Faces of Transition



Credit: ‘Cheyenne’, on http://artroom411.blogspot.com/2015/05/cheyennes-ap-studio-art.html

Some ‘re-entry’ words

When thinking about your re-entry experience, 1) identify what you can relate to with a circle. 2) Use the blank lines to include any you think are missing. 3) Draw a line under the most prominent ones you’re experiencing currently:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Tiredness** | **Lethargy** | **Confusion** |
| **Disorientation** | **Disappointment** | **Unfulfilled** |
| **Frustration** | **Irritability** | **Isolated** |
| **Discouragement** | **Resentment** | **Unsettled** |
| **Anxiety** | **Insecurity** | **Safe** |
| **Embarrassment** | **Impatience** | **Anger** |
| **Disgusted** | **Disillusionment** | **Superiority** |
| **Dissatisfaction** | **Hurt** | **Fear** |
| **Withdrawal** | **Uncertainty** | **Uselessness** |
| **Stressed** | **Contempt** | **Loss of motivation** |
| **Guilt** | **Displaced** | **Rejected** |
| **Elated** | **Relieved** | **Overwhelmed** |
| **Sorrow** | **Unfocussed** | **Released** |
| **Regret** | **Sick** | **Excitement** |
| **Exhaustion** | **Spiritually dry** | **Settled** |
| **Lost** | **Misunderstood** | **Free** |
|  |  |  |
| **Incompetent** | **Bored** | **Not myself** |
| **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** | **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** | **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** |
|  |  |  |



**Your Re-entry feelings may be stronger in the following situations:**

* Where you had a lot of stress
* Where you have changed a lot.
* Where your home culture has changed a lot while you were away.
* Where you have spent a lot of time away from your home culture.
* Where your host culture is vastly different from your home culture.
* Where you unexpectedly left your host culture.
* Where your personality adapts slowly to change.
* Where you are unsure of what you will do in your home culture.
* Where those who receive you have difference of inner values.
* Where you are leaving the mission that arranged things like homes, transport, insurance, and utilities.

# **Assessing Expectations:**

Expectations play a huge role in how well and how quickly we adjust to new situations and circumstances. However, they are often not realised until they are UNMET. This can leave us feeling unsettled, disappointed, and frustrated. Identifying your expectations during times of transition and communicating those when appropriate will help alleviate some of the hidden stress that can ultimately contribute to burnout.

Take a moment to think back to the expectations you had before you arrived in your host culture. List them here:

Now think about the expectations you had for your ministry overseas. List some here:

Finally, think about the expectations you had about returning home. List them here:

Life prior to mission: \_\_\_\_\_years My missionary journey lasted:\_\_\_\_\_\_ years I have been “home” for: \_\_\_\_ year(s) \_\_\_\_

**Draw a stress line beginning with “normal” (the time prior to your cross cultural experience) that continues through your time away, and ends with your return “home” until now. Label significant events that caused stress peaks.**

Low stress

Moderate stress

High stress

Baseline or “normal”

**Holmes-Rahe Scale**

\* Adapted for overseas life by Heartstream and by Pioneers

Please mark events occurring in your last term. If any events occur more than once, multiply the score

1. Death of a spouse or child 100
2. Divorce 73
3. Marital separation 65
4. Jail /personal assault\*/terrorism near you\* 63
5. Death of a close family member 63
6. Move to a foreign country\* 63
7. Personal injury or serious illness 53
8. Marriage 50
9. Live/work in a foreign culture\* 50
10. Learn a new language in a foreign culture\* 47
11. Fired at work/released from team\* 47
12. Marital reconciliation 45
13. Retirement/resignation from team\* 45
14. Change in health of a family member 44
15. Pregnancy 40
16. Difficulties in sexual life 39
17. Gain of a new family member 39
18. Do support discovery/support raising\* 39
19. Business readjustment/team role change\* 39
20. Change in financial state 38
21. Learning to live without a fixed salary\* 38
22. Death of a close friend/teammate\* 37
23. Leaving all relatives and close friends\* 37
24. Change to a different line of work/role\* 36
25. Change in number of arguments with spouse 35
26. Debt\* over $100,000 31
27. Foreclosure of mortgage or loan 30
28. Attend candidate program to be evaluated\* 30
29. Change in responsibilities at work/on team\* 29
30. Son or daughter leaving home 29
31. Trouble with in-laws 29
32. Outstanding personal achievement 28
33. Spouse begins or ends work 26
34. Change in living conditions 25
35. Revision of personal habits 24
36. Trouble with boss/field leader\*/teammate\* 23
37. Being misunderstood by family/relatives\* 23
38. Adjusting to new climate\* 22
39. Change in work hours or conditions 20
40. Change in residence 20
41. Change in schools 20
42. Change in recreation 19
43. Change in church activities 19
44. Change in social activities 18
45. Change in level of physical activities\* 18
46. Debt\* less than $100,000 17
47. Frequent travel away from home\* 16
48. Change in sleep patterns 16
49. Change in number of family get-togethers 15
50. Making new friends 15
51. Change in eating habits/foods available\* 15
52. Vacation 13
53. Major holidays 12
54. Minor violations of law/status in country\* 11
55. Other stresses not listed \_\_
56. Other stresses not listed \_\_
57. Other stresses not listed \_\_
58. Other stresses not listed \_\_
59. Other stresses not listed \_\_
60. Other stresses not listed \_\_

