What is the Drury Alternative Break Program?

Sponsored by the Office of Community Outreach and Leadership Development with funding provided by the Student Government Association, the Drury Alternative Break Program consists of substance free, service-learning trips that occur over Drury University’s academic fall and spring breaks. The mission of the Drury Alternative Break Program is:

To encourage an increased understanding of social and environmental issues by engaging students in service while creating opportunities for the development of leadership and active citizenship skills.

The Drury Alternative Break Program adheres to the Eight Components of a Quality Alternative Break as described by Break Away, the nonprofit devoted to providing support and research for Alternative Break programs. These eight components are:

- **Strong Direct Service:** Each participant on the spring break trips performs 32 hours of service working with nonprofits.
- **Orientation:** Alternative break participants meet with alternative break student leaders and campus advisors prior to the trips to engage in discussions about the program, learn about the trip topic, become acquainted with each other, and begin team-building.
- **Education:** Each alternative break trip focuses on one social issue. Trip leaders and advisors arrange educational activities prior to each trips departure as well as during the trips.
- **Training:** Alternative break trip leaders engage in training processes that educate them on the alternative break process as well as each trips area of focus.
- **Reflection:** During the trips, trip leaders and advisors facilitate reflection discussions and activities allowing participants to explore topics they have come into contact with more in depth.
- **Reorientation:** Alternative break participants are encouraged to bring their learning from the trips back with them to their home communities. Each group participates in post-trip service in the Springfield community related to their trips area of focus.
- **Diversity:** Alternative break trips strive to involve participants and leaders with diverse backgrounds. Trips are inclusive and accessible providing a range of topics while having a low trip cost as well as offering scholarship opportunities. Reflection activities are developed to promote controversy with civility while encouraging diverse opinions and inclusive language.
- **Alcohol and Drug Free:** all trip participants, including advisors, sign statements of understanding that include the policy that these are drug and alcohol free trips. This rule follows Drury University’s Student Organization Travel Policy as well as the policy of the alternative break movement.
How did alternative break trips start?

“Student led initiatives, now known as alternative breaks, began on college campuses in the late 1980s and early 1990s as part of an overall surge of interest in institutionalizing community service on college campuses. Rather than travel to a traditional spring break location, groups of students came together to form projects based on becoming educated on specific social issues, doing immersion service work, and group and individual reflection,” Break Away.

What is an alternative break?

“An alternative break is a trip where a group of college students (usually 10-12 per trip) engage in volunteer service, typically for a week. Alternative break trips originated with college students in the early 1980s as a counter to “traditional” spring break trips. Each trip has a focus on a particular social issue, such as (but not limited to) poverty, education reform, refugee resettlement, and the environment. Students learn about the social issues and then perform week-long projects with local non-profit organizations. Alternative breaks challenge students to critically think and react to problems faced by members of the communities in which they are involved.” Break Away.

How does the Drury Alternative Break Program coincide with the Drury Core curriculum?

As per Drury University’s website:

As a liberal arts university dedicated to the mission of “liberating persons to participate responsibly in and contribute to a global community,” we believe in connecting students, faculty and staff in active learning experiences that positively impact the world around us. We find that when classroom study is combined with action it promotes enlightened thinking and inspires in us the desire to live lives of meaning and purpose.

Engaged learning at Drury University:
- Is a required component of The Drury Core general education curriculum
- Delivers on the Drury Connect Initiative, which underlies our strategic plan
- Honors our commitment to effectively link liberal arts and sciences to the study of professional areas
- Promotes increased confidence and a positive sense of self-value
- Enhances student retention and more effectively aids in development of critical thinking skills
- Leads to greater student satisfaction
- Is a critical component for effectively preparing graduates for success

Students that participate in the Alternative Break Program’s spring trips are eligible to receive one Engaged Learning credit. To receive the Engaged Learning credit interested students should contact the Director of Community Outreach and Leadership Development, Courtney Swan, at cswan@drury.edu.
Your Role as a Drury Alternative Break Program Advisor

Leading a group of individuals to another city to perform service with various nonprofits while providing get-to-know you activities, educational opportunities, and reflection activities while also mediating conflict can be overwhelming. The following pages are designed to help you as an advisor understand your role and responsibilities. Each alternative break trip includes two advisors and one student trip-leader. The student trip-leader helps facilitate discussions and activities while also being a mentor and role model to the student participants. Student trip-leaders are not responsible for driving or being in charge during emergency situations.

Pre-Trip Responsibilities

In the fall, applications and trip information is released to students. The Drury Alternative Break Program is open to any day school, undergraduate, full-time student at Drury University. Student Government Association funds the majority of the program while the Office of Community Outreach and Leadership Development, along with student fees, fund the remaining portion. Alternative Spring Break applications are due towards the end of January. A diverse selection committee comprised of faculty, students, and staff from across campus use a standardized scoring rubric to analyze each application. Students receive notification regarding whether or not they are selected to be a trip participant approximately two days after applications are due. Pre-trip meetings begin the first of February.

Prior to the trips departure Alternative Break Advisors are responsible for completing all necessary paperwork for themselves. These documents were given to you in your Drury Alternative Break Program Advisor Application. Advisors are also responsible for making sure the student participants turn in the following documents:

- Liability and Emergency Contact Form
- Contact of Healthy Insurance

These documents should be turned in to the Office of Community Outreach and Leadership Development.

