

TEAM ON-SITE DEBRIEFING



Training Resource of:



Central Canadian District
Christian & Missionary Alliance in Canada
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Unit to be used by:

Leader or Leadership team
Team Members

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I don't know any more important practice that will help a team and a team leader than evening debriefings. Used effectively the team debrief has an immense impact on team dynamics including communications. The Debrief time is also the perfect place to air and resolve team conflict.

Included in this Module...

Discussion Points

On Site

A. Debriefing: A Vital Necessity

B. Dealing With Relational Problems

Discussion Points

- 1.** Print the following pages and discuss as a team.
- 2.** Why should your team use debriefing as a part of the mission experience?
- 3.** How will debriefing deal with realigning expectation with experience?
- 4.** How does debriefing contribute to building a stronger team?
- 5.** How will your onsite debriefing play out?

On Site

“Many of the activities that a group does in a cross cultural setting: ordering food off foreign menus, queuing up for public transport, getting on and off public transportation at the right stop, getting in and out of vehicles, walking along site seeing routes, narrow sidewalks, pickpocket territory, moving luggage in and out of hotels, require precision and promptness. The team leader who has his people’s ear makes it simple. Responsiveness is bred from respect. If you don’t have their attention, and respect at home, you will rarely earn it on the field.”(Richard P. Reichert, *Before You Buy The Ticket*)

A. Debriefing: A Vital Necessity

During your trip the most crucial relational tool needed to keep the team running smoothly is feedback. The participants and leaders need time to talk together. Each night prior to ending your evening, have your team assemble in the leader’s room for a debrief on the day’s events. A scheduled team meeting can help in the following ways:

It helps the team deal with disappointments.

As a team they need time together, apart from hosts, to voice their disappointments and to decide together to work at overcoming their disappointments.

It allows time to cope with problems or complaints.

Allowing for feedback will give opportunity for the leaders to find out what things are bothering team members.

It allows for confrontations.

There will be times when some of the people need to be exhorted. There will be times when some of the people will need encouragement. Team feedback time is most appropriate for these confrontations.

As a leader, you can set the tone for positive relationships by concentrating on these tasks:

- Be an encourager. Remember to give each other many words of encouragement and praise.
- Be a good manager of others’ skills. Be patient with beginning efforts of others as they handle ministry assignments, often for the first time. Correct mistakes gently and at the same time watch carefully to catch team members doing things right.
- Celebrate life together. Find reasons to give thanks to God and do so out loud. Express gratitude for little things that often go unnoticed.
- Make ministry fun. Ministry and fun do not have to be mutually exclusive, even when the ministry is hot, sweaty, and demanding. This is an important truth to

communicate to everyone. Help them find pleasure in what they are accomplishing and find moments to play and joke together while doing ministry.

- Communicate with others. Share with your team what God is doing in your life and what He is teaching you. Share your questions about life with them and share the discoveries that you are making about yourself and God. Your openness may be the catalyst for deep, honest relationships. Ask others what they are going through and what they are learning.
- Pray for the people you are working with. Make sure your team is constantly in prayer for each other. Share your answers to prayer and find comfort in them.
- This time of debriefing is a wonderful opportunity for you as a leader to share with your team God's vision for the Great Commission. Take advantage of these times together to train and mature your team.

In one of your last meetings on the field, be sure to remind your team of the challenge of returning home and the emotional and spiritual struggle they are likely to face after the initial euphoria wears off. Remind them there will be a debriefing session shortly after return, to sort out their experiences and regroup, and that you will be meeting regularly for a month to support each other as you seek to integrate the experience into life back home. Pray now for this process.

B. Dealing With Relational Problems

1. Handling stress

- Get away from the situation for a couple of minutes and do some deep breathing. Take a brisk walk or short run in a safe place to release some of the anxiety.
- If you find yourself confronted with problems, make out the worst case scenario and find a solution.
- Keep a sense of humor, especially about yourself. Laughing will help relieve tension and is good for you.
- Remember that in one sense nothing really depends on you. God is in control of the situation. Let God be God—don't take yourself so seriously that you find yourself taking on His responsibilities.
- Express your feelings honestly. This can help lessen the anxiety and may also cause someone near you to help by sharing a tough situation with you.
- Lean on your team. Knowing you are not alone can lessen the stress you feel.
- Pray. Sometimes stress and anxiety can fog your thinking and feelings about God. He still loves you no matter how you are feeling and He is there to help you, so reach for His help.

2. Dealing with crisis

- Don't look to place blame for the situation on a person or group of people. This is non-productive behavior and can easily lead to an us/them situation.
- If the situation is emotionally "hot," let yourself cool down before you react.
- Keep calm. Get away from the situation before you make your decision.
- Pray, either by yourself or with one or two people with whom you can share the situation and who can help you with problem-solving in the situation.
- With the two or three people mentioned above, look for practical solutions to the problem you are facing. Write out all the possible solutions and prioritize them.
- Attempt the solutions in priority order.
- Try to remain flexible so that new information and ideas will get a fair hearing.
- Keep praying while reacting.
- Try to envision God with you in this crisis. He is, so try to get a mental picture of His working in and through you.

3. Resolving personal conflicts

- Realize that conflict will be inevitable in a cross-cultural and stressful ministry situation.
- Deal with conflict in a loving and productive way.
- Deal with conflict quickly and directly.
- If you are having a problem with someone else, take your problem directly to that person, and not to anyone else (Mat 18:15). Do not involve third parties until the two of you have attempted to talk out the problem between you.
- If you can reach no settlement in your conflict, then take the problem to team leadership.

4. Helping others resolve conflicts

- Pray for those in conflict and for your wisdom.
- Listen first to one side of the story. Then listen to the other side. If necessary, do this in private, each party separated from the other.
- Bring both parties together and reword the conflict as it appears to you. Ask both parties if you have understood the conflict thoroughly.

- Look for a middle ground, possible compromise solutions, or areas for negotiations in the problem. Get input from both parties.
- If possible, bring both parties to an agreement on a compromise and have them each make a commitment to that approach to the problem. Attempt reconciliation between the two. Ask for a promise from them to treat each other as if this conflict had never occurred.
- If a hard decision needs to be made and compromise and reconciliation eludes the two parties, then make the decision for them and ask them to promise to abide by it.
- Close your time together in prayer.
- Keep this matter totally confidential in its particulars.