

GUIDELINES FOR RESPONSE TO A CRISIS

Provided for the ALT June, 06 by the YWAM Africa MC Team

Definition: “A temporary state of upset and disorganization, characterized chiefly by an individual’s inability to cope with a particular situation using customary methods of problem solving, and by the potential for a positive or negative outcome.” (Slaikeu, 1990, p. 15)

- First response always is to provide a safe place for victims and observers and communicate immediately that more help is coming. (Lay people can be sent in to provide emotional support and work towards reestablishing continuity as quickly as possible. Never forget the children. (You can also draw from church and family members for the immediate need for safety)
- Assess the dimensions of the problem and the resource people available, including leadership capability, emotional stability, and member care people available. Ensure that leadership has enough support to cope with the crisis.
- Identify a knowledgeable spokesperson responsible for communication with the affected family, extended family members, the organization, prayer networks, caregivers, and the press.
- Identify a liaison person with outside authorities like police, embassies and medical personnel as needed. This person may be the spokesperson or someone else.
- With leaders identify member care workers experienced in crisis intervention and establish a core team of member care providers to be sent within 72 hours. This team will do debriefing and in collaboration with the leaders make a follow up plan for care of survivors and observers.
- Establish with the spokesperson how to bring closure with all parties who have been involved. i.e. press release or final report.
- Ensure that victims, survivors, observers, leaders, and member care givers are debriefed following the trauma.

Recommendations for ALT:

1. Establish an emergency fund for the field for costs involved in responding to crises.
2. Strongly urge leaders to have a contingency plan in place (give a one-page guide listing the elements to consider in contingency planning)
3. Minimum contingency planning should include copies of passports, insurance details, emergency contact details, and emergency phone numbers.
4. Make the crisis guidelines available to all leaders at all levels throughout the field.
5. Regional leaders should follow up to see that contingency plans will be looked at afresh. Within six months of this publication our member care roving teams will be asking how far leaders have come in their planning.
6. Work with YWAM Africa MC team in developing a “Trauma Response Team” that would be equipped and available to travel to locations needing assistance at the time of a crisis