The Office of Community Outreach and Leadership Development will provide all advisors with the necessary information to lead pre-trip meetings. Advisors will receive information regarding their trips location, the nonprofit partners involved, copies of each participants application, and anything else the Office of Community Outreach and Leadership Development deems necessary or the advisor requests.

As an advisor, you are requested to attend all pre-trip meetings and help facilitate pre-trip activities during these meetings. During pre-trip meetings, participants learn about the geographical location they are traveling to, the nonprofits they will be working with, and facts about the social issue they will be addressing through service. Along with these items trip participants also learn about each other.
Get-To-Know-You Activities

Get-to-know-you activities are performed throughout the trip but begin during this time.

Alphabetical or birthday lineup:
Invite participants to arrange themselves in alphabetical order by their first names. This task forces participants to find out other names in the group. Or do a nonverbal name lineup as a way to review names after participants have introduced themselves in conventional fashion. Ask participants to line up in alphabetical order by their first names without talking to each other (Silberman, 1999). A popular variation is to have the group assemble by birth date without speaking.

About my name:
It’s hard for most people to remember names but fairly easy to make names more memorable. Our names carry importance for us on different levels and for different reasons. Have participants, in turn, tell the group about their name. Participants may share how their name was chosen, how their marital or family status affected their name, a nickname, or funny stories about how their name has been understood (or misunderstood). This exercise helps participants to listen attentively to a person’s name in a way that values using the name correctly. Set time limits if necessary.

Silly (or serious) superlatives:
Ask participants to introduce themselves with a superlative that starts with the same letter as the first letter of their name. Joyous Jane or Ridiculous Ron can reveal a lot about their personalities, and other participants will have one other trigger to help them remember names.

Two truths and a lie:
Give participants a few minutes to think of two true statements about themselves and one false statement. The idea is that you chose true statements that reveal details that others would never believe to be true—I have a twin brother, I was a child actor, I’ve never traveled outside of my home state, etc. Participants then guess which of the three statements is a lie.

Scar (or tattoo) stories:
This one tends to happen in most newly formed groups anyway—and doesn’t require any structure at all! Almost everyone has a scar and a silly (or scary) story to go with it. Share as you will . . . .

Skittles:
Pass a bag of Skittles (or M&M’s) and invite participants to help themselves. Then announce that for each piece of candy, they need to share information about themselves! Use the colors to categorize the information. For example, “for every green candy, tell us about a time you were embarrassed; for every red candy, tell us one of your pet peeves,” etc. This is can also be done with a roll of toilet paper, with each square representing one thing about themselves.

Personal maps or timelines:
Use this exercise on-site. You’ll need paper and some crafty supplies. Give each participant 20–30 minutes to create a representation of how they arrived at this place. Allow each participant to share (set time limits as needed). This is a great exercise to reveal a person’s family life, major influences and decisions, and philosophies—many participants find that they have surprising similarities with each other.
Drury Policy and Procedures

As an advisor you are in charge when an emergency occurs. Understanding Drury’s policies and procedures is mandatory of advisors. Please review the following information before your trips departure.

The following information is from the Office of Student Activities regarding student organization travel. For an online link to policies and procedures for student organization travel visit http://www.drury.edu/multinl/story.cfm?ID=22296&NLID=414.

Basic Procedures

Drury University requires that a Trip Leader accompany the organization for all official University Travel. The Trip Leader serves as the main university liaison and is responsible for the safety and participation of all attendees for the trip. The Trip Leader should work closely with the Student Activities Office to ensure the trip meets university standards, provides a safe experience for participants, and promotes student learning and development. For each university-related trip, Trip Leaders are required to:

- Ensure trip participants represent Drury University appropriately at all times and are active, helpful participants for the duration of the trip.
- Facilitate a pre-trip planning meeting with all participants to discuss the planned itinerary, behavioral expectations, and transportation details so participants know what to expect as part of the trip.
- Review and authorize travel purpose and transportation prior to travel, coordinate required paperwork, submit required forms and carry a copy of important participant safety documents on them at all times during the trip.
- Require all students travelling with the group to provide proof of medical insurance to be able to participate in any travel associated with Drury University.
- Facilitate understanding and compliance of all university policies and applicable laws; ensure students submit proper travel safety forms; and verify all travel plans appropriateness, length, destination, and purpose.
- Facilitate emergency procedures, manage issue resolution and maintain student conduct standards.
- Ensure the proper and timely reservation and payment procedures of the group’s payments and contracts.
- Ensure proper rooming accommodations for all travel participants, including themselves. If the Trip Leader is an employee of Drury University, the Trip Leader should not share a bed with a student. It is strongly recommended that the Trip Leader stay in his or her own room.
Travel Registration & Follow-Up Process

Students and student organizations travelling on behalf of Drury University are required to complete the registration/follow-up process for all travel outside the Springfield, MO city limits.

- **At least two weeks** before the trip: All trip participants must complete a [Liability Release Form](#) and an [Emergency Information Form](#) and show proof of medical insurance. The Trip Leader will keep these documents on file with them for the duration of the trip. Please see Appendix D.

- **At least two weeks** before the trip: All trip drivers must complete a [Motor Vehicle Report](#) to become an approved university driver. Completed forms are submitted to the Business Services Office.

- **At least one week** before the trip: The Trip Leader should use the [Travel Registration Form](#) to alert the Student Activities Office of upcoming Travel.

- **Within one week** after the trip: The Trip Leader should use the [Travel Follow-Up Report](#) to alert the Student Activities Office regarding the trip completion.

