

Editorial: Proposing Three Foundational “Ingredients” of Member Care

Harry wrote an editorial a couple months ago about “closing the gaps” in global Member Care (MC). He suggested we offer “ingredients” and not “the whole cake” so that Member Care (“the cake”) can be developed to fit each cultural context.

So we wondered: **“What ingredients from our experience in MC as the Mobile Member Care Team (MMCT) might be helpful to others?”** Since we announced [MMCT’s upcoming closure](#), many have written us about ingredients of the MMCT ministry that impacted them these past 18 years. As we review the responses, three ingredients stand out: **Building Intentional Community, Training/Mentoring and Networking.**

Building Intentional Community: Early on, our team embraced Henri Nouwen’s message, **“From Solitude to Community to Ministry”**, and committed to keep those three things in balance and in their correct order. As a team, we determined to demonstrate that it IS possible to live and minister together as a grace-filled community, despite opposition from our enemy. And by God’s grace, it became common for workshop participants to share their observations of the love among us and the enjoyment we had serving together. Did it require work and intentionality on our part? Yes! And it only worked when we each consistently spent time in communion with our Father: From Solitude... to Community... to Ministry.

Training/Mentoring: The need was too big for our small team: we had to train others. We did well over 100 week-long workshops and touched a lot of lives. Trained peer crisis responders, in turn, touch hundreds of lives as they provide care to traumatized fellow missionaries and local believers. Mentoring workshop co-facilitators in the content, as well as the training process, thrilled us and multiplied our efforts, too! Investing in these folks with hearts for MC was a high privilege. MMCT training partners and peer crisis responders went on to develop MC in their own mission, inter-mission and church communities. This was God’s answer to our prayer to multiply our “five loaves and two fish”!

Networking: Inter-mission trainings provided the secondary gain of networking opportunities for missionaries - especially mission leaders who felt isolated and MC workers looking for resources and kindred spirits. We came to understand the African proverb: “It takes a string to gather pearls together.” We aimed to be the string, gathering communities of previously isolated missionaries, leaders or MC workers. We facilitated the networking process during trainings: doing *inter-mission* workshops, integrating small groups and raising scholarship funds so participants could afford to be residential at workshops. As these “pearls” bonded and some of them became strings, we faded back, smiled at one another and knew the Father’s pleasure.

In our experience, the African proverb is right: *“If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.”* But networking is not easy and usually for a local MC network to thrive, a couple people in the network need to share this same vision: to be the string or the “network weavers”. Those of you who feel drawn to this calling are very welcome to use the [networking resources](#) on our website.

Three Ingredients: We highly recommend these Three Ingredients to mix into the MC cake of your own cultural contexts: Build Intentional Community, Train/Mentor others and Develop Networks.

And we look forward to learning about other ingredients God is giving to our Global Member Care Network!

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