

MANAGING EXPECTATIONS

A Conversation Guide

While your Sponsor Circle needs to have certain expectations or goals to be achieved, it is crucial to be prepared to change them as you learn more about the newcomer or unexpected situations arise.

Establish a Shared Understanding at the Beginning

Shortly after the newcomer's arrival it can be helpful for all involved to have a conversation about goals and expectations. This conversation should center and empower the newcomer to share their own expectations of community sponsorship.

A simple document which captures those goals for the newcomer and the Sponsor Circle is helpful to have, reflecting the conversation and to be used as a touchstone to visit from time to time to see if those shared expectations need to be amended. This can clear up any mistaken expectations or incorrect assumptions; set goals; set boundaries; and prevent confusion, frustration, and conflict.

Discussion Questions for Sponsor Circle Members

The following questions are for the Sponsor Circle to consider prior to and during the sponsorship period. It is recommended to revisit and reflect on goals and expectations throughout the sponsorship period.

- 1 What if your relationship with the newcomers is not what you expected and you don't get along very well?
 - What if you don't like them?
 - What if they don't like you?
- 2 Sometimes people express themselves in ways we find hard to read, particularly across cultures. In some cases, people have been traumatized to the point that they find it hard to build healthy relationships or may make decisions that are influenced by the trauma they have experienced. Explore your expectations about gratitude on the part of the newcomers.
- 3 A key goal of sponsorship is to help the newcomer build self-sufficiency in their new community. Sponsor Circles should strive to never make decisions for the newcomers, but rather to make decisions with the newcomer. They should try, whenever possible, to mentor newcomers through providing alternatives and resources. What if the newcomer doesn't take your advice?
 - What if you disagree with the family's parenting style?
 - What do you do if you do not agree with the way they spend money?

Cultural Context

It will be important to consider cultural context as a lens for many aspects of the newcomers' resettlement. Newcomers are transitioning from their homeland to the US, and there will likely be aspects of US culture that are new, different, confusing or at odds with what people may be familiar with or see as important. Your Sponsor Circle is steeped in US culture in many ways, even while Sponsor Circle members have diverse backgrounds and experiences that they bring. At the same time, your Sponsor Circle is eager to welcome those from another culture. Thoughtful discussions about cultural context in advance of their arrival and when sensitive challenges develop will be helpful.

Questions to guide your group in discussion, possibly with the insight of a local community member familiar with the newcomers' homeland culture:

- What is my own cultural identity? How do I bring this identity into interactions with others? How do I bring identity, power, and privilege to this work?
- What are some similarities between your cultures, perhaps customs or activities that could build connections early in the relationship?
- What are potential cultural issues that cross legal boundaries? (e.g disciplining of children, driver's licenses, etc.)
- How will your group handle these challenges in a manner that incorporates the needs of the newcomer to move forward independently, yet acknowledges their cultural upbringing?
- How will your group navigate situations in which members of your group have different perspectives related to culture?