For travel outside of a 300-mile radius of Drury University Campus in Springfield, MO

Groups or individual representatives of the organization must alert their Campus Advisor of the group’s general travel plans, safety procedures and trip participants in advance of the planned travel.

- Drury University requires that a Trip Leader accompany the organization. The trip leader may include:
  - The Trip Leader may be the official Campus Advisor
  - A university employee that has been pre-approved by the Campus Advisor.

- The Student Activities Office requires advance registration for all travel in this category.
**Fifteen-Passenger Van Policy**

Drury University would prefer that organizations rent 12-passenger vans, however, in the event that a 15-passenger van is used please comply with the following.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) issued a study, “The Rollover Propensity of Fifteen-Passenger Vans,” which concluded that the center of gravity on a fifteen-passenger van shifts rearward and upward, affecting stability of the van when it is heavily loaded. Here are some statistics from the study:

- Fifteen-passenger vans carrying ten or more occupants are three times more likely to roll over than those with fewer than five occupants.
- Fifteen-passenger vans overloaded with more than fifteen passengers have a 70 percent chance of a rollover.

All persons driving University owned, leased or rented 15-passenger vans are required to comply with the following:

- Have a valid driver’s license.
- Have a valid and clear **Motor Vehicle Report** (MVR) on file with the University. MVR forms can be found online or obtained from Jill Holmes in the Business Office.
- Be 21 years old or older and have at least five years of driving experience.
- Drive with courtesy and exercise reasonable caution to prevent accidents or property loss.
- Operate vehicles in accordance with all applicable University policies and follow all applicable local and state traffic laws. The University is not responsible for fines or citations received while driving on University business.
- Drive vehicles at lawful speeds that are appropriate to road, weather, and other conditions.
- Use vans for authorized and official purposes only.
- Not transport unauthorized passengers or permit any unauthorized person to drive the vehicle.
- Not operate a van when under the influence of alcohol or drugs, including prescription medications if they cause impairment.
- Remove the rear seat of the van and have no cargo stored in the seats space. This will put the weight toward the front of the van and limit the potential for rollover.
- Limit the number of passengers in a van to eleven or less, including the driver.
- Not use a roof rack. Carrying luggage on the roof will raise the center of gravity and increase the likelihood of rolling over. There should be no trailer towed.
- Not use cell phones or text while driving.
- Not drive between the hours of 1:00am and 5:00 am.
- Not drive more than 8 hours in a 24-hour period. If the drive is longer than 8 hours, another approved driver must take over the wheel.
- Take a 15 minute break after driving for two hours or a 30 minute break after driving four hours.
- Make sure that all passengers are wearing a seatbelt. NHTSA estimates that belted occupants of fifteen-passenger vans are 75 percent less likely to die in a rollover crash than those who are not wearing a seat belt.
Risk Management & Safety Guidelines for Travel

Due to the nature of the student organization, special instances may arise regarding the planning and execution of student organization travel. Review the guidelines and best practices:

- All occupants must use seat belts and remain seated when the vehicle is in motion.
- The number of passengers in a vehicle shall not exceed the number of working seat belts in the vehicle. Loading of the vehicle shall be done in accordance with vehicle manufacturers’ recommendations. Vehicles may not be loaded with more passengers than manufacturers’ recommended passenger load.
- Have completed Travel Registration Form on file with the Student Activities Office at least one week prior to the trip.
- No alcohol is to be in the vehicle at any time.
- The transportation, use, or storage of any hazardous materials is prohibited. The transportation, use, or storage of any firearms, weapons, and/or explosives is prohibited.
- Use of radar/laser detection devices is prohibited in the vehicle.
- The University does not provide comprehensive or collision (physical damage) insurance for private vehicles driven on University business, and the owner is responsible for primary liability insurance.
- The University does carry non-owner excess liability coverage to protect the University and employee in the event of a suit resulting from an automobile accident in which an employee was driving on University business.
- Non-student friends and family of students are not eligible to participate in travel opportunities.
- Drivers of the vehicle must comply with all university policies and travel guidelines.
- Drivers will comply with all applicable traffic laws, speed limits, regulations and operate the vehicle in a safe, prudent manner at all times. The University is not responsible for uninsured costs, fines or citations received while driving on University business.
- Driver must be 21 years of age or older (or meet the rental company’s age requirement).
- Drivers must be currently enrolled Drury students or currently employed Drury staff/faculty.
- Drivers must have a valid U.S. driver's license for the vehicle being driven with the appropriate classifications, restrictions, and endorsements.
- Driver shall confront rowdy or disorderly behavior by the passengers that may cause driver distractions.
- Driving while smoking or under the influence of impairing drugs or alcohol is prohibited.
- Driver is prohibited from the use of headphones or earphones.
- Driver is prohibited from texting or using hands-on mobile phones while driving and must limit use of communication devices. Only hands-free units should be used while driving. Drivers should stop and park the vehicle to use any other devices.
- Driver must have approved Motor Vehicle Report on file with the Business Services Office.
- Drivers are expected to use good judgment and make appropriate safety decisions in the event of adverse weather or other factors that affect the ability to drive safely in observance of travel warnings as issued by the highway safety authorities or weather advisory service.
- The number of drivers required must be appropriate based on the distance and duration of the trip.
  - Each driver is allowed to drive a reasonable amount of hours and must take regular breaks.
  - One person must be in the front passenger seat and awake at all times to assist with navigation and trip safety.
- Passengers of vehicles must comply with all university policies and travel guidelines.
• Authorized passengers include members of officially recognized Drury University student organizations, university employees, or authorized volunteers while on approved university student organization travel.
• All passengers must wear seatbelts at all times. The maximum number of passengers in any vehicle must not exceed the number of seatbelts in the vehicle.
• Transporting passengers in the bed of a pick-up truck is prohibited.
• All student participants choosing to participate in student organization travel do so voluntarily and at their own risk.
• The University shall not insure or accept liability for any damage, loss or injury resulting as a result of being a passenger on a university-related trip.

