



AGC Managing Expectations Training Activities

Required Training for Sponsorship Groups

Preparing to Work with Newcomers

Refugee applicants as well as sponsors have expectations. It is useful for group members to be aware of these and to prepare themselves together to try to prevent these expectations from becoming problematic and to develop skills to mitigate the effects of unrealistic expectations or sense of entitlement when they arise.

The following resources and handouts may be useful as you start a conversation as a group or with a group about the issue of managing expectations.

SAMPLE TRAINING OUTLINE¹

- 1. Generate clarity** about the ‘problem’ – this will start to gauge interest and discussion about the issue of expectations.
 - ❖ You may want to share practical examples, a joke, case scenarios (see page 6 for samples), or video clips that illustrate the topic or issue.
- 2. Light theory** – this will bring everyone on the same page. To tackle the issue of expectations requires a healthy dose of self-reflection and developing awareness about our own expectations. Participants need to be aware that expectations are not bad in and of themselves and that we all carry them. The aim of this segment is to gauge empathy and create solutions that are empathetic.
 - ❖ You may want to raise awareness about expectations by sharing a self-assessment questionnaire (see page 2) or presenting examples where expectations have positive connotations and impacts.
- 3. Tips and advice** – this will allow participants to engage in problem-solving after the “problem” has been defined, discussed and understood.
 - ❖ You may want to include examples of how others have successfully managed to handle potential conflict arising from mismatched or unrealistic expectations. You may also want to discuss the roles of orientation, communication and conflict resolution.
- 4. Application** – this will allow participants to cement and reinforce the knowledge they have gained in an attempt to apply it. Let’s not just talk the talk – let’s try to walk it too.
 - ❖ You may want to use role plays that illustrate different ways in which mismatched or unrealistic expectations could negatively affect the sponsorship. You can adapt the case scenarios or use the role plays provided in the following sections.
- 5. Debrief** - review key concepts and learned skills. Make sure any outstanding questions or unclear areas are addressed. End the meeting positively.

¹ These activities are taken directly from RSTP’s “Managing Expectations – A Resource Kit for Refugee Sponsors” available for download from <https://www.agcrsi.org/resources/preparing-for-arrival>

SELF-ASSESSMENT

You may want to distribute these questions as an exercise in self-reflection or a starting point in small group discussion at the beginning of a group meeting or training sessions. It is important for facilitators to clarify that there are no right or wrong answers to these questions. The purpose is for participants to become aware of their own expectations and to take responsibility for them, without being judged by others. The questions are not designed to be discussed in a larger group setting.

To get to know one another, we need to look at ourselves. What motivates me? What makes me disappointed or feel frustrated? What expectations do I have? Take a moment to answer and reflect on the following questions:

1. Motivations:
 - a. Why am I involved in refugee sponsorship?
 - b. What will I get out of a successful sponsorship?
2. Resourcefulness:
 - a. On a scale of 1 ('not at all') to 5 ('extremely'), how would you rate your own level of resourcefulness? What makes you a 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5?
 - b. You may not always get what you want, but do you always get what you need? How so? What do you do or say to accomplish this? Do you have a strategy?
3. Secondary migration:
 - a. How would I feel if the sponsored refugee were to express their intentions of moving to another city during the first week after arrival in Canada?
 - b. What if they expressed this in the twelfth month of the sponsorship? Would there be a difference in my reaction/feelings? If so, why?
 - c. How would I feel if the sponsored refugee were to catch a connecting flight to another city on the way to our community?
 - d. How would secondary migration affect me personally? How might it affect our sponsoring group? How could it affect the receiving community?
 - e. How will secondary migration impact the refugee(s)?
4. Outcomes:
 - a. How would I feel if the sponsored refugees refused to attend language classes?
 - b. How would I react if the sponsored refugee did not send their children to school?
 - c. What would I do if the refugees did not like the accommodation that we arranged for them? What if they did not get along with the landlord?
 - d. How would I react if the refugee had a health condition which were not disclosed before their arrival?
 - e. How would I manage if their health/mental health deteriorated after arrival?
 - f. What if the sponsored person does not cooperate with the group?
 - g. What if they rely on information from friends and relatives rather than the group?
 - h. What general outcome(s) do I hope for?
 - i. What would a sponsorship breakdown mean to me?
 - j. Would I get involved in another sponsorship? Why or why not?

Alternatively, as a facilitator, you may want to ask some of the questions out loud to get people thinking – but remember, do not point to any particular person to answer the question. These are rhetorical questions, designed to get people to self-reflect and empathize.



