

DEBRIEFING

Many kinds

Personal Debriefing

Debriefing is intentional and specific, scheduled listening following an intense and unusual experience. It is done for the purpose of supporting, caring, providing feedback, giving perspective and help to the person.

- It is an honest acknowledge of the situation and its effects.
- It leads to acceptance of the situation, and eventually becoming grateful to God even for this difficult experience.

- It is...
- Telling your story
- With both facts and feelings
- To a trustworthy person,
- Someone with whom you feel safe
- Knowing that person will not judge you, they will accept you, and they won't try to fix it.

- Debriefing takes time.
- This is not the time to tell your story.
- Don't take notes.
- It's ok to be silent, let the person gather his thoughts.

Some debriefing questions...

- What happened?
- How did you handle that?
- What was the hardest part?
- What helped you get through that?
- What feels unfinished about that?
- How did God help you?

- What gave you strength?
- How are you different because of that?
- How were you able to help others?
- What will you remember most?
- How will you use that experience?

Organizational debriefing

- May involve a whole group, as in an evacuation event.
- Or it may have been very public and impacted many though it was an individual event, such as a suicide.

Suicide of a member...

- Debriefing a whole group of 500...
- Leader called a meeting and asked me to come 'talk to us'.
- "How shall we think about this sad event? How do we make sense of something that makes no sense?"

- I helped them understand the level of despair that a suicide represents.
- Helpless—I can't do anything about this; I can't help myself.
- Hapless – bad things always happen to me.
- Hopeless – no one can help me; there's no hope for me

- Gave them some suggestions about next steps.
- Don't condemn the person or the family.
- Tend to your own relationships; talk about this with your family.
- Counselors are available and waiting to talk.

- Brought back memories for some.
- I gave them some suggestions of things to read.

Evacuation debrief

- Began with the whole group
- Worship first – their own music
- Tell the story—what happened? What happened first? Then what? Etc.
- How did this impact you all?

- Then small groups – talk together about how you felt, pray for one another.
- Then individuals, as couple together or separately as they preferred.

Time with children

- Teens separately from adults but together
- Middle age children together
- 6 – 10 years with a counselor with parents around them.

Administrators were involved in the whole group session

- After the individual time with a debriefer, each couple met with their administrator to discuss next steps. How to spend the next month or so.
- Any decisions about the future should be made by the administrator, not the debriefer.

Hostage Debrief

- Hostage survivor with the family, the security person, and 2 or 3 debriefers.
- Again, telling the story with all parties contributing their perspective on what happened.
- Individual time with hostage, spouse, and family.
- Looking ahead

Some articles on debriefing

1. Introduction to Debriefing
2. Debriefing in Mission Settings
3. Guiding Principles of Debriefing

Also End of Service Debrief

- A leader moving out of a long, very public role
- A loved person retiring after many years of service
- It should be given to everyone at the end of their service.
- It allows an opportunity to thank people

Debriefing has been proven very beneficial

- It helps people process very strong and deep feelings
- It helps to make some sense of something that makes no sense
- It reminds people that they are cared for.
- It helps them know they're not alone