In the Event of an Accident

The following procedures should be used whenever members of a University group are involved in an accident, regardless of the extent of the damage:

• Stop immediately; take necessary steps to prevent another accident; and notify the proper law enforcement agency and/or emergency medical services (911) so that an official report to document the accident is made.
• Render aid to the injured until help arrives.
• Call Drury Security at 417-873-7911. Do not call the family members of the injured University students or employees. Drury Security will do this in accordance with University policies.
• The following information will need to be obtained from the other driver in the event of an accident: a) year of vehicle b) make and model of vehicle c) color of vehicle d) license plate number, and e) drivers license number of the other driver.
• DO NOT make any statement, oral or written, as to who was at fault. Any admission of fault may impair the insurer's ability to defend a case of questionable legal liability. Appropriate legal authority will decide fault or liability.
• Record the names, addresses and phone numbers of all witnesses.
• Provide all required information to the law enforcement officer.
• When returning to campus, the driver must immediately contact the Student Activities Office to follow up on the completion of the Travel Follow-Up Report.

Unstructured Time

Participants are highly encouraged to stay with the group at all times. However, there is often “unstructured time” during a trip when a meal is not provided or there is time to explore the city/trip location. Participants are allowed to leave the group during designated, pre-approved times but only under these circumstances:

• The participant is not alone. At least two participants must be together.
• The participant understands the zero tolerance alcohol and drug use policy and conduct expectations are still in effect.
• The participant and advisor come to a mutually-agreed upon time for the participant to return (no later than the housing curfew of trip).
• Participants are not allowed to sleep or stay overnight anywhere other than at the accommodations provided by the trip.
The participant will not be missing and service project time or group meals.

If the trip participant(s) does not return back to the agreed upon location at the agreed upon time the Alternative Break Advisor will follow Drury University’s Missing Student Policy.

**Missing Student Policy**

Drury University is a safe, education-oriented and community-minded campus that maintains an academic and social environment conducive to intellectual and personal development of students and promotes the safety and welfare of all members of the campus community. Drury University is concerned for the safety and well-being of its students, employees and citizens. Drury University will cooperate with authorities in the enforcement of all applicable laws.

In accordance with Section 485 of the Higher Education Act (HEA), every institution of higher education that provides on-campus housing must provide a missing student notification policy for those students residing in on-campus housing.

Every student who resides in on-campus housing shall have the option to identify a confidential individual to be contacted by the university in the event that the student is determined missing in accordance with the procedures outlined below. Only authorized campus officials and law enforcement officers in furtherance of a missing person investigation may have access to this information.

At the beginning of each academic year, Drury University will inform students residing in on-campus housing that Drury will notify either a parent or an individual selected by the student not later than 24 hours after the time the student is determined to be missing.

This information will include the following:

- Students have the option of identifying an individual to be contacted by Drury University not later than 24 hours after the time the student has been determined to be missing. Students can register this confidential contact information through the Housing Office.
- If the student is under 18 years of age, and not an emancipated individual, Drury University is required to notify a custodial parent or guardian not later than 24 hours after the time that the student is determined to be missing.
- Drury University will notify the appropriate law enforcement agency not later than 24 hours after the time that the student is determined to be missing.
- If Drury University Security or law enforcement personnel have been notified and make a determination that a student who is the subject of a missing person report has been missing for more than 24 hours and has not returned to campus, Drury University will initiate the emergency contact procedures in accordance with the student’s designation.

Drury University will practice the following notification procedure for a missing student who resides in on-campus housing:
Once Drury University receives a missing student report via the Dean’s Office, Drury University Security, Housing Office or other source, the following offices will be notified:
  - Drury University Security
  - Dean of Student’s Office
  - Housing Office

Any official missing person report relating to this student shall be referred immediately to Security.

If Drury University Security, after investigating the official report, determines the student has been missing for more than 24 hours, Drury University will contact the individual identified by the student, the custodial parent or legal guardian if the student is under 18 and not emancipated, or local law enforcement if these do not apply.

Upon notification from any entity that any student may be missing, Drury University may use any of the following resources to assist in locating the student. These resources may be used in any order and combination.

- Through the Housing Office, the Resident Assistants or Community Advisors may be asked to assist in physically locating the student by keying into the student’s assigned room and talking with known associates.
- Security may key into the student’s assigned room as well as search on-campus public locations (library, cafeteria, etc.).
- Security may issue an ID picture to assist in identifying the missing student.

The Dean of Student’s Office may try to contact known friends, family, or faculty members for last sighting or additional contact information.

- Student Affairs or academic departments may be contacted to seek information on last sighting or other contact information.
- Security may examine card access logs to determine last use of the card and track the card for future uses.
- Security may access vehicle registration information for vehicle location and distribution to authorities.
- Technology Services may be asked to look up email logs for last login and use of Drury University email system.
- If there is any indication of foul play, the local police department will immediately be contacted for assistance.