**YOUR TOTAL:**

Studies performed in the United States show that 200 points in one year increases the risk for serious physical illness or a serious psychological problem within the next 2 years. The average overseas worker we have seen has about 600 points a year, and still functions reasonably well because of a high level of commitment and enhanced coping abilities.

# **50 common signs and symptoms of stress**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1. Frequent headaches, jaw clenching or pain | 18. Sudden attacks of life threatening panic | 35. Nervous habits, fidgeting, feet tapping |
| 2. Gritting, grinding teeth | 19. Chest pain, palpitations, rapid pulse | 36. Increased frustration, irritability, edginess |
| 3. Stuttering or stammering | 20. Frequent urination | 37. Overreaction to petty annoyances |
| 4. Tremors, trembling of lips, hands | 21. Diminished sexual desire or performance | 38. Increased number of minor accidents |
| 5. Neck ache, back pain, muscle spasms | 22. Excess anxiety, worry, guilt, nervousness | 39. Obsessive or compulsive behaviour |
| 6. Light headedness, faintness, dizziness | 23. Increased anger, frustration, hostility | 40. Reduced work efficiency or productivity |
| 7. Ringing, buzzing or “popping sounds | 24. Depression, frequent or wild mood swings | 41. Lies or excuses to cover up poor work |
| 8. Frequent blushing, sweating | 25. Increased or decreased appetite | 42. Rapid or mumbled speech |
| 9. Cold or sweaty hands, feet | 26. Insomnia, nightmares, disturbing dreams | 43. Excessive defensiveness or suspiciousness |
| 10. Dry mouth, problems swallowing | 27. Difficulty concentrating, racing thoughts | 44. Problems in communication, sharing |
| 11. Frequent colds, infections, herpes sores | 28. Trouble learning new information | 45. Social withdrawal and isolation |
| 12. Rashes, itching, hives, “goose bumps” | 29. Forgetfulness, disorganization, confusion | 46. Constant tiredness, weakness, fatigue |
| 13. Unexplained or frequent “allergy” attacks | 30. Difficulty in making decisions | 47. Frequent use of over-the-counter drugs |
| 14. Heartburn, stomach pain, nausea | 31. Feeling overloaded or overwhelmed | 48. Weight gain or loss without diet |
| 15. Excess belching, flatulence | 32. Frequent crying spells or suicidal thoughts | 49. Increased smoking, alcohol or drug use |
| 16. Constipation, diarrhoea, loss of control | 33. Feelings of loneliness or worthlessness | 50. Excessive gambling or impulse buying |
| 17. Difficulty breathing, frequent sighing | 34. Little interest in appearance, punctuality |  |

While stress is a normal part of everyday life, if you, or those you love, are experiencing several, ongoing symptoms associated with stress without improvement, seek professional help. A good stress-management plan of healthy diet, regular exercise, and good sleep is essential. Prolonged stress alters the brain chemistry and may require medication to set things back in order. Your GP can help to assess this and advise a plan that works for you.

**Ways to increase coping capacity:**

**Checklist for the Returnee:**

* Take your time
* Arrange temporary structures
* Don’t act for the sake of action
* Recognise why you are uncomfortable
* Take care of yourself in little ways
* Explore the fun and opportunity-rich sides of change
* Get someone to talk to
* Find out what is waiting in the wings of your life
* Use this transition as the impetus to a new area of learning
* Recognise that it is normal to find transition hard

**WHO I AM…** Write your name in the cloud, then draw lines & label all current roles/identities.

 **WHO I’VE BEEN…** Draw lines & label past roles/identities. Place (parenthesis) around these.

**WHO I’D LIKE TO BE…** Draw a line & label possible future roles. Circle these.