**Texas Big Bend Backpacking Expedition**

**Family Seminar Information:**

**OVERVIEW AND SCHEDULE**

DUE TO CONCERNS RELATED TO THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC, THE PARENTS WILL PARTICIPATE IN THE SEMINAR VIRTUALLY WHILE THE STUDENTS CONCLUDE THE COURSE.

The Outward Bound Intercept Family Seminar is as much for you as for your child. We strongly encourage all parents or guardians who live with the student to participate in the Family Conference, but only one parent/guardian is required to attend. This document includes an overview of the Seminar, general reminders, and a schedule. Please read this document thoroughly and contact your Course Advisor if you have any questions.

The Seminar will focus on how your family can best support one another as your child finishes their Outward Bound course and transitions home. The seminar is crucial to the success of the Intercept Program, and your choice to participate demonstrates a strong commitment to that success. Thank you for your involvement, and we look forward to meeting you virtually at the end of the program.

**FAMILY SEMINAR OVERVIEW -** The Family Seminar occurs over the course of two and a half days and will include a series of interactive workshops, activities, presentations and discussions. It will include a family conference facilitated by Outward Bound staff. The objectives of the Family Seminar are to:

* Provide you with a mini Outward Bound experience so you can better understand your child’s experience.
* Connect with other parents, guardians, and families.
* Share specific information about your child’s experience and stories from their expedition.
* Share tools, techniques and lessons that instructors employed during the expedition. We will also discuss how your family can employ the same or similar tools at home.
* Begin a plan for your child’s transition home.

**Note:** You will not see your child until the second day of the Seminar as they will be engaged in volunteer service projects on the first day.

**28 Day:** The Seminar will end mid-morning on Day 26 of the course in order to give you time to travel to El Paso to pick up your child. You will travel home with your child on Day 28.

**50 Day:** The Seminar will end mid-morning on Day 48 of the course in order to give you time to travel to El Paso to pick up your child. You will travel home with your child on Day 50.

**Day 1:** During the first day of the Family Seminar you will meet your child’s instructors and the parents of the other students. You will participate in lectures, interactive lessons and activities in the morning and afternoon. In the evening you will have one hour to engage in an in-depth conversation with one of your child’s Outward Bound Instructors. This meeting is intended to update you on your child’s experience and help prepare for the reunion and family conference the following day. The purpose of the first day is to equip parents with a better understanding of their child’s Outward Bound experience, where they struggled and thrived, what progress they made, and what struggles they may face while transitioning home. By the end of the day you will have learned the same communication, decision making, and anger management lessons that the Instructors taught your child during the expedition, giving you a common vocabulary to use the following day when you interact with your child.

**Day 2:** This is the day you will see your child again (albeit virtually)! This day your child and their group will give a short presentation about their experience. You will have the opportunity to participate in some activities together with your child in the morning. Individual family conferences are scheduled throughout the afternoon. You will have one-and-a-half hours scheduled to have a conversation with your child that will be facilitated by one of their Instructors. This conversation will touch on some of the issues from the past, but is intended to retain a focus on the future. It aims to be the beginning of a conversation that you and your child will continue in the days and weeks to come. It will allow you to reconnect and to begin making a plan for your child’s transition home.

**Day 3:** On the final day of the Seminar, we will begin with conversations and course closure with the large group of parents. The course will conclude two days later in order to give you time to travel to pick up your child.  The students will arrive no later than 11:00 AM on the last day of the course. Please plan your itinerary accordingly.

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| **Day 1** | **Day 2** | **Day 3** |
| **\*\*All times noted below are in Central Standard Time!!** |
| **9:30-10:45am****11:00-12:30pm****1:00-2:30pm****3:00-8:30pm** | Zoom Webinar: Introductions & Overview of Intercept ProgramCourse Overview with InstructorsLunchIntro to course tools, activities,discussions (cont).1-hour scheduled conference with an instructor | **9:30-10:45am****10:45-11:45am****12:00-6:45pm****8:00-8:30 pm** | Parent Zoom: Prepare for conferencesReunion, activities, and student presentation1.5-hour scheduled conference with your child and an instructor. Expedition pictures slideshow | **9:00-11:00am****Sunday****7:30-8:30****pm** | Course closurewith parent group*Course concludes two days later in order to allow* *parents/guardians**time to travel to* *El Paso*Graduation ceremony |

**WHAT TO PREPARE -** It is important that before the Seminar you send the Course Director:

1. **Workbook:** This must be completed and emailed. You will receive a link to the workbook the first day your child is away. This workbook is your daily “homework” while your child is away. It provides you a parallel experience to that of your child’s Outward Bound course and is intended to keep you connected with the experience as well as prepare you for the Family Seminar.
2. **Letter to your child:** You will find guidelines for crafting this letter in the “Week 7” section of the workbook. (“Week 3” of the 28 Day workbook) Scan and email this to the Course Director.
3. [**Narrative request Google Form**](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfvJBoVtQ2xI0eBHgjwj2jirkW9OKoKGJ6qyTun_u06GHhJAw/viewform)**:** The narrative is a written account of your child's Outward Bound course. The instructors will be writing it next week after the course ends. It can be provided to parents, schools, bosses, probation officers, etc. Please use this form to confirm your email and any other email addresses to which you would like us to send your child’s narrative.

**DATES**

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| **Course Number(s):** | **Family Seminar Dates:** |
| VRSF-072 | Thursday, December 3rd - Saturday, December 5th  |
| VRIB-161 | Thursday, February 11th – Saturday, February 13th, 2021 |
| VRSF-171 | Thursday, March 11th – Saturday, March 13th, 2021 |
| VRIB-162 | Thursday, March 25th- Saturday, March 27th, 2021  |

**Travel to/from El Paso:**

Participants must arrive and depart via personal vehicle. No commercial transportation such as airlines, trains, or buses is allowed at this time. Your course advisor will share more specific details.

* **Do NOT make travel arrangements until your child has been medically approved for the course.**
* **However, once your child has been approved, book accommodation as soon as possible. El Paso is a popular winter vacation destination and hotels fill very quickly during winter weekends.**