

Proactive Care for Missionary Marriages

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When a married couple responds to God's call to serve cross-culturally they become a great threat to Satan and his kingdom. Leaving the security of home, adapting to a different culture, and finding a place within a new community presents an unbelievable amount of stress on a marriage. During this workshop we will explore how caregivers can minister from a distance and as well provide tools for debriefing married couples.

5 key areas of significant impact on missionary couples:

1. Departure for the field

2. Field arrival

3. Home life

4. Ministry

5. Home assignment/furlough

Debriefing

Missionary debriefing is a *relational* and *intentional* process that provides an opportunity for a missionary to *tell their* story. It's designed to create time and space in a person's life so they can unpack and process the experiences which they have had, especially while serving on the field. By asking questions and *listening with intent*, you promote an opportunity for a person to verbally process past and recent events from *their point of view*, complete with their emotional responses at the time and since then.

Debriefing Notes from Scott Hicks – Barnabas International

Here are some of the questions and points to ponder in doing a debriefing that I use at the end of a person's term of service. Not all the questions should be used but they serve as a guide to some of what you want the person to share. You want to give the person the freedom to freely tell you what life was like, their thoughts and feelings on the subject, where they currently are in their thinking and help them think through what is needed now and during the rest of their furlough.

The first is to establish a timeline if you don't know the people you are debriefing. Ask them to tell their story of the term, what the experience was like, and make mental notes of high and low points.

I then ask them to get specific.

- ❖ What were some of the high points?
- ❖ What were some of the low points?
- ❖ What do you feel that you have accomplished in the areas of ministry? relationships? family?
- ❖ Did this term go the way you thought or expected it to go?
- ❖ What was the most difficult thing for you? What stand out the most?
- ❖ What did you learn about yourself? What has God taught you about yourself?
- ❖ How do you feel right now, overall, about your term of service?

- ❖ Is there anything you wish you had done differently? or that you would do differently next time?
- ❖ Is there something that you wish you had known before you went?
- ❖ Do you feel that you had enough training for this assignment?
- ❖ Is there anything that your mission could have helped you with for the past term or for the one coming?
- ❖ Right now, what are you feeling the need for?

Throughout the process, try to;

Summarize what you have heard, mentioning both the good and the bad (the difficult). Demonstrates that you've been listening.

Validate the person's experience, especially the difficult ones. This will let the person know you understand.

Don't use the debriefing time for you to tell your story after some point they've made reminds you of something in your life unless it is to make a quick validating point.

When appropriate, try to reframe, maybe during summary statements of what you've heard, some situation that they've been through. For example, like getting caught in a political uprising and a person feels that they shouldn't have been there that they should have known better, it might be possible and appropriate to simply say that situations like that pop up so fast that they are often hard to predict and see how they respond.

Express appreciation for their service.