





# The Essential Support Team

Caring for Your Missionaries in Each Stage of Life

Presented by **Heidi Tunberg, ReachGlobal**

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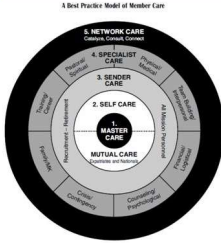
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## A Model of Member Care



1. Master Care
2. Self/ Mutual Care
3. Sender Care
4. Specialist Care
5. Network Care

© 2000 David Pollock & Kelly O'Donnell  
Adapted from *Doing Member Care Well: Perspectives and Practices from Around the World* edited by Kelly O'Donnell

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## Stages of Missionary Life

✦ **Pre-Field – LEAVING stage** (celebration & sorrow)  
Focus: Support team building and preparing for the field

**Ways to help:**

- ✦ Pre-field training
- ✦ Practical help
- ✦ Emotional support
  - Encourage RAFT - Saying goodbye well

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## How to build a R.A.F.T.

- ✦ **R**econciliation
- ✦ **A**ffirmation
- ✦ **F**arewells
- ✦ **T**hink Destination
  - ▣ Seek to make expectations
    - Positive
    - Realistic



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## Stages of Missionary Life

- ✦ **Pre-Field** – LEAVING stage (celebration & sorrow)
 

Focus: Support team building and preparing for the field

**Ways to help:**

  - ▣ Pre-field training
  - ▣ Practical help
  - ▣ Emotional support
    - Encourage RAFT - Saying goodbye well
    - Give permission to grieve

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## Stages of Missionary Life

- ✦ **First years overseas** – TRANSITION stage (chaos)
 

Focus: Language Learning & Cultural Adjustment

**Ways to help:**

  - ▣ Educate yourself on culture shock and transition

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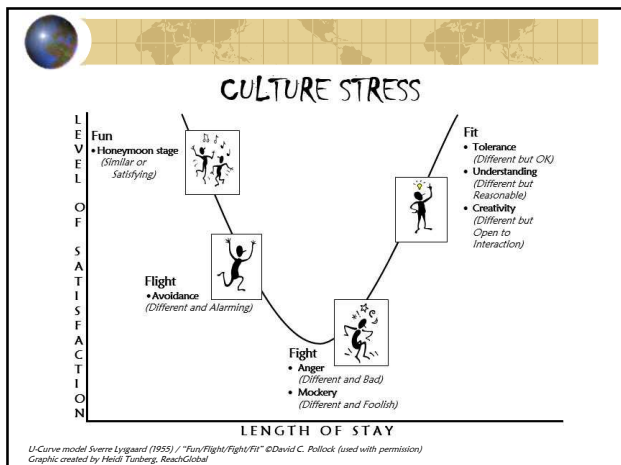
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## Stages of Missionary Life

✦ **First years overseas – TRANSITION stage (chaos)**  
Focus: Language Learning & Cultural Adjustment

**Ways to help:**

- ✦ Educate yourself on culture shock and transition
- ✦ Offer emotional support and perspective
- ✦ Learn what NOT to say
- ✦ Listen for "red flags"

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## ✦ RED FLAGS WARNING OF CULTURE STRESS

When someone in the family is experiencing "culture stress" overseas, the first thing we usually notice is their negative comments about the people or their culture.

Here are some common comments people may make after the novelty wears off:

1. These people are dirty.	2. These nationals don't care.
3. These people are rude.	4. They are so hypercritical.
5. I feel unappreciated.	6. Everything here is so expensive.
7. They have no sense at all.	8. They're inconsiderate.
9. They are really stupid.	10. This is the most ridiculous thing I've ever seen.
11. They are unfriendly.	12. I hate this place.
13. They are years behind us.	14. You can't trust any of them.
15. They are so uncivilized.	16. Why don't they do it our way (the RIGHT way)?

These comments are red flags, warning signals that negative attitudes are developing and a critical attitude is taking root.

Adapted from Mission Training International, Colorado Springs, Used by permission.

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## Stages of Missionary Life

### ✦ First years overseas – TRANSITION stage (chaos)

Focus: Language Learning & Cultural Adjustment

#### Ways to help:

- ✦ Educate yourself on culture shock and transition
- ✦ Offer emotional support and perspective
- ✦ Learn what NOT to say
- ✦ Listen for "red flags"
- ✦ Connect them with resources

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## Stages of Missionary Life

### ✦ Home Assignment

Focus: Reconnecting with supporters and family

#### Ways to help:

- ✦ Encourage good timing (ideally not before 2 years)
- ✦ Provide logistical help (housing, vehicle, etc.)
- ✦ Facilitate opportunities to share
- ✦ Ask good questions and listen well
- ✦ Help them carve out Sabbath time
- ✦ Connect them with resources

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## Stages of Missionary Life

### ✦ Ongoing service – Engagement stage (settled)

Focus: Pursuing ministry opportunities and managing on-going life transitions

#### Ways to help:

- ✦ Maintain a relationship through on-going communication (maybe even visits!)
- ✦ Learn about Third Culture Kids and cultivate relationships with their children (if any)
- ✦ Receive their MKs (if any) when it's time for college
- ✦ Connect them with resources

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## Stages of Missionary Life

### ✚ Return from the Field – Transition stage (chaos)

Focus: Reverse culture shock & re-establishing "home"

#### **Ways to help – put it all together!:**

- ☒ Provide logistical help
- ☒ Offer emotional support
  - Encourage RAFT - Saying goodbye well
  - Give permission to grieve
- ☒ Ask good questions and listen well
- ☒ Remember what not to say
- ☒ Refresh your memory on culture shock
- ☒ Watch for red flags
- ☒ Connect them with resources

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