Volunteer Debriefing guide in the UK and abroad
DEBRIEFING

You are reading these words because you are coming home from serving on the ship or you have already come home and you recognise that debriefing may be a worthwhile resource to explore as you transition back from ship life.

You are right and we are so glad you are taking the time to read this guidebook! It is known that transition into any new season of life can be fraught with unexpected challenges, both glaring and subtle. After serving overseas, re-entry back into mainstream life can come with massive challenges. As an organization, Mercy Ships recognizes that returning home after living on a ship in Africa, with 450 others from over 35 different nationalities comes with its own set of unique challenges.

Debriefing has been shown to be a valued part of a person’s support system when returning home. It has been ranked first in a study on a list of things people found helpful on their return and a close second was spending time with others who have also returned from living overseas, who can relate to you better than most (Watts, 2018- Navigating Relocation). Yes, debriefing can be hard work and is sometimes seen as an option just for those who ‘are struggling’ however, it is proven over and over again that adequate self-care, engaging in a debriefing process and intentionally taking time out after service abroad are some of the most essential steps necessary for successfully navigating life in the healthiest way before, during and after service abroad.

The fact that you’ve opened this guide proves that you see there is value in taking time out to reflect, talk, breathe and process before moving into the next season of life. Jesus took time out during his ministry and saw the value in moving away from the busyness and chaos of life and having the opportunity to recharge and prepare for what was ahead. Until 50 years ago,
many missionaries returning on a boat from their service abroad had 6 weeks to rest, recharge and reflect, re-evaluate and take stock of what they had been through. (Expatriate Living, 2018) We are now denied this in modern day living and we now have a short flight before we return into ‘normal life’. We are caught up in the flurry of ‘welcome homes’ and before we know it, we have not had a moment to breathe and reflect. You suddenly realise that cultures have changed, fashion is different, friends and family have changed, and the fundamentals of life as you knew it are put out of joint and the depth of change can be quite colossal. You may be glad for the changes or you may not. Everyone is different but at the end of this all, you have changed too. Your world view has potentially been adjusted from what you saw on the ship, your outlook to things may have changed and you may find it tricky to communicate your feelings to those around you. This is where debriefing can really help and we would highly recommend you consider participating in one sooner rather than later.

Choosing to take the steps necessary for returning well, will not only impact you, but also those around you as you explore the various aspects of your journey and prepare for the next season in life. We have pulled together some information which we hope you will find helpful in the following pages in choosing a debrief option. If you have any financial concerns in relation to debriefing or further questions about the options listed, please contact your Crew Support Coordinator in the UK or speak to chaplaincy whilst on the ship. For long term crew, debriefing is included as a benefit in the disembarkation process, however, the UK office would like to offer guidance and support for short term crew members also who may express a desire to participate in an organised debrief.

In an effort to accommodate individual styles and preferences, we have gathered a variety of resources in this guide in an attempt to suit a variety of needs so we hope you find something helpful. We know that not everyone likes reading books and blogs so you may find an organised retreat more helpful.

To reiterate how committed Mercy Ships in the UK is to supporting healthy crew members in mind and soul, you can request a free copy of ‘Returning Well’ when leaving the ship. If you would like a copy before going to the ship, just let your volunteer coordinator in the UK office know.
Positive comments from returning crew about debriefing:

‘It made me feel valued and helped me to see how I really felt about some things that happened while I was serving abroad.’

‘Receiving reassurance that the pain I felt was understandable.’

‘My debriefer was good at listening, interested in me and grasped what I described.’

‘I found it helpful to be asked specific questions about how things may have affected me. The questions really helped me articulate how my experiences affected me.’

Some **quick tips** when talking to friends and family:

- Expect mixed responses from those you speak to on your return.
- Expect that most people you speak to will have no insight or empathy to situations or stories you describe so it’s hard for them to respond appropriately.
- Some people may not have even realised you were away!
- Be ready with three responses to the tough, ‘So, how was your trip?’ question:
  1. **Two sentences** for those who are asking out of politeness.
  2. **Two minutes** for those who are asking because they want to know but don’t want a full run down.
  3. **Two cups of tea** for those precious friends or family who give you their ear and let you talk.

