

**4. Doing a Risk Assessment** (Remember God sent spies, Joshua sent spies!)

- 1. POSSIBLE RISKS
- 2. TEN MOST CRITICAL RISKS
- 3. RANK THE RISKS
- 4. CRISIS IMPACT VALUE

0	No effect at all
10	Negligible impact
30	Will take a week's time to cope. Financial effect will be harmful to some group efforts.
50	Will significantly affect staff and finances. Limited to a single country or program.
60	Staff are at risk of personal safety.
70	Impact will last a year or more and touch 50% of operations.
80	Results affect the group in other countries, too.
90	Work in the country forced to cease for at least two years.
100	Loss of life very high or half of overall activities globally impacted for a year or more.

- 5. LIKELIHOOD OF RISK
- 6. DO THE MATH (add the 2 scores)

0	Not likely
30	Vaguely possible
50	Possible but not sure when
80	Quite likely to happen
100	Quite sure it will happen

- 7. IDENTIFY THE SERIOUS RISK FACTORS
- 8. MAKE CONTINGENCY PLANS
  - a. Who should be involved in process

# RISK ASSESSMENT

(MMCT, Member Care While Managing Crisis, used by permission)

We should do regular risk assessments with a representative group of people who have access to information that informs our group as accurately as possible about the local context. There are organizations who specialize in helping cross-cultural agencies do risk assessments and we would do well to consult them for advice and training in high risk areas. Using the following simple procedure will help you bring a measure of objectivity to a difficult task.

## **Analysing the Risk Probability Factors in a Given Situation:**

### ***1. Step One: Possible Risks***

List as many possible risks as you can think of that might happen to your group and/or to the individual members for whom you are responsible.

***As you make your list, consider these examples as possibilities in your situation:***

#### ***Incidents that might affect your group at some point:***

- |                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| 1. War, civil unrest, riots     | 7. Incident affecting national colleagues                          |
| 2. Robbery or attack on offices | 8. Negative relations/encounter with local or national authorities |
| 3. Bombing                      | 9. Legal threat  |
| 4. Accidental death             | 10. Media threat   |
| 5. Murder of group of staff     | 11. Other?   |
| 6. Natural disaster             |  |

#### ***Incidents that might affect individual members in your group at some point:***

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. Hostage taking                       | 6. Major robbery                                       |
| 2. Arrest of personnel                  | 7. Negative relations/encounter with local authorities |
| 3. Long prison sentence of staff/worker | 8. Legal threat  |
| 4. Rape                                 | 9. Other?  |
| 5. Accidental death                     |  |

## **2. Step Two: Ten Most Critical Risks**

Look over the two lists you've made in Step One and select the ten incidents that are most critical for your situation.

## **3. Step Three: Ranking of Risks**

Rank the ten possible risks you've selected from the most serious (#1) to the least serious (#10).

## **4. Step Four: Crisis Impact Value**

Assign a crisis impact value to each of the ten you've selected using the following rating system. Consider the impact it would have on the whole team, even if the incident involved an individual.

- 0 No effect at all
- 10 Negligible impact
- 30 Will take a week's time to cope. Financial effect will be harmful to some group efforts.
- 50 Will significantly affect staff and finances. Limited to a single country or program.
- 60 Staff are at risk of personal safety.
- 70 Impact will last a year or more and touch 50% of operations.
- 80 Results affect the group in other countries, too.
- 90 Work in the country forced to cease for at least two years.
- 100 Loss of life very high or half of overall activities globally impacted for a year or more.

## **5. Step Five: Likelihood of Risk in Near Future**

Assign another number to each of the ten to reflect the likelihood of the event occurring in the next 3 years.

- 0 Not likely
- 30 Vaguely possible
- 50 Possible but not sure when
- 80 Quite likely to happen
- 100 Quite sure it will happen

## **6. Step Six: Do the Math**

Add up the two numbers you've assigned to each of the ten risks you've listed. Each risk should then have a single number assigned to it.

## **7. Step Seven: Identify the Serious Risk Factors**

List the risks that have a total score of over 100 to identify the serious risks factors for your local context.

## **8. Step Eight: Make Contingency Plans**

Discuss as a group how any of these serious risk factors might be minimized: how the crisis impact value or likelihood of each might be lessened. Consider it your responsibility as leaders to make plans towards this end.

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Who is most at risk in traumatic or crisis situations? Who is likely to find it hardest to cope?

**Inexperienced/untested**

- People for whom life has been easy; who have never had to wait for gratification.
- People who have never been thwarted, have never suffered.

**Theologically naïve**

- People who expect and demand quick, simple answers.
- Those whose theology says God will not let bad things happen; they have no working theology of pain, persecution, injustice.

**Dependent**

- People who want (demand) to be taken care of.
- Teens, children – the adults in their lives may not be coping well with the crisis. They may find their entire lives in upheaval and may complicate the situation by picking up/mirroring their parent's attitudes.

**Bruised**

- Those with old unresolved anger and pain. Perhaps they have memories of similar events, or of administrative injustice or of God letting them down in the past. These memories are brought into the current situation.
- Those with dysfunctional marriages or families (past or present).
- Those with poor coping strategies – violence, substance abuse, withdrawal, isolation, anger.
- Very fearful people.
- Those who won't talk but keep a tight lid on everything. They either can't identify or won't talk about their feelings
- Those who are rigid – those who can't see or accept options. These people are often judgmental and critical.
- Those needing a large support system, services, etc. The needed facilities and people may not be available to them now.

**Life-Stressed**

- Those in transition
- Those in the throes of culture stress (i.e., those new to the field, those who haven't yet established supportive relationships, those who do not know the ethos of that entity, those who don't yet know the language of the country).
- Those in double-jeopardy – experiencing two or more life crises concurrently (e.g. job transition and a sick child, rebellious teenager and a drop in support).
- Those with severe health problems (even when great resilience is demonstrated in their habitual handling of life, the added stress of crisis can prove to be too much).

**Note:**

A debrief team or intervener needs to be aware of the reality that any given community (mission or otherwise) probably has individuals representing the characteristics listed above within its populace. Some of these people, while obvious to those close to them, may not be easily identifiable by an administrator, visiting therapist or member care facilitator. Those ministering to these doubly-hurting individuals must be prepared to be non-judgmental and compassionate, extending appropriate help to them.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Segal, Dr. Julius (1986). Winning Life's Toughest Battles: Roots of Human Resilience. New York: Ivy Books.  
Stearns, Ann Kaiser (1984). Living Through Personal Crisis. New York: Ballantine Books.

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