

S.C.U.B.A. - A tool for effective field calls

Stabilize

Connect

Understand

Break

Advice

STABILIZE

Goal:	Example questions/statements:	Tips:
<p>Quickly determine if there are any immediate needs to address. This is similar to the scene size up using WFR skills. Examples of immediate needs could include a physical injury that must be managed, a student that is actively running away, the need to separate students and put them on solo time, or even having the group set up tents to get out of the bugs before you dive too deeply into the rest.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where are you? • Where's the rest of the group? • What's the group doing? • Have you checked vitals? • Is everyone together? • How is your co-instructor doing? • What is s/he doing? • Have you had lunch? • Is camp set up? • How many students were involved? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It's okay to Understand, Connect, and even Advise right here in this first step...but only with aim of stabilizing the situation. • "Tune your instrument" before picking up the phone. • If you aren't sure if things are stable ask them to leave their phone on, involve others, and call them back soon.

CONNECT

Goal:	Example questions/statements:	Tips:
<p>The instructor is, first and foremost, a human being with whom you have a relationship. Slow down to remind them of that. No advice or plan you can offer will be successful without trust. This starts by acknowledging humanness.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you exhausted? • I was just thinking about the time that you and I _____. • Sounds like you're having a rough day. • <u>Brief</u> update on the outside world (sports score, basecamp happenings, etc.) • Are you and your co laughing? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remember you are facilitating. It is your job to impact the energy. Infuse the tone that is needed or match the tone you are hearing. Depends on instructors needs. • Laugh at least once! • Empathize

UNDERSTAND

Goal:	Example questions/statements:	Tips:
<p>“Stand in their campsite” by gathering information from all available resources. This starts on the field line by asking good questions to the instructors and <u>listening</u> to their answers. Resources include...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Immediate</u> resource: the instructors in the field. • <u>Internal</u> resources include: manual, WFR field guide, maps, other CDs, management staff, maps. • <u>External</u> resources include: parents, medical or psychological adviser, safety director 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First, gather <u>objective timeline</u>. Try to put things in chronological order. (When did this start? How many times did this happen? Who was involved? When did you notice?) • Next, understand <u>what action has been taken</u>. (How did you handle it? What does the contract say? Who have you checked in with? Have you looked at your WFR field guide? Have you administered any meds?) • Finally, <u>gather subjective information</u>. (What do you think is going on? How serious do you think is? Be honest, is this freaking you out a little? How comfortable are you managing this? What do you feel like the next steps are?) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This must be complete <u>before</u> you advise. • The more complicated the incident the longer this takes. • During this step you may realize you missed one of the previous two steps. If so, don't proceed forward. Instead go back and complete that step.

BREAK

Goal:	Tips:
<p>Pause as a facilitator to ensure you have not missed any steps. Digest. Seek input. This is a good time to “retune your instrument,” gather more resources, review existing resources, or simply give yourself time to process.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remember you don't have to know everything. • Remember that once you've completed the <i>Stabilize</i> step, you are no longer in a hurry.

ADVISE

Goal:	Example questions/statements:	Tips:
<p>Make a plan. This could be done through statements or through questions. But ultimately you should hang up the phone with a shared understanding of the next steps in managing the situation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Between now and _____, what are you thinking? (Insert lunch, next portage, tomorrow night, etc). • Between now and _____, this is what I want you to do.... How do you feel about that? Is there anything you feel like I'm missing? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For a complicated incident (or for inexperienced staff) this step must be incremental. In these cases you will return to the first two steps before the next incremental advice is given. • Don't be a sage. “Cite your sources” to empower and train staff. If you are pulling from the manual or WFR field guide, look at it together. If you are working with a team at HP, tell them.

S.I.M.P.L.E - A tool for effective parent phone calls

Stabilize

Inform and involve

Meet their needs

Provide the spectrum of possibility

Listen!

