
- “More emphasis on language”.
- “Get involved as soon as they can”.
- “A bad day on exchange is always better than a bad day in your home country; you can grow from it”.

Rebound Weekend Evaluation

1. What did you think and feel about the weekend?
2. Should this be available for all future rebounds?
3. What did you like best?
4. What did you like least?
5. What can we do to make it better?
6. What did you do to leave your country a better place?

Rebound Weekend Evaluation: How did you feel about the weekend?

- This weekend helped to sort out feelings of coming home and how to deal with them correctly.
- It was nice and not a waste of time.
- It was fun! Glad I came.
- A good place to start to accept my reverse culture shock.
- Fun and emotional. Proper mix of the 2.

- Rewarding and helpful.
- As nervous as I was to come, I’ m so happy I did because it’ s finally nice to have people to relate to. I don’ t want to go home!
- This weekend helped me open up about things I know others wouldn’ t understand. I love the opportunity to get to talk to other alumni.

- Great stuff.
- Great idea and amazing activities.
- I think it was amazing. I became closer to the other rebounds and realized how I'm not alone. It made me miss my host country and it was hard to admit my feelings but I needed it.
- I feel that I now have closure with my exchange and I now fully understand that I have to embrace my home culture to be completely bicultural.

- ### Available to future rebounds?
- All said yes emphatically
 - Very crucial for the adjustment of coming back from a year abroad
 - It'll help bring closure to their exchange
 - Make it available to those who didn't make it through because they need guidance and help too and shouldn't be ostracized

- ### What liked best?
- Small groups
 - The people
 - Reconnect and talk
 - Sharing our essays
 - Incredible experience
 - Listening to the speeches
 - Everyone let out their feelings because we didn't have to hide how we truly felt

- ### What liked least?
- Repetitive
 - Guilted into speaking
 - Too much reflecting
 - Long amount of sitting
 - Lake Yale food
 - Weekend too short
 - Jeopardy game
 - Writing the essay

- ### What liked least?
- Being in the United States
 - To be honest nothing really
 - Structured work
 - Full group sessions
 - Psychology test

- ### How make better?
- Last 2 weeks
 - More free time
 - More small group chats
 - Changing up the small groups daily
 - Make assignments more fun
 - Make this meeting mandatory
 - Was everything any student could ask for
 - Better food

How did you leave your country better?

- Showed them Americans are not all like on TV
- Planting 200 trees
- Teaching children English
- Tutoring students
- Proved American stereotypes are not correct
- Have a new life and family
- Left my old sense of myself and have new self
- Left best apple pie recipe Sweden ever had

- I touched the hearts and lives of everyone I met.
- Taught my host sister better English.
- Community service as well as diplomatic meetings.
- I shared my culture and talents.
- Made meaningful relationships.
- Inspired a few kids to do an exchange.

Questions and comments?