EXPECTATIONS VIDEO DISCUSSION

Video: 'Refugee Sponsorship and Expectations: Sponsor and Refugees Perspectives'

The RSTP interviewed sponsored refugees and members of various refugee sponsoring groups about their expectations in the context of the private sponsorship of refugees program. Their answers were videotaped and compiled as a resource that can be used in trainings of refugee sponsoring groups. The video has also been posted on the RSTP YouTube channel and can be found at: http://youtu.be/JvWbp_d5ivU.

The video is divided into two parts: the first part features responses from members of refugee sponsoring groups, while the second part focuses on the anticipations, discoveries, hopes and challenges experienced by sponsored refugees after their arrival.

The following video segments and accompanying discussion questions illustrate what potential expectations there could be on the part of sponsored refugees and refugee sponsors.

Sponsors' Expectations

Video segment:
5:53 minutes – 10:11 minutes



Activity:

1. Inform participants about the video they are about to watch.
2. Ask them to list all the expectations that the interviewed sponsors had of the refugees they would sponsor and of the refugee sponsorship itself.
3. Play the segment identified above.
4. After playing the video, ask participants to tell you what they have listed and record these on a flip chart.

Debrief:

1. Ask participants if they are surprised at the length of this list. Ask them why or why not?
2. Are there any expectations that surprised them and/or they disagree with?
3. Do any of these expectations sound familiar?
4. Are there any expectations that they would add?

Allow for the conversation to develop;
moderate where needed.

Sponsored Refugees' Expectations

Video segments:

16:09 minutes – 18:07 minutes &

19:33 minutes – 22:41 minutes



Activity:

1. Before showing the next segment, ask participants to talk in their groups about the kinds of expectations that sponsored refugees might have after their arrival in Canada. Ask one person in each group to note these down. They will be discussed after watching the video.
2. Inform participants about the video they are about to watch.
3. Ask them to take note of what interviewees were surprised about and what initial expectations they said they had.
4. Play the segment identified above.
5. After playing the video, ask participants to tell you what they have listed and record these on a flip chart.

Debrief:

1. How does the list on the flip chart compare to the list of expectations they had discussed previously in their small groups?
2. Were there any surprises? Did the interviewed refugees mention things that surprised you or you did not expect?
3. How do the expectations of refugees compare with the expectations from the sponsors? What similarities and differences did you notice?

Managing Expectations

Video Segment:

11:46 minutes – 14:00 minutes



Activity:

1. Having watched the previous video segments, ask participants to briefly discuss in their small groups, to identify some of the expectations that could potentially become problematic, and to brainstorm how they might prepare to either avoid or mitigate the impact of such expectations.
2. Time permitting; ask one to three groups to briefly share what they have come up with.
3. Show the video segment above to add to what participants have already mentioned.

Debrief:

1. Briefly ask participants if they have any comments.

ROLE PLAYS & SCENARIOS

You may want to provide participants with role plays, have them act them out, discuss and then debrief together or allow participants to develop their own role plays and then perform it in front of the larger group, discuss and debrief together. The latter version works well with participants who have experience as refugee sponsors.

Always debrief role plays in large group or small group discussions:

- Any comments, impressions, feedback from the audience?
- Ask actors: How did it feel playing...?
- Ask audience: How would you have handled the situation differently, if you were...?

If you do not have any role plays or case scenarios to work with, you may want to start a group exercise by instructing participants to share and discuss examples where it was challenging to interact and/or meet the needs of sponsored newcomers due to unrealistic or mismatched expectations.

Ask participants to pick one of the scenarios that were shared in their group, and to prepare a three-minute role play that illustrates:

- What happened in that situation
 - What the challenge was
 - How the persons involved were able (or unable) to overcome that challenge.
- Alternatively, your role play can illustrate how you would have liked to handle the situation.



Sample role play: At the refugee committee meeting²

We can't underestimate the importance of coming to an agreement about the main issues of sponsorship - before the people arrive...

Alice: Greetings, everyone. Can we call this meeting to order? Let's begin with a review of our sponsorship of Miroslav and the family. How long is it now?

Ben: Seven months. Time to get Miroslav out to work!

Alice: Well, hang on a minute, Ben. His English still needs a lot of work. If he stops studying now, he'll pretty much be condemned to the lowest paying jobs. And he has no idea how to even look for a job in Canada. He'll need training for that, too. If he goes to work now, his life will hardly be better than it was in Europe.

Ben: Miroslav has had all the basic ESL classes now. *(That should be good enough. Lots of people come here with less help than that - and they make it!)* And Dina's working- it's good enough for her.