If campus security officials determine that a student for whom a missing person report has been filed has been missing for more than 24 hours, then within the next 24 hours, they must:

- Notify the individual identified by the student to be contacted in this circumstance,
- If the student is under 18 years of age, notify a parent or guardian, and
- Notify law enforcement.

This policy has been established to protect the integrity of the educational experience, encourage positive behavior and enhance the community commitment of Drury students, university employees and Drury citizens.
During-Trip Responsibilities

Expenses and Receipts

Advisors of the Alternative Break Program are responsible for following budget guidelines, keeping receipts, labeling receipts, and recording transactions on the Receipt Log. All expenses for this program are tax exempt. Advisors must use the tax exempt form when traveling and making purchases. Advisors should utilize the Drury University credit card for all purchases. Advisors are not to use their own credit. Whenever an expense occurs follow these instructions:

- Fill out the necessary information on the Receipt Log.
- Write a label on the receipt for one of the following categories:
  - Food
  - Gas
  - Transportation
  - Free Time Activity
  - Housing
  - Emergency
- Circle the total spent.
- Place the receipt in the envelope provided by the Office of Community Outreach and Leadership Development.

As an advisor, you are responsible for keeping track of all receipts. The Office of Community Outreach and Leadership Development performs an SGA audit on funds used and must be able to track expenses accordingly. Do not lose receipts. Please see Appendix F for an example of how to label your receipt. Please see Appendix G for an example of the Receipt Log.

Groups tend to go through four stages as they interact over time. As an advisor, you should be able to recognize each and what you can do to get the group to work together. The fifth stage is a specific stage relating to the Alternative Break Program. The following observations and suggestions are drawn from The Break Away Site Leader Survival Manual.

Forming, Storming, Norming, Performing, and Transforming

Forming: As a group of people first get together, “usually everyone is quiet, engaging in very simple conversation. There may also be some formality and awkwardness at this stage. It feels like everyone is walking on eggshells trying to sniff each other out.” They will look to you to review the program’s goals and rules. As the group’s facilitator, you also help to break the ice. Icebreakers and other activities will help with introductions and “will start to build a safe space of trust and support within the group.”

Storming: It is perfectly natural—indeed, normal—for tensions to arise in a group. This can be further aggravated in a group that has traveled to an unfamiliar place, is tired, and is living without their normal amenities. As individuals vent, the group can become polarized and lose focus on the goals of the program. As the facilitator, your role “should be that of a safe harbor,” listening to concerns and helping to direct energies towards conflict resolution. At this stage, you may need to use role playing to process conflict, reserve time for
in-depth and structured group discussions, and hold one-on-one meetings to solicit input from those not willing to share in a group setting.

**Norming:** “After venting the tension of being with new people in unfamiliar circumstances, the participants will begin to find identities within the group.” At this stage, the group may be testing the waters, resulting in power struggles and cliques. Afraid of another storming period, participants may not want to deal with issues directly, creating new conflicts. At this stage, your patience may be tried, but “your role here is that of a teacher that works to help the group empower itself to act.” While the group may want to split, try planning activities that will keep everyone together. Keep mixing up smaller groups.

**Performing:** When participants share vision and purpose and learn how to deal with conflicts and their own identities, they reach the productive performing stage. At this point, you play the role of the “reinforcer,” challenging the group to make their own decisions and to reflect on their experiences. Explore social issues critically, presenting different perspectives and ideas.

**Transforming:** “After the break, participants often are anxious about coming back to campus. They might be nostalgic and afraid of losing the intimacy they had as a group on the trip. This anxiety could lead to withdrawal, detachment, or a denial of the success of the break.” Your role now is to play “coach,” planning group reunion activities and helping participants to continue to stay connected to the service and issues they encountered on the break. Help the group to find ways to document their experiences and channel their energy towards continued action on campus.

**Activities. Reflection, Team Building, Etc.**

Understanding where your group is at in terms of group stages is necessary. Understanding activities that can help move your group from one stage to another is also necessary. The following provides activities to help move groups through the stages. Be aware though, if you’re not a practiced facilitator, take on discussions of race and power carefully.

**Jedi knight.** The group sits in chairs with one member in the middle. Whenever two people make eye contact, they must switch chairs. The person in the middle tries to get a chair—there should always be one fewer chairs than participants.

**Three-person machine.** Form groups of three. Each group designs and acts out a machine, such as a sewing machine, washing machine, or pencil sharpener, for the whole group to guess (Coover, 1985).

**A strong wind blows.** The group sits in a circle with one person standing in the middle. There should be exactly one chair fewer than participants. The person in the middle says “A strong wind blows for everyone with . . .” something that people may have in common—glasses, a brother, short hair, etc. All the people for whom this is true must get up and switch places, leaving one person standing in the middle. They start over again.

**Warm fuzzies.** Each person in the group has a paper bag with his or her name on it. Everyone writes one positive thing on a slip of paper about each person and drops it in their bag. This is a good activity for those who may not be as comfortable speaking in public—it makes everyone feel they have something positive to contribute to the group.
Cheyenne initiation rite. (From The Break Away Site Leader Survival Manual.) Have your group sit in a circle. Starting with a volunteer (not a facilitator if you can help it), a person listens while group members speak honestly on what they think of the person. In the actual Cheyenne rite, the member picks three people to speak on his or her behalf. Try writing the affirmations down (silently or from spoken word). This activity is worth the extra time it may take. It really cements the personal interaction side of an experience.