  You need to remember that the type 3 person is rare so treasure them!
- Don’t be surprised or offended if someone changes the topic back to their lives and mundane details about curtains or paint samples when you’ve been sharing a significant story. Don’t be too critical of those who do this. Save your two cups of tea stories for those who you know will listen but also make sure you listen to them.
- Take your time in making decisions about what’s next and seek advice from those you trust.
RE-ENTRY FANTASIES:

The top ten fantasies of returning home

10. I WILL WRITE TO EVERYONE I MET!
This is a feeling that quickly disappears when home. Do stay in touch with one or two people. This communication will help you adjust to being home, plus it keeps your new vision alive.

9. PEOPLE ARE DYING TO HEAR ABOUT MY TRIP!
Some people would rather die than hear about your trip! Very few people want all the details and schedules. Prepare a specific story about a person or lesson learned. Share this clearly and briefly. Leave them wanting more.

8. I WILL BE GLAD TO BE HOME!
Of course, there are things you will have missed. However, you may experience some re-entry adjustment or low mood. Recognise this is a part of re-entry.

7. I HAVE NEW PURPOSE!
You will return with new vision in life and may find your home job and activities purposeless. Ask God how you can enhance the activities in which you are involved and bring His purpose into them.

6. I AM TRULY SPIRITUAL!
Watch out, this fantasy can cause you to judge and judge! Remember those you are returning to have not had the experience you have. Share what you learned and let God work in them.

5. I AM GOING TO SELL ALL MY THINGS!
This is a reaction fantasy. God may want you to adjust your lifestyle for His purposes; however, He doesn’t call you to prove something to Him. Ask God to guide you in the areas you need to change.

4. I HAVE FULFILLED MY MISSION’S RESPONSIBILITY!
Some people are glad to be back and think they can check the “mission’s thing” off their list. If you stay open with God, He will use the experience for His purposes for years to come. Allow your experience to change you.

3. GOD IS CALLING MY SPOUSE!
Perhaps He is. However, remember God had a specific plan to change your heart. He will need to work in their heart too. Be patient with your spouse and family when you return. They may not understand what you are feeling.

2. I AM GOING TO BE A MISSIONARY!
This is a fantasy which could become a reality! If you have this idea, don’t become discouraged if it seems unattainable. Seek advice, counsel and move toward this one step at a time.

1. I WILL NEVER BE THE SAME!
This is not a fantasy! You will never be the same. How much you allow the cross-cultural experience to affect you is up to you!

From: Help! We’re going on a short-term trip!
BLOG
A Life Overseas

http://www.alifeoverseas.com/reading-resources-missions/

The blog collective ‘A Life Overseas’ provides that place of online connection for Christ-following missionaries and humanitarian aid workers living in foreign countries – from the past, present, or future. As a team of writers who have logged years of overseas experience they want to create an online space where ex-pats of many nations come together to interact, encourage, and find a community that ‘gets it’. On this site, you’ll find honest conversations about the role and realities of international missions, practical advice from others on the foreign field and faith-based inspiration for the days when you’d just rather go home.

Whether you are new to the mission field, thinking of moving internationally or have already spent years on foreign soil you will find helpful information on this website. The website aims to be the doorway to different worlds, perspectives and the stories here will lead you to a bigger faith, a more effective ministry and a greater understanding that you’re not alone.
READING LIST
A selection of books authored by ‘A Life Overseas’ contributors:

BETWEEN WORLDS
Between Worlds will resonate with both those who have lived outside of their passport country and those who have not. These essays explore the rootlessness and grief as well as the unexpected moments of humour and joy that are a part of living between two worlds.

