

Facilitating and Debriefing

1. What expectations should we mention before the activity?

At the beginning of the orientation gather the group and ask them to agree upon a "Full Value Contract". This contract asks each participant to hold certain values throughout the orientation, allows for a positive environment and encourages students to hold some responsibility during debriefing.

- I agree to follow all safety and group behavior guidelines.
- I agree to work together with the group and work towards the individual and group goals.
- I agree to give and receive feedback, both positive and constructive, and change negative behavior when it is appropriate.

2. What criteria should be considered when choosing initiatives? What activities should we run?

Initiatives you are familiar with and comfortable running.

Appropriate for group size, setting/environment, minimal supplies, activities you can easily manipulate to make more or less difficult with minimal supplies.

Think about what topics you want to discuss and choose initiatives based on what you want the conversation to be. Not the other way around.

3. What should our role be during the activity/initiative?

We need to keep our head on a swivel and be fully involved in the initiative as a facilitator. You are enforcing the rules, listening to participants' struggles, challenges, and successes, etc. You are always prepared to tweak the rules a little bit to make it easier or more difficult, etc. You are enthusiastic and not looking like a watchdog or a supervisor.

Which activities should we process and which should we not process?

Any activity that actually brought up something worth discussing with the group based on your overall goals. Typically, fun activities that don't truly challenge folks or bring up certain topics worthy of conversation should be left alone without debrief.

What concepts/topics should we process?

What are freshman college students struggling with or what will they struggle with in their first semester? What are their main concerns 1 month prior to moving to Gunnison?

- living with a stranger/roommate
- making friends
- pursuing romantic relationships
- seeking social activity
- performance in social situations

- comfort in large groups/ parties
- giving and receiving help from others (friends, RA, professor, etc.)
- doing well in classes, finishing assignments, etc.
- talking to professors
- joining clubs, intramurals, etc.

How long should we process each activity?

It depends. Basically think about 10% to 30% of the length of the activity. A short 10 minute activity may be a simple stand around chat for 1-3 minutes. Unless something major happened you shouldn't process a 10 minute activity for 6 minutes because a lot probably didn't happen in 10 minutes. A 1 hour activity could use 10-15 minutes and an all-day climbing event could chat for an hour or more.

How should we process or debrief, what type of structure?

Start easy and go to more open-ended questions.

Start the discussion by asking some very easy questions (answerable by a number, word, or phrase) to the whole group. Ask people to answer the question as it comes around the circle to them.

Examples:

- From 1 to 10 (1 is low and 10 is high), how well did you get to meet new people today?
- Name one activity you did today where you meet a new student.
- What was the most difficult task you did today?

Try to expand upon these answers after they cycle through each individual.

- Find similar comments and encourage more discussion among the students.
- Lead the group towards specific discussion points.

Have a predetermined list of questions you can ask them.

- Try to allow the students to control the discussion unless it wanders off.
- Offer personal experiences, but only engage as much as the others.

Why is it important or valuable to provide a structured debrief?

It provides an opportunity to actually think about these activities in our busy lives.

It allows us to learn from each other, it allows us to learn from our activity/experience, it provides an opportunity for future students to see that other freshman are dealing with the same issues and allows an upper graduate student to share their struggles and successes throughout their college experience, and much, much more. **Why are orientation leaders college students?**