Thank you. Bring to the meeting enough index cards for each participant to collect one card from each other participant.

Give each person an envelope (large enough for the cards) and enough index cards to pass one to everyone else in the group—if the group is six people, each person should get five cards. Ask each participant to write his or her name on the address side of the envelope and pass the envelope to the person on his or her right. Tell the group to read the name on the envelope and complete the following sentence on one of the cards in reference to the person whose name is on the envelope:

“Thank you for . . . .” Each person puts the card in the envelope and passes it to the right without reading the other cards in it. Continue until each person receives his or her envelope (Silberman, 1999).

Continuum/four corners. Also known as “forced choice,” this exercise helps to prompt lively discussions as you ask participants to physically align themselves according to their opinions. In the four corners version, you mark four corners for “strongly agree,” “agree,” “disagree,” and “strongly disagree.” Put forth a statement and direct participants to move to the corner that represents their opinion. Facilitate a discussion with participants in place and allow for individuals to move to different corners as they are influenced by the arguments presented. Your statements need to be created to invite debate. It’s ok to be deliberately vague and to refuse to offer clear definitions. Let those subtleties in understanding fuel the discussion as they show how we vary in our assumptions. Statement examples:

- Women should be able to have any job that men can have.
- The Civil Rights movement achieved its dream.
- Community service is just a band-aid and doesn’t address the root causes of social problems.
- I participate in community service because it makes me feel good.
- Alcohol abuse is not a major problem on our campus.
- HIV/AIDS prevention should be abstinence only.
- The United States has not played a role in the economic situation in Central America.

You get the idea—tailor it to the theme of your trip.

For the Continuum variation, create only a line with ends marked “strongly agree” and “strongly disagree” (use a rope, two trees, a curb, etc.). In the line version, you are asking participants to listen to each other carefully as they respond and to move themselves along the line. (Silberman, 1999)

Koo Stick. In Native American tribal councils, when controversial issues or serious conflicts needed resolution, the Talking Stick was employed. The stick, made by the council leader, or by the entire tribe, was a symbol of oneness, not only signifying the importance of the meeting and the commitment of the people, but also allowing equal time for all and regulating each speaker’s behavior. Have your participants collaborate in
making a stick, or use a simple twig, a ball, or some other object that your group responds to. The rules for using the stick are:

- Only the person holding the stick may speak.
- He or she must speak briefly and to the point.
- A participant may pass the stick along if he or she has nothing to say.
- The speaker may conclude by saying “ho,” and the participants may indicate that they have listened by responding “ho” (this part is often left out without defeating the purpose!).
- Variation: the Conch Shell was similarly used by Golding in his book *Lord of the Flies* (Break Away; Silberman, 1999).
The Active Citizen Continuum

One purpose of the Drury Alternative Break Program is to assist students in developing an increased understanding of social and environmental issues and to create opportunities for the development of their leadership and active citizenship skills. During the program, students will be engaged in a direct service experience which exposes them to a particular social or environmental issue. Students will participate in reflection activities which will encourage them to examine their role in the issue and to develop a deeper understanding of it. The ultimate goal of the program is to encourage students to move from being only a member of society to becoming an active citizen.

www.alterantivebreaks.org
Reflection

"Action without reflection leads to burnout. Reflection without action leads to cynicism," Albert Einstein.

Reflection, reflection, reflection…….

As stated in the Eight Components of a Quality Alternative Break (Breakaway), “during the trips, trip leaders and advisors facilitate reflection discussions and activities allowing participants to explore topics they have come into contact with more in depth.”

Reflection is an important part of service. As longtime leadership trainer, Blaine Lee said, “Before you attempt to set things right, make sure you see things right.” Reflection encourages participants to think further about their experience and to do so in collaboration with others. Through reflection participants come to understand what other members of their group believe or how another person perceived an issue. Through discussion within the group participants learn to appreciate other view points and to develop a deeper understanding of what took place.

In the following section of this manual various reflection activities have been provided. As an advisor, you will co-lead these activities with your student trip-leader. You and your student trip-leader should find activities that you both are comfortable leading. The following section provides examples, but feel free to use any you know work or are more comfortable with.

Bumper stickers:
Invite participants to create “bumper stickers” or short statements that express the following:

- one thing learned at the meeting
- a key thought or piece of advice to keep in mind for guidance in the future
- an action step to commit to taking in the future
- a question to ponder

These statements should be kept concise and shared with the group (Silberman, 1999).

Connections or web of yarn:
This is a dramatic and memorable activity that symbolically draws a long series of meetings to a close. It is especially appropriate when participants have formed close connections with one another and offers a visual picture of their accomplishments by using a skein of yarn to literally and symbolically connect participants.

- Bring a skein of yarn to the meeting. Ask everyone to stand or sit and form a circle. Start the process by stating briefly what you have experienced by facilitating the meeting process. You might say, for example, that you started out with a roomful of strangers and that you and they, working together, have formed a cohesive and productive organization that has tackled a problem and solved it by connecting with one another.
- Holding one end of the yarn, toss the skein to a participant on the other side of the circle. Ask that person to state briefly what he or she has experienced as a result of participating in the meetings. After he or she has spoken, ask that person to hold onto the yarn and toss the skein to another participant.
- Have each participant take a turn at receiving the skein, sharing reflections, and tossing the yarn again while continuing to hold onto a segment of the yarn. The resulting visual is a web of yarn connecting every member of the group.
Complete the activity by stating that the program began with a collection of individuals willing to connect and work with one another.

