

Emotionally Leaving Well: helping us to help others

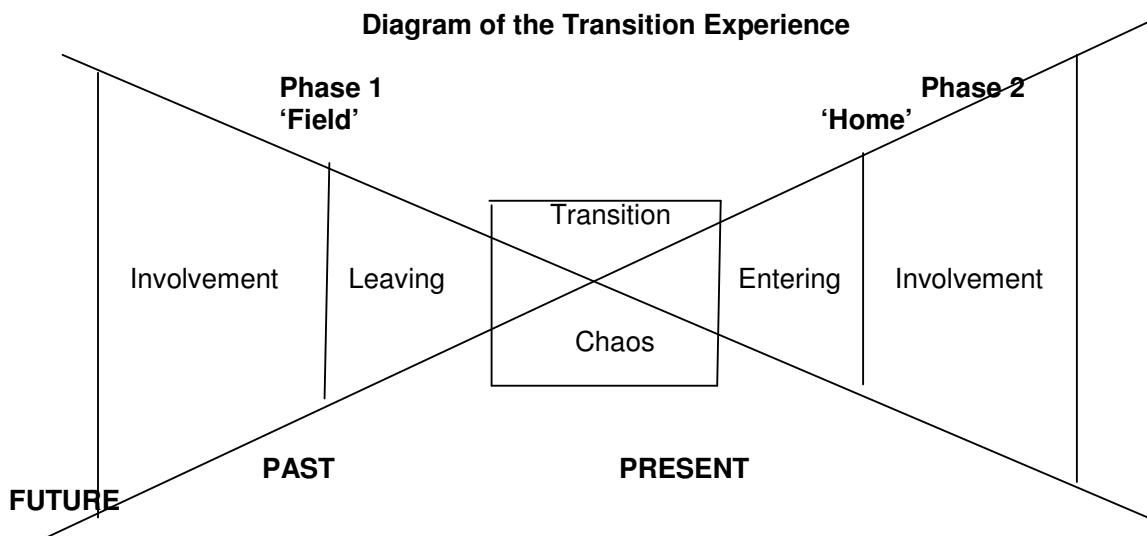
Outline:

- A. Transition, Change and Loss
- B. Helping people face the Grieving Process
- C. When do people need further help or counselling?
- D. Dealing with your own feelings of Grief, Anger and Exhaustion.
- E. Resources

A. Transition, Change and Loss

Transition is the name given to the process of change which takes place when we move from one place to another. It may be of a **minor** nature (e.g. visiting a new place) or can describe a **major** upheaval in our lives with the resultant stress (e.g. change of home/job/surroundings /relationships/climate when missionaries return home).

Re-entry - the adjustment from life on the mission field, to life in the 'home' country is a major transition, intensified by the cultural factors involved.



People need **time and focus** to leave their life, role, friendships and country. We as Agencies need to encourage them to make time to leave- perhaps finish their job and then have 1-2 weeks to pack and say good-bye.

***Closure is the art of bringing to a satisfactory conclusion
the passage of life through which we have just passed.
Closure enables us to move from one passage of life to another
without carrying burdens of guilt, anger, anxiety
and false expectations.***

1. Exit Interview in the Field Before they Leave

Probably 1 month minimum before they leave.

Take notes, have member read them, add to them and both parties sign them.

a. Your Mission Years:

- * What things did you do well?
- * What things were a challenge and how did you work with the challenge?
- * What did you gain from your time overseas?
- * In what areas do you see yourself needing more growth and/or input?
- * What insights did you learn about yourself?
- * What did you learn about mission?
- * What did you learn about your mission agency?
- * How are you personally remembering your time here- photos, visiting favourite places, time with friends.....?

b. Returning to UK and thinking about how they will meet the challenges while on field:

- * Some people go on a holiday before they reach their home country to help them be rested before all the re-entering.
- * What do they think will hit them most when they return?
- * What support do they have available in their Family/relationships? Church? Community? Agency?
- * What are the emotions and needs of the present?
- * What is their time frame for getting things sorted, finding a job, etc?

c. Celebration of their contribution(s)

- * This should be something they have some knowledge about and perhaps a say into.
- * Take all members of the family into consideration and have affirmation for each person.

d. Practical Help on their Re-Entry

5 Fingers of Adjustment

- 1) Be aware of the Process
- 2) Continue to be a "L"earner: "L" is for learner not looser, lonely or lunatic.
- 3) Be open to receive help
- 4) Make plans and do what you can
- 5) Recognise God's involvement

2. Agency Debrief in UK

- * Agency Debrief in UK with their Church involved if possible.
- * Talk with each member of the family and encourage both spouses to 'tell their own story'.

a. Concerns on your Return

- * People come back for different reasons, planned and unplanned. What are your predominant emotions now that you have returned?
- * Which of these emotions are you finding difficult to work with?
- * Who are you sharing & praying through these emotions with? What effect is that having?
- * What do you miss about the situation you were in?
- * How have you changed during your time away?
Physically?
Emotionally?
Spiritually?
In outlook and values?

Socially?
 Financially?
 Other ways?

- * What are your goals now that you have returned?
- * What obstacles might keep you from achieving your goals?
- * What help do you need to achieve your goals?

b. Mentors in their church:

- * Who can help them with shopping, finances, children, CV writing, handy-man repairs etc
- * Someone mission savvy to pray with weekly or bi-weekly during the re-entry process. This could even be by phone if no one is local.
- * A helpful phrase to ask for help "I've been out of the country for sometime, I wonder if you might be able to help me with....." (e.g. Petrol in the car, automated grocery shopping,)

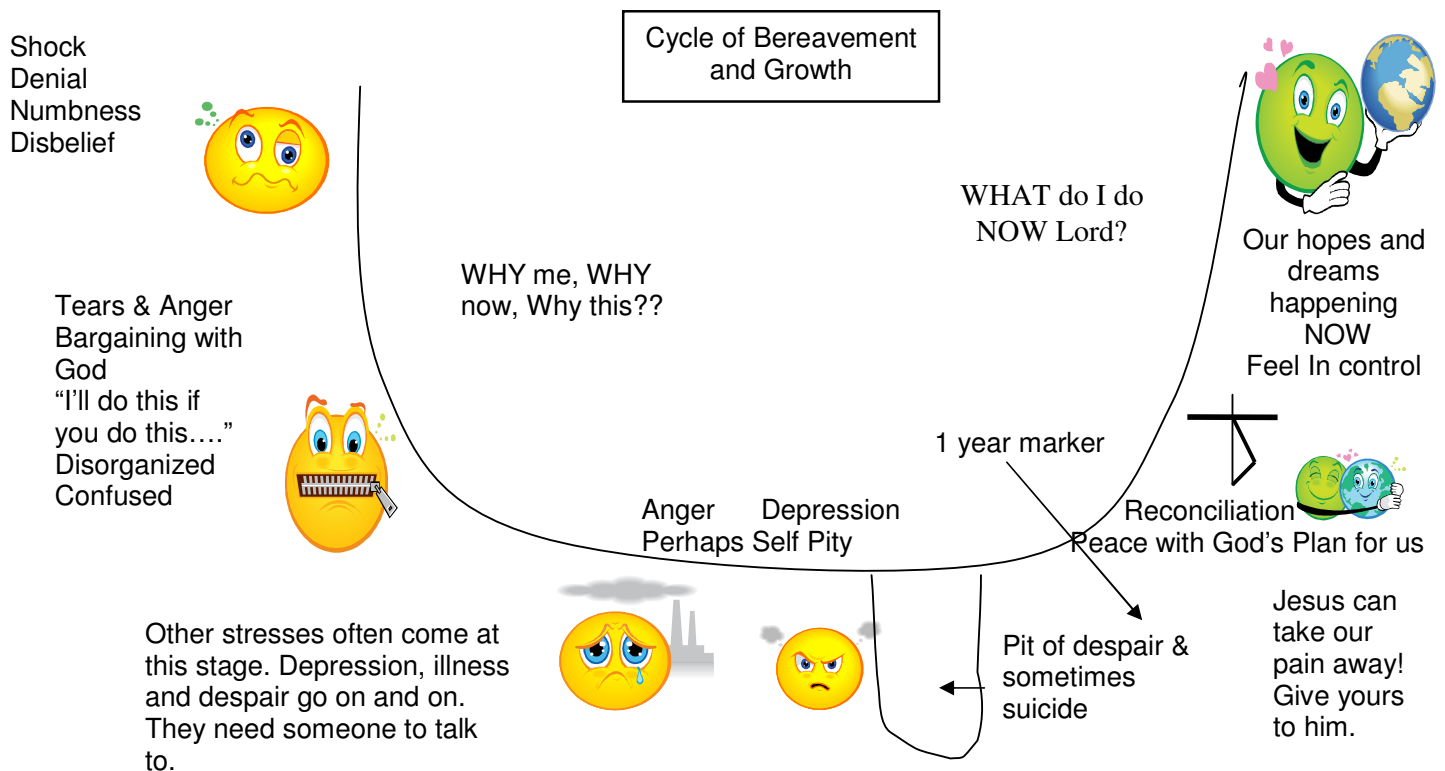
c. Time to Tell their Story: (some like to tell it & others don't)

- * Friends & acquaintances quickly get disinterested
- * Network of others who have returned
- * Mission conferences & Mission stands can be great places for returnees to Tell their story
- * Outside Debrief paid by Agency for people who have served 2 or more years.

d. Sudden or Unexpected Return:

- * Making a party-line of what to say to people about the return home.
- * One contact person to speak to relatives if necessary
- * Mission to pay for you to go back for a good-bye in a few months/years time (this depends on well-being of the individual)

B. Helping people face the Grieving Process of Change Including Role, Loss, Identity, Bereavement, Anger, Fear



The Four Tasks of Grief

1. Accepting the Reality of the Loss

- * Intellectual recognition of the loss (of role, place, people, cultural & calendar markers)
- * Deeper emotional recognition that the loss is irrevocable (you have left and it will never be the same).

2. Working through the Emotions of Grief

- * Releasing tears-tears are healing and surprise us coming at the most unexpected moments.
- * Expressing anger, fear, guilt and other feelings.
- * Really hear their anger if they express it.
 - “Tell me more what you thought & felt.”
 - “I’m glad you can express it.”
 - “Apologize if you can.”
 - “What might we do to prevent this happening in the future?”
- * Telling our story. We need to do this over and over again. Our story affirms our past and personhood.

3. Adjusting to Living in our Changed World

- * Making new contact with people.
- * Doing practical tasks such as household chores or finances, car maintenance.
- * Learning about the ‘new place’. Be as inquisitive about it as you were with Mission country.
- * Ask for HELP when needed. This builds relationships.
- * Adjusting can be a time of tremendous personal growth.

4. Reinvesting Emotional Energy

- * Moving from focusing on what has been ‘lost’ to noticing what is still open to us in life.
- * Developing the willingness to reinvest our emotional energy in new activities and new attachments.
- * Beginning to carry our memories with us into a new life, not as a burden but as an enrichment.

Four R’s of Resettlement

Relinquish old attachments.

Release old assumptive world.

Readjust What are the Joys/Challenges of NOW What do I do NOW Who am I NOW

Reinvest What do you have for me NOW Lord

This work takes time, energy, and courage. We are working on all the tasks at different levels throughout the course of grief. Healthy grief work is a long process in which the first three tasks are done over and over again until we reach some resolution and are able to reinvest our energy and move on in our lives.

Typical Time Frame of Grief

1. Numbness – 0-6 months, normal to function mechanically

Task: to protect self from feeling the full impact of loss

Denial & Disbelief: task oriented, get resettled, make a place to live, deputation, organize paperwork. Tiredness!! Confusion.

Not ready to deal with feelings; fleeting anger.

2. Disorganization: 6-12 months, normal to feel intense loneliness

Task: to acknowledge impact of loss (home, friends, work/ministry, weather, the known, etc)

Some depression, weeping, sleep and appetite difficulties

Need to express feelings

Roller-coaster of emotions: dysfunctional, but normal

No longer protected; full impact of loss is felt; living feels overwhelming

In Acute Suffering: panic, inability to concentrate, confusion, anger/hostility, guilt, impaired decision-making, lack of motivation, susceptibility to illness, tightness in throat, shortness of breath. Resistance to relinquishing old ties.

3. Reorganization: 12-24 months, less intensity to feelings, occasional peacefulness

Task: finish emotional relationship with past/ deceased

Need: encouragement to re-enter mainstream

Sleep and appetite come back.

Times when you don't think about your losses.

Setbacks: holidays, anniversaries, birthdays, Christmas memories.

C. When does a Person Need Further Help, Counselling etc?

Complicated grief is like being in a chronic, heightened state of mourning.

Signs and symptoms of complicated grief can include:

Preoccupation with your sorrow

Inability to enjoy life

Problems accepting the loss

Difficulty moving on with life

Trouble carrying out normal routines

Withdrawing from social activities

Numbness or detachment

Irritability or agitation

Bitterness about your loss

Feeling that life holds no meaning or purpose

Depression or deep sadness

Lack of trust in others

Some estimates suggest that as few as 6 percent or as many as 20 percent of bereaved people develop complicated grief. If a person is still depressed at 18 months they need to get counselling help.

Listen out for statements of 'ending it all', 'no purpose in living', etc.

Ask them to rate themselves on a scale of 0-10.

0 = feeling Very Happy 10 = feeling very depressed, suicidal. If in the 7-10 range.

They definitely need to see GP. In 8-10 range I ask them to see GP NOW TODAY and might go with them.

Encourage them to speak to their GP about their grief.

Encourage them to get counselling.

D. Dealing with your own Feelings of Grief, Anger and Exhaustion

Your own emotions can be retriggered by listening to your personnel's emotions.

What emotions did your member(s) speak about and what emotion(s) have you noticed in yourself after an interview with your members?

What did you do with your emotions – nothing, tell someone about them, get angry or upset with someone else?

How much do things your members say stay in your head and clog up your life?

Who do you speak to regarding processing issues- a line manager, supervisor, spiritual mentor?

If you need a supervisor you can look on:

www.bacp.co.uk (National body of counsellors – look under supervision)
or www.acc-uk.org (assoc. of Christian counsellors) look in your post code area, ask around, get regular supervision if your load is heavy or time to time supervision for when cases are demanding. If not happy with supervisor talk it through with them and if no change get another one. You do need to be choosy, see if they are sound, as all professions have unwise people in them.

How might Jesus carry this burden for you? How might this happen more for you?

Using imagery of placing things at Jesus' feet and leaving them there for him to hold.

E. Resources

Books

Burn up or Splash Down Marion Knell 2006
Effective Debriefing Handbook Debbie Lovell-Hawker People in Aid 2002
Families on the Move Marion Knell 2003
Praying our Goodbyes Joyce Rupp 2002
Re-Entry Making the transition from missions to life at home Peter Jordan 1992
The Third Culture Kid Experience: Growing Up among Worlds David Pollock & Ruth Van Reken esp. ch 11 Unresolved grief
Grief: www.businessballs.com/elisabeth_kubler_ross_five_stages_of_grief.htm

Spiritual Nourishment:

Open to God Joyce Huggett 1993 ed.
Return of the Prodigal Henri Nouwen
Wounds that Heal: Bringing our hurts to the Cross Stephen Seamands Eagle Publ.

Websites

www.oscar.org.uk spiritual gifts, writing a CV, job vacancies, other mission agencies
www.globalconnections.co.uk standards in mission practice, events, network & articles
www.xenosmk.org British-based org. for TCKs, activities & articles
www.tckworld.com research and links to other TCK resources
www.mmct.org. info on trauma, debriefing etc.

Other Agencies specific to Mission

www.interhealth.org.uk - London based: health checks, inoculations, psychological assessments & counselling

www.healthlink360.org – Edinburgh based: health checks, inoculations, psychological assessments & counselling

Debbie Lovell- Hawker: doctors_hawker@yahoo.co.uk counselling/ teaching/ advising /debriefs

Maryann Richard: maryannrichard@blueyonder.co.uk counselling/ teaching/ psychological assessments/ debriefs and EMDR Trauma therapy

Re-Entry Courses for Mission personnel returning to UK

Course: New Directions info@penhurst.org.uk Tel 01424 892088 in Kent

5-8 October led by Tony Horsfall

26-29 January 2010 led by Maryann Richard

18-21 July 4pm Sun to 2:30 pm Wed Led by Tony Horsfall & Debbie Hawker

16-18 October 4pm Fri – 2:30 pm Mon Led by Mike Frith