Alice: *I wish Ben would try to understand what they're going through. He just doesn't seem to get it.)* I don't think that's quite fair, Ben. Dina works as a cleaner- when there is work. She hasn't had many hours lately. And you know, she doesn't get much chance to talk when she's at work, so her English isn't benefiting from this job at all.

Ben: *(They've got a better life just being in Canada. We can't hand feed them forever.)* They're safe and they have the chance to work. There are lots of others that need our help. We should be directing our money toward them now.

Alice: Well, we've committed to supporting them for a year. I think they should have some say in what they want to do. Miroslav wants to study more, I think. Then, when he gets a decent job, Dina can quit cleaning and go to classes.

Ben: *(I know that Jim Brown would give him a job on his pig farm.)* I still think they can work and study if they want. If they couldn't, you know - I wouldn't push for it. But I really feel that we should be looking to help a new family now. We gave Miro and Dina their chance.

Alice: Well, what about the kids. They'll be in school and there'll be a lot of extras coming up for them. Miro had a good job before they had to run. If he gets a good base in English, he should be able to build a career here, too. And a better life.

Ben: *(She needs to be more realistic!)* You're not convincing me, Alice. I thought that we agreed: one year's support or until they got working, whichever came first. So, I think we should help him get to work - starting now.



² Courtesy of Maggie Hosgood and the Refugee Advisory Group of the United Church, Vancouver, BC

Miroslav and Dina's point of view

Miroslav: You are late tonight, Dina. How was your day?

Dina: Oh, Miro, I am so tired tonight. We had to clean a house so dirty pigs would not live in it! And the smell! It was terrible!

Miroslav: I feel so bad that you must do this work. As soon as I get a good job you can stop cleaning and stay at home with the children.

Dina: Oh, Miro ... I don't know if I want to stay at home. That is lonely, too. And I want to study English, too. It's too bad we both couldn't study together: It's your turn now. And if you study hard then you can get a real job, like back home. Not like me.

Miroslav: But I always have worked for the family. I should be working now - any job!

Dina: No, Miro! We agreed! For one year you study, you get good enough English. Then you get a good job. With the church money and my work, we can get by for a while.

Miroslav: Tonight, we are tired. We don't argue – okay? Make us a coffee, eh.

Sample case scenario: The Smiths

The community of Underhill was very excited about the arrival of the Smith family - their first sponsored refugee family. With a population of 9,590 people, Underhill is a scenic and calm community that offers the best of Canada's natural treasures: mountains, fresh green fields and proximity to the sea side. It has a vibrant arts and craft scene and a booming hotel and tourism industry. The winters are mild and the summers refreshing. For the residents of Underhill and the tourists that come here year by year, this is paradise in North America.

The Underhill refugee sponsorship committee has been in existence for two years. They consist of members from several faith communities who have come together to help a family in need. After over a year of waiting, the Smiths (a family of 4) finally arrived a month ago. Several of the committee members picked them up from the nearby airport and brought them to the basement apartment which they had rented and furnished for them.

Though they had seemed shy and very polite at first, the Smiths seemed to be happy. Then, everything started to change about a week ago: They constantly called the committee to be driven around to various appointments and to run errands. Then they asked for a mobile phone for each member of the family even though the committee had not included more than one phone into the monthly budget. Despite the donated TV and cable, the family asked for a satellite dish. And, when the committee proudly presented the family with the pile of clothing donated from generous community members, the Smiths refused to wear them or take them home.

Today, the committee received a call from the family. They asked if they could move to Toronto.

It took more than 12 months of hard work to fund-raise and collect the in-kind donations, and the group was under the impression that the family they would sponsor would be desperate. Members of the sponsorship committee are starting to doubt whether the family was really in need, and whether their funds should have been used to sponsor a different family.

In your group:

1. Discuss what you think the problem or issue here is and how you would handle this situation if you were members of this sponsoring group.
2. Designate who will play Mr. and Mrs. Smith and group members Jane, Ahmad, and Soraya and act out this scenario for the larger group and either discuss or act out a potential solution to this problem.

Sample case scenario: Abida

Abida and her family were sponsored 2 months ago from a refugee camp. They have endured torture and do not know who if any of their family members have survived the violence in their home town. Abida has left behind a sister who does not have any means of supporting herself in Yemen. Due to recent unrest in the country, Abida has been worried about her sister and wants to support her. Your group learned that she sent money to her sister from the monthly allowance that you have been giving her. Some members of the group were not happy as they felt that she should have used the little amount of money to feed herself and the children. The funds were raised with the help of a number of volunteers and were intended for sponsorship purposes only.

