



What's unique about singles?  
What kind of help do they need?

- Discuss in small groups:
- 1. How many single women do you have in your agency?
- 2. How many single men?
- 3. What challenges do they face?
- 4. How have you helped them?

**The Wycliffe Situation**

- Between 20 and 22% of our Wycliffe members are single. And they are not all alike.
- More single women than men.
- Singles are of all ages, and are very different. Some are single because they are widowed.

- Others are single because they are divorced. Some are single because they have chosen singleness.
- Some of the widowed persons have children. Some singles also have children by adoption.

- And singles come from every country.
- What does such diversity say to us?

- I believe it means we must work hard to understand the unique needs of singles, and do our best to help them uniquely—they cannot be treated all alike.



**Some of their challenges...**

- \* Raising support alone
- \* Making life decisions alone
- \* Facing the mission application process alone
- \* Lacking the comfort and feedback a spouse gives
- \* Going on vacation alone
- \* Celebrating holidays alone



- \* Growing old alone
- \* Being misunderstood by a culture where marriage is the norm, and it is expected
- \* Maintaining a house and vehicle and other equipment
- \* Making a home alone
- \* No one to talk to at night



**On your handout, pages 4 and 5, there are a number of issues:**

- Please read these 31 issues in your small group.
- Now discuss what your agency has done to help these folks before they go to the field. How have you prepared them for single missionary life and work?



**What can member care do for singles?**

- 1. With applicants who are single, discuss issues of singleness as part of the preparation process. Find ways to point out the advantages of being single. Listen to their fears of going abroad alone. Encourage them to make national friendships.



- Connect the single person with an older, happy, single missionary so the single applicant can ask whatever questions he or she may have, and so he or she can see a happy, fulfilled single missionary



- Help the single candidate know how to talk with his family about his decision to be a single missionary.



- 2. Community care. (on field)
- Burden-bearing is one of the things we all need, and we can all participate in. Valuing one another, extending hospitality, playing together, sharing holidays and vacations with families, establishing a system



- of prayer partners, or of partnering of a support person with a village translation team.
- Utilize singles in leadership activities and opportunities.
- Singles should be represented on the field leadership team, such as the Executive Committee



- Or the Crisis Management Committee, or the Social Committee, or the Devotional Committee. Just because they are single does not mean they cannot make good decisions!



- 3. Encourage the single to take initiative in self care. Help them reach out and make friends of both mission colleagues and national or local people. Don't wait to be invited—be an inviting person. Extend hospitality, plan outings, include families in your life.



- The single must cultivate a deep and real relationship with God. She also needs to learn new skills—computer use, vehicle repair, language adequacy, house maintenance. The more a single can do for herself, the more independent and secure she will feel.



- And she will also feel more like a welcome member of the community, a contributor to community life, rather than merely and usually a supplicant.



- 4. Look ahead. Furloughs are difficult for single missionaries. How can the agency and the church support this person while on furlough?
- And retirement alone can be very difficult—where? With whom? Will there be enough money?



**Summary:**

- 1. Singles are men and women created in the image of God and should be treated with the same respect and value as a married person or couple. They are not less, though they are different in some ways.



- 2. Single workers have different needs—for companionship, logistical help, practical daily living; attention should be given to ways of helping without demeaning.



- 3. Friendship skills will be very important in building relationships with single workers, and with nationals. Help them if these relationships seem to be getting too close...



- 4. The member care person can talk with same-sex singles about the temptations that singles face; help them understand these temptations and know how to protect themselves.



- 5. A field member care person should do some basic research to become familiar with the scope and diversity of the members of that group—what cultures, ages, kinds of people are there? And then be prepared to help.