Cut the yarn with scissors so that each person, though departing as an individual, takes a piece of the other participants with him or her. Thank participants for their interest, ideas, time, and effort (Silberman, 1999).

**Banners and T-shirts:**
Transform a bed sheet into a group banner to leave with your host or carry home. Decorate with markers, paint, and fabric paints (be sure to lay newsprint underneath so your materials don’t bleed through!). Similarly, buy plain white t-shirts (check the men’s department) and invite participants to decorate each other’s shirts with affirmations, parting messages, inspirational quotes and silly remembrances of the trip.

**Photographs:**
Take a group photograph at the beginning of your trip. Bring along construction paper, markers, glue, and other art supplies. Have a copy of the photo made for each organization with whom you meet and work. Give them a handmade framed photo as a personalized thank-you.

**Leading a Debrief**

Debriefing can serve as an opportunity to reflect on an experience and make it meaningful by identifying what we learned about ourselves and others. The technique of debriefing is useful for group members following the completion of an activity or event. As a facilitator, your job is to lead a thought provoking, safe discussion by asking meaningful questions in a pre-planned sequence. A mature group will often lead their own discussion with little prompting from a facilitator. A debrief usually follows this sequence: rules, what, so what, now what.

**Rules:**
Rules can help to develop a supportive, caring climate for people to feel safe and free to express themselves. If time permits, rules for the group’s interaction should be developed by the group, preferably before the service project ever takes place. Otherwise, a list of the rules should be posted and discussed with a hand-raise agreement by those who will abide by them before the debrief. Suggested rules include:

- Honor confidentiality
- Give unconditional respect to self and others
- Participate as much as possible
- Speak only for myself, not others
- Be open and honest with group members
- Be silent if it feels right
- Stop the discussion if a rule is being broken and restate the rule

**What?**
This is the project report describing what happened during the entire project, who was involved, what was accomplished, what needs were met, etc. Techniques for leading this part may include:
1. Sharing photographs.
2. A "go around"* where each person says one descriptive word or sentence about the project.
3. The "memory game"* where one person begins to recount the project but can be interrupted any time by someone saying, "Hold it!" if they think of something to add to that part of the story.
4. A group log/journal is kept where people sign in periodically to record date, time, events and ideas.

Questions to ask may include:

1. For the sake of refreshing our memories, will someone please describe (the project)?
2. We're going to go around the circle starting to my left. Would each person say one adjective to describe (the project) we just completed?
3. What were some things you noticed? Did any of these things surprise you?

So What?
The "what?" questions generally lead quickly into the "so what?" questions. This is where the participants identify what they think or feel about or learned from the experience. If you look back at the original reasons for volunteering and selecting the project, you will be able to ask evaluative questions to see if the volunteer's needs were met by doing the project. Techniques for this section may include:

1. "The whip" where you ask each person in the group to complete a sentence such as, "I'm glad that I...", or "When we were (doing something) I felt..."; 2. "Partner dialogue" where you ask participants to discuss a question and have one of the partners summarize their discussion for the group afterwards;
2. Journalizing can be a single sheet of paper with questions to focus reflections on or blank paper for recording free-flowing thoughts; consider writing poems, drawing pictures or having a community journal;
3. "Fish bowl" where half the group sits inside a circle and discusses the project surrounded by the other half of the group who observes and summarizes the inside group's discussion; or
4. Quotations or readings that reflect the purpose of the activity can be read by the facilitator and participants can respond to them (the Leadership Library has several quote and readings books to choose from).

To ask about what was learned may include:

1. What do you know now that you didn't know before?
2. What attitudes and feelings do you have about the experience that you didn't have before?
3. Are you aware of any other changes that occurred in knowledge, skills, attitudes, or feelings as a direct result of this experience? If so, explain.
4. How did you actually learn what is most important to you?

To ask to evaluate the group may include:

1. What part of this project was most valuable for you?
2. How has this group been helpful to you?
3. How have you contributed to this group?
4. What are some things that would have made the group experience better for you?
Now What?
The "so what" questions should flow smoothly into the "now what" questions. These questions should take what was learned from the experience and apply that to future projects or interactions. Questions to ask may include:

1. What do you think you will remember or retain in other ways after the experience?
2. Can you explain why this might be so?
3. What will you probably verbally share with or demonstrate to others in the future?
4. Would you make any personal changes in how you will contribute in the future?
5. What are some things you appreciate about the members of this group?
6. What changes would you suggest for future group experiences?
7. Where does the group go from here?
**Ten Tips When Facilitating Discussion**

During an active meeting, you want lots of group discussion. Your role is to facilitate the flow of comments from participants. Although it is not necessary to interject your comments after each participant speaks, periodically assisting the group with their contributions can be helpful. Here is a ten-point facilitation menu to use as you lead group discussions.

1. **Paraphrase.** Paraphrase what a participant has said so that he or she feels understood and so that the other participants can hear a concise summary of what has been said. Say something like, “So, what you’re saying is that we need to be careful what we say to other people in the group.”

2. **Check for meaning.** Check your understanding of a participant’s statement or ask the participant to clarify what he or she is saying. Say something like, “Are you saying that this plan is not realistic? I’m not sure that I understand exactly what you mean.”

3. **Give positive feedback.** Compliment an interesting or insightful comment. Say, “That’s a good point. I’m glad that you brought that to our attention.”

4. **Expand.** Elaborate on a participant’s contribution to the discussion with examples, or suggest a new way to view the problem. Try “Your comments provide an interesting point from the community’s perspective. It could also be useful to consider how the government would view the same situation.”

5. **Increase the pace.** Energize a discussion by quickening the pace, using humor, or, if necessary, prodding the group for more contributions by saying something like, “Oh my, we have lots of tired people at this meeting! Here’s a challenge for you. For the next two minutes, let’s see how many activities we can think of to do back on campus.”

6. **Devil’s advocate.** Disagree (gently) with a participant’s comments to stimulate further discussion. For example, “I can see where you are coming from, but I’m not sure that what you are describing is always the case. Has anyone else had an experience that is different from Jim’s?”

7. **Relieve tension.** Mediate differences of opinion between participants and relieve any tensions that may be brewing. For instance, “I think that Susan and Mary are not really disagreeing with each other but are bringing out two different sides of this issue.”

8. **Consolidate.** Pull together ideas, showing their relationship to each other, for example, “As you can see from Dan’s and Jean’s comments, we see how water resources affect the overall level of poverty.”

9. **Change the process.** Alter the method for obtaining participation or by having the group evaluate ideas that have been presented. Say something like, “Let’s break into smaller groups to discuss each theory that has been presented.”

10. **Summarize.** Summarize (and record, if desired) the major views of the group, for example, “I have noted four main points that have been brought up . . . .” (Silberman, 1999).
Ten Methods to Deal with Difficult Participants

1. **Signal nonverbally.** Make eye contact with participants who hold private conversations, start to fall asleep, or hide from participation.

2. **Listen actively.** When participants monopolize discussion, go off on a tangent, or argue with you, interject with a summary of their views and then ask others to speak. Or acknowledge the value of the person’s viewpoints and invite him or her to discuss them with you during a break.

3. **Encourage new volunteers.** When a few participants repeatedly speak up in meetings while others hold back, pose a question or issue and then ask how many people have a response to it. You should see new hands go up. Call on someone who hasn’t spoken previously.

4. **Invoke participation rules.** From time to time, tell participants that you would like to use rules such as the following:
   - Only participants who have not yet spoken can participate.
   - Each new comment must build upon a previous idea.
   - Speak for yourself, not for others.

5. **Use good-natured humor.** One way to deflect difficult behavior is to use humor. Be careful, however, not to be sarcastic or patronizing. Gently rib the participant about inappropriate behavior (“You certainly have a lot to say!”) or humorously put yourself down instead of the participant (“I guess I lost my concentration for a while.”).

6. **Connect on a personal level.** Even if a problem participant is hostile or withdrawn, make a point of getting to know the person during a break in the meeting. It is unlikely that people will continue to give you a hard time or remain distant if you have taken an interest in them.

7. **Change the method of participation.** Sometimes, you can control the damage done by difficult participants by inserting new formats, such as using pairs or small groups rather than full-group discussion.

8. **Ignore mildly negative behavior.** Try to pay little or no attention to behavior that you find detrimental to the meeting. These types of behavior may disappear if you simply continue the meeting.

9. **Discuss very negative behavior privately.** You must call a stop to behavior that you find detrimental to the meeting. Arrange a break and firmly request, in private, a change in behavior of those participants who are disruptive. Or create small group activities and call aside the problem participants. If the entire group is involved, stop the meeting and explain clearly what you need from participants to conduct the meeting effectively.

10. **Don’t take it personally.** Remember that many problem behaviors have nothing to do with you. Instead, they are due to personal fears and needs or displaced anger. Try to determine whether this is the case, and ask whether participants can put aside whatever is affecting their positive involvement in the meeting (Silberman, 1999).
Common Conflicts

Conflicts will always arise. Break Away facilitators have developed the following list of typical group conflicts and tips to address them effectively.

**Greeks vs. independents.** Structure a discussion about the stereotypes of Greek life.

**Cookers vs. cleaners.** A chore plan with rotating responsibilities can help avoid boredom and bitterness. Keep meals simple to prepare and mix more confident cooks with the non-cooks.

**Construction workers vs. “people” people.** Try to head this one off in the application process by meeting with applicants individually to be sure that their expectations about work will be reasonably met. If your group has been split into teams to work on different projects, rotate to prevent boredom.

**Group processors vs. individual reflectors.** Structure time for group and individual reflection. Make time to meet with each participant one-on-one during the week to check in. Process exercises in small and large groups. With your co-leader or partner, talk about other potential conflicts, such as:

- cultural sensitivity battles
- haves vs. have-nots
- activists vs. philanthropists
- liberal vs. conservative
- language proficient vs. deficient
- your role in the visited community

Post-Trip Responsibilities

At the return of the trip advisors are requested to immediately contact the Director of Community Outreach and Leadership Development, Courtney Swan, at 873-7809 to let her know of the safe arrival back. Advisors should also make sure each student has a way to get home before departing.

Advisors are responsible for returning the rental van back to Fisk Limousines Inc. and following the appropriate steps required by Fisk to do so.

The following week advisors are responsible for getting all paperwork, including receipts, back to the Office of Community Outreach and Leadership Development, along with the completed Alternative Break Program Advisor Evaluation form.

All trips have a post-trip meeting and service opportunity. Advisors are highly encouraged to attend these events.