

Peer Responder Self-Assessment

Relational Roles

In the cross-cultural worker community, people will always have multiple roles with each other. Some examples of that: Your doctor is also your neighbor and your children are best friends; your child's teacher is also your team leader's wife and you lead a committee she is on.

Likewise, you may find yourself in a position of being asked to debrief someone who you are connected with in various ways. Helping someone through a crisis can create a special bond to that person and can also leave them feeling indebted to you or vulnerable with you. Because of this, it is important to take responsibility to guard against any kind of exploitation or harm that might occur as a result of this vulnerability.

There are certain types of relationships that might complicate or compromise the ability of the crisis responder to provide necessary care. That includes:

- Relative
- Close friend
- Boss
- Subordinate
- Past unresolved conflicts
- Current tension in relationship

Peer Responder Well-Being

Before responding to a specific crisis situation, it is advisable to do a self-assessment to help decide if you are in a good position to provide crisis care.ⁱ As you consider your current well-being and functioning, look at each of the following categories of **your** personal life.

- Your comfort level with the crisis situation
- Physical health and energy level
- Stress levels and emotional health
- The current needs of your family and close support system
- Ministry/Work demands

Perceptions of Others

Since peer responders are often living and ministering within the same community as those they are helping, their effectiveness as helpers will be impacted by past relational experiences and reputation. Imagine what crisis victims or leaders might be wondering about you:

- Can I trust this person?
- What will they do when they do find out about what I have been through? Will they criticize, blame, or judge me?
- How vulnerable, how human are they?
- How resourceful are they?
- Are they committed to helping us struggling members, or are they just interested in getting the task completed?
- What will they do with my information? Where is it likely to show up to hurt or embarrass me?
- Do they listen long enough to really hear? Do they jump to conclusions right away, and act on these precipitously?
- What did they do with my needs in the past? (Ignored them? Became impatient and irritated? Became creative and invited me to brainstorm options with them?)
- Do they know where to get help?
- What is their tolerance level for mistakes? Do they ever make mistakes? And when they do, do they blame the membership or do they apologize? Do they view mistakes as instructive and developmental or do they condemn people?
- Does this person have the spiritual maturity to handle the complexities of this crisis?

Additional Resources/Supporting Documents:

ⁱ See Seven Steps of Crisis Debriefing: Pre-Debriefing (10.4.1) for specific self-assessment questions prior to providing a crisis debriefing,