Group Discussion:

Do you agree with members of this sponsoring group? Why or why not?

Sample case scenario: Moving to another continent

Activity instructions:

- Ask participants to tell you the most exotic place that they can think of. Record several on a flip chart
- Ask participants to tell you, by show-of-hands, who has heard of each of these places
- Pick the place that the least number of them have heard of
- Ask participants to imagine that they are forced to leave Canada immediately and move to this new place. Ask them to think about the kinds of questions they would have about this new place since they are moving there for good. Ask them to reflect on the kinds of things they might worry about.
- Time permitting, ask participants to compare their top 5 questions in their small groups.
- Debrief by asking participants to share any comments about their questions, feelings and comparisons with peers.
- Conclude by drawing parallels to the kinds of worries refugees who are resettled to Canada might have when they do not have access to some information.

POST-ARRIVAL: PROVIDING ORIENTATION

Providing orientation to the newly arrived refugee family helps to ensure that both sponsors and sponsored refugees are on the same page with regards to the scope of the sponsorship including roles and responsibilities of both parties, that essential information about living in Canada is provided and that any questions that newcomers may have are clarified.

You may want to provide orientation in an informal and flexible way that will allow you and the sponsored newcomers to have two-directional conversations and allow for any questions that the newcomers might have to be asked and answered in a safe and comfortable atmosphere.

In the settlement sector, orientation sessions are provided separately to youth and adults. We advise sponsors to do the same, where possible, to address the specific needs and interests of youth which pertain particularly to the education system, youth culture, and rights and responsibilities. A settlement agency near you may have a youth settlement program that can provide newcomer youth with in-depth information about the school system, volunteering opportunities, youth employment and recreation.

The items listed below and topics to be discussed with the adults in the newcomer family in addition to the actual settlement support provided by members of the sponsoring group.

We recommend that 1 - 2 group members participate in these orientations. The entire group's participation may overwhelm and even intimidate the newcomers. Best practice is to start each orientation with a warm and friendly welcome. Make sure you arrange for an interpreter ahead of time, if needed, and that the interpreter is briefed prior to or at the beginning of the meeting.



Orientation: First few days

Checklist for orientation after a few days:

- What it means to be sponsored (social assistance, residence, term)
- Who are the sponsors (general & specifically the names)
- What types of supports do sponsored refugees get (general)
- What specific support will they get, when and how – esp. financial
- Responsibilities of sponsors (limitations, availability, expectations, etc.)
- Responsibilities of newcomers
- Their rights as permanent residents
- Emergency contact numbers and procedures
- Information about any matters requiring immediate attention – this will differ case by case. Prioritize according to their situation and needs. For example:
 - If arriving from warm climate during the winter months, you may want to discuss the Canadian winter (where to obtain appropriate winter attire, concept of wind chill, outdoor safety, school/school bus cancellations, etc.)
 - For families with young children, set up a time to accompany to school for school registration and provide support for school preparations (school attire, stationary, plan school route, vaccinations, etc.)
 - If arriving with medical need, identify a local health care provider together, set up a time to accompany for IFH and provincial health care registration, explain health care support and system in broad terms

Orientation: First week

Checklist for orientation during first week

- Review any questions they may have, pay particular attention to issues relating to financial support.
- Repeat their rights and responsibilities as permanent residents.
- Provide a general overview of the neighbourhood they have moved to – if possible, do this while you go for a walk together through the neighbourhood. Cover nearest grocery store, bank, public transit stop, library.
- You may want to discuss local customs relating to handling/paying money, transportation, social interactions and anything else that might be useful to know in order to meet their basic need

Orientation: Second or Third Week

Checklist for orientation during second or third week

- Check-in: any questions, concerns or issues that need to be clarified
- Discuss aspects of life in Canada:
 - Rights
 - Responsibilities
 - Employment customs, interview etiquette, etc.
 - If newcomer has not met with a settlement worker yet, ensure any other settlement related questions are answered
- Discuss any possible misunderstandings, conflict and crisis and what to do in those situations
 - Reassure the newcomers that they can speak up if they are unhappy with the support that they are receiving from the group or co-sponsor, if applicable.
 - Inform of who can be contacted in such a situation
- Address any other questions that the newcomers might have.

During your training, ask participants to brain-storm what items they would cover in an orientation session with newly arrived sponsored refugees. Direct groups to prioritize their orientation list according to immediate, first week, and second/third week. Ask participants to focus on the items they have identified as 'immediate' and to plan an orientation meeting around these items. Time permitting, ask two of the groups to role play their orientation session. You can debrief this session by asking for feedback from the audience and by reviewing the orientation lists above.