Explain next steps

Best Practice	Why	Example
Stabilize - Let them know that their child is okay.	They likely will be worried when they see our phone number.	"Hi _____. This is _____ calling from Outward Bound. I know people get worried when they see our phone number so I want to assure you right away that _____ is okay.....but I did get some information about him/her from the field today and wanted to share that with you . Do you have a minute or are you in the middle of a million things?"
Inform and involve - Share the information you have first, and then invite them into the conversation.	Inform- We have people's children in our care; it is our obligation to inform them about their children. Involve- This is Outward Bound. We do our best work when we focus on inclusivity, relationship-building, and teamwork. Parents should trust us and feel like a part of our team.	"Any time I have information about anyone's child I like to let them know. I'm calling to let you know what happened and to share how we have handled it thus far. But I'm also calling to get you involved in the conversation and to get your input because obviously you know your child better than anyone."
Meet their needs - Assess what they need. And connect as people.	Pause for a minute. Let them say something...anything. And assess where they are at. Do they need more information right now!? ("Oh my gosh...tell me more about his ankle.") Do they need to laugh with you? ("Oh man...I knew I was going to get this call....just tell me how bad it is.") Do they need to vent?	
Provide the spectrum of possibility - Share all possible outcomes.	Parents need to know <u>all</u> of the possibilities. False expectations will create a lot of work for us down the road and are also not fair to the parents. Of course, remain optimistic, but also be honest.	"I have to be upfront with you that if this continues there is a strong possibility that _____ would be unable to complete the course. I'm not calling because I necessarily think that's the road we are going down. And off course, none of us want that. But I do have to be honest that it is possible. On the other hand, it's also possible that this continues to improve over the next few days and _____ goes on

	<p>If you haven't already, this is a great place to remind parents that we all have the best interests of their child (our student) in mind.</p>	<p>to have an amazing experience out there. That is the hope. And of course the hard part is that it will take time to know which of these directions this is moving."</p>
<p>Listen!</p>	<p>Parents may have a lot to say. Remember that you are their only conduit to sharing their thoughts, concerns, joys, etc. with us. Make the time to do this. Don't make the call if you don't have time to slow down and listen. You don't have to agree, disagree, or provide answers to everything they say. Just listen. You don't even have to understand everything they are saying. It's that simple...just set aside time to prioritize letting them share what they need to with you.</p>	
<p>Explain next steps</p>	<p>When you hang up parents need to know what will happen next and if/when they will hear from you (or another team member) again.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Like I said, anytime I have information about someone's child I like to pass it along. But moving forward please understand that no news is good news. But of course, feel free to reach out if you have questions." • "I'll be communicating with _____'s instructors on Sunday morning. So plan on hearing from me before the end of the day Sunday with a quick update. I also want to be up front, if you hear from me between now and then it's likely because things aren't improving. Of course we don't want things to go that way. So for now, let's both cross our fingers and hope that I'll have good news to share on Sunday." • "I'll be in the field from from the 10th through the 21st. Between now and then, if there are any updates you can expect to hear from one of the managers on our on-call team. However, remember that no news is good news. So don't be alarmed if you hear nothing while I'm away."

Some expectations for professional communication w/ parents

They are parents. They are also customers. They are also human beings.

Please consider all of those things when communicating with parents. Remember that parents expect (and deserve) excellent customer service throughout their experience at VOBS. Also remember that for some parents having their children in someone else's care, far away from home can be emotional. At VOBS we do our best work when we are building relationships. This is almost always done more effectively over the phone as opposed to email. It also takes time. We must prioritize these relationships when juggling our busy schedules.

Below are just a few expectations for communicating with parents in the role of a Course Director:

- Response time must never exceed 48 hours
- When out of the office your vacation response should be enabled, professional, and clear about who to contact when you are out
- When something is ongoing, be clear about who they will hear from next and when
- Leave specific information when you get voicemail. Never hangup. And never leave a very vague voicemail. Always tell them exactly why you are calling.
- When notifying parents about a field incident always use a phone call. Emailing is NOT an option.
 - If it is an ongoing incident, emails can be used for logistics and some follow up if appropriate.
- Emails
 - Should be free from typos and (major) grammatical errors. They should also present with clean and consistent formatting.
 - Always use BCC when sending bulk emails. Include your email address in the "To" line. Sometimes include your supervisor in the CC line.
 - Sometimes use BCC to include your supervisor and/or the PD
 - Use CC if you are handing something to someone else on the team because you will be out of the office. Notify that person before sending the email or sharing their information in a phone call/voicemail.
- If you are covering someone else's parent communication always CC them if using email. If you are using phone communication send them an email or write them a note summarizing your correspondence.
- Always notify your supervisor if you feel like you are in over your head.