LOOMING TRANSITIONS
When you go abroad to serve, you’re thinking about the language, the losses and the excitement. When you return home you’re thinking about your friends and family, the losses and the relief. Most aren’t thinking about the process of transition - and yet if you do it can make the difference between a smooth entry and re-entry, or a decidedly bumpy landing. A veteran of serving abroad, Amy Young, is the perfect companion to guide you through the much-neglected process of transition. Practical in nature, Looming Transitions places a strong emphasis on:

- Keeping your soul fertile as you stay grounded in Christ
- Looking for the lighter moments
- Learning about yourself
- Helping others
- Making lists
- Leaning into grief as you prepare for your transition

BELONGING EVERYWHERE & NOWHERE
Insights into Counseling the Globally Mobile. “Bushong, a licensed marriage and family therapist, delves into this previously, unexplored world of how to effectively counsel clients raised outside of their parents’ home culture. The book is filled with practical examples, interesting stories, tips, charts, resources, theories, techniques and discussion questions for further study.”

HONORABLY WOUNDED
As a psychiatrist, medical doctor, and former missionary, Dr Foyle provides insights and special help for the stress and pressures of full-time Christian service.

WHEN HELPING HURTS
When Helping Hurts is a paradigm-forming contemporary classic on the subject of poverty alleviation and ministry to those in need.
## Retreat Options in the UK

### Lee Abbey

[www.leeabbeydevon.org.uk](http://www.leeabbeydevon.org.uk)

Lee Abbey offers a 50% discount for Mercy Shippers for any retreat you choose to attend. Lee Abbey is home to a Christian community that hosts retreats, holidays and conferences on an estate on the dramatic North Devon coast. Individuals, couples, families, small groups and whole churches come to be transformed and renewed by God. During your stay, the community offer you spiritual support and prayer. As well as the community praying for each of our guests by name every morning, there is a pastoral team who are available to listen to and pray with you. If you come with questions or burdens, these experienced intercessors will help you find a way forward and hear God's voice. What Lee Abbey offer isn't in-depth counselling, but they believe God cares and that prayer works.

We would love you to leave Lee Abbey having been refreshed and renewed by Him.

For an idea of what they offer, look below. There are many options available. Just look at their website to check exact times and dates.

**Renew, Refresh, Resource** weekends are designed for individual Christians, small groups and churches to strengthen their relationship with each other, to deepen their relationship with God and to learn how to be salt and light more effectively in their local communities and places

**The Healthy Heart** - In an increasingly overwhelming world, there is an ongoing wrestle over the state of our hearts. With all their experience of the complexities of life, its delights and its challenges, Mark and Karen will help us explore how we can own our scars and establish ourselves in the goodness of God. We will consider how to live healthy rhythms of healing and grace and ground our identity and wholeness in Christ, as we keep in step with the Spirit.

### All Nations

[www.allnations.ac.uk](http://www.allnations.ac.uk)

While All Nations is traditionally a training college preparing missionaries to work abroad however, they also run various refresh and retreat courses in the summer.

**Refresh & Retreat**
The challenge to 'stay' in mission is a battle that many face. 'Refresh & Retreat' will provide input, insight and support to those who are looking for some space and time to review, recharge and 'refresh' for future mission service, or in transition.

**Who is the course for?**
This course is for those who are currently in cross-cultural service and are seeking refreshment, or those re-entering their home cultures at the end of an assignment.

**What is the programme?**
It will contain a programme of morning devotions and evening prayer, sharing and worship. There will be opportunities for one-to-one pastoral chats and/or prayer. The rest of the time, participants are free to use the grounds, library, prayer rooms and surrounding countryside and amenities for personal retreat and refreshment time.

**The programme will include:**
- Spiritual Life: there will be times of devotions, worship, reflection and sharing.
- Pastoral Care: there will be an opportunity to talk and pray through pastoral concerns.
- Free time: your chance to use the time as you feel God is guiding you in order to rest, reflect and refresh.
Penhurst offers Mercy Ships a 10% discount for any retreat you choose to attend.

Penhurst is a safe place, a holding place where you have the freedom to choose how you use this precious time. You can choose to be silent, to talk to or pray with somebody, to just rest or even sleep, to explore the countryside, to write, paint, read or even to pull up weeds if you feel so inclined! Some of you may prefer something more structured. They have a variety of different retreats, short courses and workshops on our programme or you can ask for an accompanied retreat. As well as your personal time there will be opportunities to join with others at morning and evening prayer.

**Individual Retreats and Spiritual Accompaniment**
Individual retreats are just that: individual. Our aim is for your stay to be as appropriate and meaningful as possible for you. If you would like it to include any particular elements that would help you to meet with God in this place then do contact us and discuss them with us before you book.

**Listening and Prayer**
Many people say that they find it helpful to be listened to by someone who is interested, caring, and non-judgemental. Our staff team are sensitive to individual needs and willing to support guests through confidential listening and prayer. Spiritual Accompaniment, Individually Guided Retreats or the opportunity to talk to a professional counsellor can often be arranged if discussed in advance.

**Listening and Prayer Companionship**
Accompanied Retreats with simple listening and prayer companionship can be tailored to your individual needs. This enables you to meet daily with someone who will be an open and accepting companion on your journey. He or she will offer encouragement and perhaps suggest methods and materials you might use as you spend time with God during your retreat.

Your companion will NOT be a counsellor and may not be trained in any particular spiritual discipline.

**Individually Guided Retreat**
An Individually Guided Retreat ([IGR](#)) or Accompanied Retreat provides an opportunity for you to meet daily with someone who will encourage you to focus on your spiritual journey and your relationship with God whilst you are on retreat.

At Penhurst we offer some silent IGRs on our programme. These are led by Spiritual Directors who are trained to accompany others on their spiritual journeys. They may introduce you to spiritual ‘tools’ such as those found in the Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius Loyola.

If you choose to come on a personal retreat and would like to meet with a Spiritual Director let us know before you book and we will endeavour to arrange this for you.
At Le Rucher they offer:
- Debriefing for field workers
- Critical incident (trauma) debriefing for individuals, families and/or teams
- Brief counselling in the context of debriefing
- Referral to other professionals
- Consultation and support for career changes

Debriefing and counselling are provided from a Christian, biblically-based worldview by experienced pastoral care workers. Debriefing sessions are scheduled from Monday to Friday. Prayer ministry and Bible meditation are normally part of the debriefing process with the consent of those participating.

Personal Debriefing Retreat (in English, French or Dutch)

A 4-1/2 day retreat with both small group and daily personal sessions with a debriefer providing spiritual input and renewed hope. This type of debriefing focuses on the personal journey of the cross-cultural worker as you are given the space to reflect on your reactions to the events of your life. You will have ample opportunity (as a couple or an individual) to tell your story and how you personally have been affected by past events—including your triumphs, disappointments, conflicts and other changes and concerns. Plenary teaching combined with both group and personal feedback times, allows ample opportunity to bring closure (where needed) and bring pressing issues into the presence of God in a safe, peaceful environment.

Other Member Care services include:
- Training - seminars in Debriefing and Crisis & Trauma Response, both at Le Rucher and on the field.
- On the field team debriefing or trauma care, depending upon our availability for the period requested.

Re-entry is an exercise in paradox, and many missionaries discover - the hard way - that going “home” takes a lot more than just a plane ticket. Of course, you CAN get home in 12 hours – but should you? At Intermissionary Retreats, we know a successful reentry involves patience, planning and people.

Taking a week out to rest your mind, body and heart before entering the whirlwind of building a new life in an old place, is just plain smart. So is preparing for reverse culture shock. Your nation, your friends and your family have changed since you’ve been gone. So have you. Expecting things to be easy and familiar is a common mistake. At Intermissionary Retreats, we listen to you talk about your experience abroad and we normalize it. Then we help you build some context around it, so you can use it for something cool going forward.

We also help you reconnect with the God who sent you out in the first place – so you can start dreaming again - imagining what might come next. So why not take a week? Take a breath? Do it with a small group of people in a high-mountain location, where the meals are long, the air is clear and naps are taken in sunny spots daily.

That’s how we roll at Intermissionary. So if you’ve been serving outside your passport nation for 6+ months and need a break before going “home,” join us.

Intermissionary have a scholarship fund which you could apply to if you cannot afford to join this retreat.
Thrive Worldwide

Thrive Worldwide provides services in the UK and globally.

Our clinical services are underpinned by our philosophy of holistic care: we believe that for people to thrive, they need to be well in body, mind and spirit. We have defined our services as medical, occupational health and psychological, but our holistic philosophy underpins all our consultations and interactions with clients. Thrive Worldwide offers a range of medical service, a range of psycho-social services rooted in evidence-based approaches and our UK Occupational Health Service helps employers promote and maintain the health and well-being of employees in the workplace.

Velvet Ashes

Great online resource for women before, during and after service.

We are an online community of women serving overseas. We are a unique tribe, bonded by the shared journey of uprooting our lives and re-rooting in foreign soil. We know the pain of goodbyes, the upheaval of change, the redefining of self. We know the extremes of our lives that leave our hearts raw and weary. And in all of this, we know the deep longing of our souls to be known and to know we are not alone. We are made for community, deep and rich. We are wired for relationship with women, women we can laugh and cry with, women who can whisper into our dark places and say, “I know.” And who can do this but those who have lived it, those who are journeying through the same kind of story? Velvet Ashes is here to connect the hearts of women who are separated by geography but bound together by the life of serving overseas. Velvet Ashes is a place for us to gather, to belong. It’s a place to crack open our hearts and let the stories flow. It’s a place to be mentored by the lives of those who have learned to thrive in this life. Wisdom and hope in heaping helpings. It’s a place where we can link arms with one another and grab hold of the promise of Him who said, “I will give you a full life in the {seemingly} emptiest of places.” (Isaiah 58:11)

This is Velvet Ashes.
Personal one to one debriefers

Please note that Mercy Ships have no experience of working with these individuals but they come recommended by OSCAR.

Rob and Ali Watson and Brook Besor
DORSET

TRAINING, QUALIFICATIONS & EXPERIENCE

Rob and Ali Watson were trained through Debbie Hawker and People in Aid plus Erik Spruyt at Le Rucher on their Trauma and critical incident programme. Ali has a BA honours degree in Counselling through CWR and Roehampton University is registered with BACP and has nearly 3,000 hours of counselling experience. She works with Moorlands College as a counsellor and specialist mentor, she has her own private counselling practice (Quiet Waters Counselling) and works with Health Assured (a private health provision company) and a local charity offering trauma counselling to women caught in domestic violence.

Rob has a BA honours degree in Applied Theology from Moorlands College, he is the Pastor of Twynham Church in Christchurch, prior to that was Lead Elder in a church in Eastbourne for 13 years. They both have cross cultural experience church planting in Hong Kong for two years in the late 1990’s. We have been involved in debriefing since 2010 and have seen people from Eastern & Western Europe, Middle East including Turkey, Iraq, Afghanistan, Yemen, Syria, Asia and South America. We have worked overseas as well as in the UK.

Rob and Ali work for both mission organisations, independent missionaries and for churches where they provide reports where appropriate.

CHARGES AND AVAILABILITY

“One day debriefing with lunch would currently be the only form of debriefing we can offer from our home for 5 hours at £30/hour (including meal).

“In the future we would hope to resume offering accommodation with 5 hours debriefing offered over 2 days but at present that is not available due to family commitments. At present we offer a first come first served opportunity for debriefing and can offer placements for up to 12 days a year during higher education holiday periods.”

LOCATION, COVER AND CONTACT DETAILS

"We are placed in Christchurch Dorset but can make visits including up to one week placement overseas if expenses can be met and with notice."

quietwaterscounselling.co.uk/wp/?page_id=46
Karen Sampey, Counsellor  
HERTFORDSHIRE

EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS IN DEBRIEFING
I'm an integrative counsellor and experienced debriefer of groups and individuals. I received my initial debriefing training from Dr Debbie Hawker, and then went on to be trained in Critical Incident Stress Debriefing in Switzerland. It also formed part of my counselling diploma training. I have debriefed many Christian workers and specifically many of who served in Lesvos, Greece with the refugee crisis. I worked on the Island myself for about 5 months during 2016 supporting aid workers and to some extend the refugees themselves.

I regularly debrief DTS (Discipleship training school) groups within YWAM (Youth With A Mission) when they returned from their three month outreaches. My main focus is on counselling but I still offer debriefing to missionaries of all organisations.

CHARGES AND AVAILABILITY
My debriefing fee is £20 per hour and my counselling start at a minimum of £20 and go up according to income. The heart of my practice is to be available to all regardless of financial status and therefore if this is an issue, I'm very happy to negotiate on a case by case basis. I have regular weekly clients for counselling but make room in my schedule each week for debriefing and again it depends on my client schedule at the time of a debriefing request.

LOCATIONS, COVER AND CONTACT DETAILS
"I'm based in Harpenden but travel occasionally if the need arise.
My phone number is 07816280562."

Debbie Hawker  
NOTTINGHAM

EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS IN DEBRIEFING
I have a doctorate in clinical psychology, training in debriefing and about 20 years' experience of debriefing as well as training debriefers.

CHARGES AND AVAILABILITY
£130 for 3-hours of debriefing and a follow-up contact afterwards. £45 per hour if further counselling is needed after that.

LOCATION, COVER AND CONTACT DETAILS
I'm based in Long Eaton (East Midlands) near the train station, and also offer debriefing by Skype for those unable to travel here, including people around the world.

More info at: resilientexpat.co.uk
Dr. Robert Lugar. One Another Ministries Int’l.  
STAFFORDSHIRE

EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS IN DEBRIEFING
Our team has been providing professional services for Christian mission organizations and their members for more than 20 years. All of our counsellors have a Master’s degree or higher in counselling psychology or a closely related field, and all also have cross-cultural ministry experience. We frequently offer debriefing for those in ministry. I can say that our debriefing sessions normally last more than 90 minutes. We would usually meet with them at least a half day if it is a routine debriefing and their last one was fairly recently, and normally at least one full day if they have not had a debriefing in many years or if any trauma is involved.

CHARGES AND AVAILABILITY
We operate on a donation basis and do not charge a fee for services offered to Christian organizations or their members. I have attached a copy of our donation policy for your information. We schedule requests as we receive them and normally stay fully scheduled at least two months in advance.

LOCATION, COVER AND CONTACT DETAILS
Our ministry centre is located in the Cannock Chase in Staffordshire. Normally when working with an individual, a couple, or a family they will come to meet with us at our centre. When we are working with an entire ministry team, it is possible for one of our team members to travel to meet with them. More information about our ministry and the services we provide can be found in the FAQ section of our web site (listed just below my name). If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at http://www.oneanother.com/

Fiona Dunkley Consultants

EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS IN DEBRIEFING
FD Consultants support anyone who has been impacted by trauma through work or personal circumstances, whether directly or indirectly. We offer consultancy to organisations when implementing a trauma management programme and duty of care policies for psychosocial support. FD Consultants offer services to enable individuals to remain resilient in highly stressful environments and situations. We have expertise in sexual violent crime, crisis management, family liaison support, psychological first aid, trauma, and wellbeing services. We support individuals suffering burnout, vicarious trauma, acute traumatic stress, cumulative stress, and compassion fatigue. Individuals may be impacted by, or work in highly pressured environments, such as warzones, natural disasters, civil unrest, terrorist attacks, sexual violent crime and harassment, and managing disease epidemics.

CHARGES AND AVAILABILITY
Prices start from £130 depending on what service you need.

LOCATION, COVER AND CONTACT DETAILS
https://www.fdconsultants.net/ and my phone number is 07791 798334.
EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS IN DEBRIEFING
I was initially trained for debriefing by YWAM in about 2003, and then again by Debbie Hawker. I’ve also done the following courses:

- Sharpening Your Interpersonal Skills
- Introduction to Biblical Counselling with Waverley Abbey
- Counselling Skills for Pastoral Care with St John’s Nottingham
- Post-Traumatic Stress with Erik Spruyt

I’ve been doing debriefing regularly since 2006, and am on the list of approved debriefers for Crosslinks, OMF, CMS and BMS. I would stress that although I’ve had counselling training, I’m not a registered counsellor so I make sure I don’t stray into that territory, though I am happy to do a follow up to an initial debrief.

CHARGES AND AVAILABILITY
I currently charge £150 day and I’m happy to include local travel in that though also invoice for longer journeys – cost over £30. If the work takes less than a day I charge pro-rata although with travel and writing up notes a 1.5 hour debrief can easily expand to four hours!

LOCATION, COVER AND CONTACT DETAILS
I’m happy to do pretty much anywhere although the Midlands are my natural region; anywhere within an hour’s drive of Birmingham would be no problem. I have no other commitments so I’m flexible to debrief any day of the week, including Saturdays if that works best for the client, but a few weeks’ notice is always useful for planning.

Contact details: tim@syzygy.org.uk
EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS IN DEBRIEFING

We have been assisting Mission Agencies with the medical and psychological care of their Mission Personnel for the past 35 years! HealthLink360 is a Christian charitable health organisation based on the outskirts of Edinburgh. Founded in 1983 as Care For Mission we have 35 years of experience. We are committed to promoting the health and resilience of those seeking to make a difference around the world and in the UK.

We offer medicals, health screening, psychological and wellbeing assessments, debriefs, counselling, travel health care and training within a mix of face-to-face and remote services. All that we do is rooted in Christian principles, seeing each person as loved and uniquely created by God.

Because of its charitable status, HealthLink360 is not-for-profit. We seek to keep costs as low as possible for services provided and remain grateful to our volunteers and to those trusts and individuals who continue to support us financially. Grant support provides around 15% of total income. We also do not wish cost to be a barrier, particularly for individuals who are self-supporting. In some circumstances we can apply further discounts for those who need our services but who would otherwise be unable to afford them.

OUR TEAM

Our team currently comprises 7 sessional doctors, a psychologist, 3 sessional counsellors and two travel nurse specialists, supported by an administrative and management team, and a Board of Trustees.

Our psychological services team is led by Clinical Psychologist Chris Dunkerley, who moved from an NHS post in the North of England to HealthLink360 in June 2014. Chris brings expertise in Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), psychological assessment and trauma work. All the team have a personal Christian faith and are qualified and experienced counsellors, registered with a relevant professional body. Together they have a wealth of understanding and experience of the specific issues faced by those working cross-culturally and within the context of overseas mission.

SERVICE PROPOSAL

HealthLink360 we have extensive experience in providing psychological debrief for missionaries, aid workers, Christian leaders and others. This has been a core element of our work for the past 35 years and is a great, flexible tool that can lead on to other interventions if necessary.

Experience and research indicate that many missionaries benefit from the opportunity to debrief and reflect on periods of service overseas. Psychological debrief can be particularly useful for those who have experienced personal or vicarious trauma or encountered very stressful situations. It can offer an opportunity to decompress and talk through the situation, look at coping strategies and consider further support, if needed. Debriefing can also be offered to groups following a stressful or traumatic incident. There is a significant evidence base for its effectiveness when done correctly (e.g. Hawker, Durkin and Hawker, 2010).

A key advantage of outsourcing debrief to an external agency is that mission partners are more likely to be open and honest in relation to discussing sensitive or personal issues away from their sending agency. Additionally, experience and research indicate that issues raised can sometimes relate to the
A HealthLink360 debrief is an unhurried, confidential time with an experienced counsellor or clinical psychologist. