



## Module 8 : Disaster Team Functioning 2

Project and Trip Management  
Issues

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### CR vs. Mission Trips

- Heterogeneous groups
- More unpredictable
  - Personal safety
  - Schedules
  - Work
- More tension
- Situation, people's needs different
- More flexible

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**SELECTION AND SCREENING OF TEAMS**

- **EMOTIONAL**
  - maturity and ability to withstand trauma
- **PHYSICAL**
  - relatively healthy and able to endure sleepless nights, poor conditions and probable stress on the body
- **SPIRITUAL**
  - maturity in spiritual walk

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**ISSUES OF AUTHORITY AND SUBMISSION**

- **“ATTACK THE LEADER SYNDROME”**
  - Questioning of leadership and authority.
- **Unresolved issues of projection and transference**
  - Projection – the placing of a person’s own inner conflicts upon an authority figure rather than upon oneself (eg.fear)
  - Transference – the transfer of feelings (usually towards parental figures) towards a leader
- **Rebellion**
  - the “Jezebel” spirit (1Sam.15:23, 1 Kgs.18:19, etc)

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**RESOLVING DIFFERENCES, DEALING WITH CONFLICTS**

- Normal conflicts due to individual differences of style, opinion and culture
- Leadership styles (eg. autocratic verses democratic/consensus)
- In most disaster relief situations, there will be a need for a more centralized, hierarchical, directive model of leadership.
  - See the Incident Command section for the model of leadership
  - The need for “order” out of “chaos
  - Event Stabilization

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**RESOLVING DIFFERENCES, DEALING WITH CONFLICTS**

- Conflicts arising out of stress and emotional fatigue as a result of jet lag, sleep deprivation, physical discomfort, etc.
- Conflicts over issues of control – dealing with the need to control situations which are often “out of control” (ie. “helplessness”)

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**INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES (GENDER, CULTURE, ETC.)**

- **INEVITABILITY**
  - when a team is gathered from many nations and backgrounds, differences are inevitable. Team problems will arise

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**INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES (GENDER, CULTURE, ETC.)**

- **UNITY**
  - Christian unity – a direction and value system which is Biblical and brought about through effort and prayer
  - Crisis mentality – when in an emergency situation and while focused on a common and immediate goal (such as distributing food in a refugee camp / building a levee against an impending flood) artificial unity can occur

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**INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES (GENDER, CULTURE, ETC.)**

- GENDER
  - Men and women often react differently to stress. Men often react with anger, rage, or physically, whereas women often react with depression or tears.

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**INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES (GENDER, CULTURE, ETC.)**

- CULTURE – Though there are many cultural differences, there are many contributing factors :
  - The disaster is in a “foreign” culture / nation – Therefore the relief team may be insensitive or unaware of cultural norms or differences (eg. women wearing “revealing” clothes in a conservative Muslim nation; “hugging” strangers of the opposite sex as a sign of support, serving the women before the men in a typical Hindu cultural context).
  - Cultural differences occur “within” the team members

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**INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES (GENDER, CULTURE, ETC.)**

- ASIAN v. WESTERN CULTURE – An example of some typical differences :
  - DIRECTNESS OF COMMUNICATION v. INDIRECTNESS
  - THE AVOIDANCE OF CONFRONTATION v. DIRECT DEALING WITH ISSUES
  - SAVING FACE

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### MAINTAINING FOCUS

- The need for a team to maintain its goal-directedness. If the goal is to preach the Gospel the team can lose focus and become focused on secondary goals such as food distribution, etc

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### TEAM ALLOCATION

- Team leader
- Treasurer
- Logistics
- Journal/Recorder/Photographer
- Spiritual : worship, prayer
- Team Welfare

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### PRACTICAL PREPARATION AS A TEAM

- Checklist
  - Visa, air tickets
  - Vaccinations
  - Money
  - Briefing, maps, word list
  - Travel insurance
  - Team building (setting the norms)
  - Role allocation
  - Logistic issues (shared group items to pack)
  - Corporate prayer

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### SHARED GROUP ITEMS

- First Aid
- Group Medicine
- Communal Items
- Equipment, stationary etc. appropriate for your ministry or job
- Aid to the victims

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### DURING THE TRIP

- Field Dynamics
  - Relating with survivors
  - Relating with local host
  - Relating with team members
- 5 Common Mistakes to Avoid in the Field
- Daily Routine

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### Field Dynamics

- Relating with Survivors
  - Demonstrating love, winning hearts
  - How do they see you
  - Not appropriate to preach openly in times of crisis, pray for openings
  - Open doors through practical love (we sow, someone else will reap)
  - Be spiritually alert when God opens doors

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### Field Dynamics

- Relating with Host
  - Honor local leadership: we give them recognition, they gain respect of locals
  - We exhibit servant hearts : ours is a limited temporary presence
  - Don't leave them to pick up the mess we create
  - They have a better understanding of the local situation: seek their opinion on major decisions

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### Field Dynamics

- Relating to Team Members
  - No heroes
  - Success of whole mission depends on whether we can stick together as a team
  - Effort from everyone
  - Different expectations: be tolerant & flexible
  - Common vision
  - Conflict resolution
  - Role assignment & responsibility

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### 5 COMMON MISTAKES IN THE FIELD

1. To much emphasis on either the practical or spiritual aspect of relief work
2. Failing to identify with the people & to value them.
3. Wrong focus (ego trip for us)
4. Lack of common vision, clearly defined goals & strategy, lack of briefing & instructions, communication: unfulfilled expectations, unhappiness, disunity
5. Team members have unresolved issues projected to other team members

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### THEREFORE...

1. Be practical in dealing with problems but understand there is a spiritual realm
2. Understand cross cultural communications, be a servant to them
3. Let Jesus be seen, not us
4. Have a common vision, clearly defined goals & strategy, adequate briefings, keep everyone informed
5. Select fairly mature people

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### Daily Routine

- Morning Devotion & Prayer
- Work
- Evening debrief
  - Everyone encouraged to share
  - Confidential
  - No judging, accusing, criticizing
  - To share personal thoughts to help each other learn together, move towards “resolution”
  - Not for settling disagreements, criticize or complain
- Business meeting
  - Evaluate work, implement improvements

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### Stress in the Field

- Cumulative Stress
  - Heavy workload, poor communication, frustration
  - “burn out”
- Traumatic Stress
  - Major upsetting event you have undergone or witnessed
  - Sense of unreality, insomnia, emotionally numb, recurrent images , tense / headache

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### Stress in the Field

- How to help yourself?
  - Remember your reactions are normal & unavoidable
  - Express your feelings
  - Speak to people you know & trust
  - Take care of yourself, eat well, exercise. Avoid alcohol
  - Speak to a stress counselor when you return

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### POST TRIP

- Debrief & closure
  - We need return to our “regular” lives
  - Briefing will help you think express your feelings and help you to “move on”
  - Give yourself a few days to make this transition
  - Your family’s reaction may not be what you think you “deserve”
  - Anticipate mood swings, strong emotional reactions

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### FINAL WORDS

- To survive a trip:
  - Spiritual preparation
  - Knowing why you go & managing your expectations
  - Knowing what to expect (roles, work, emotions)
  - Know what to do when you get home

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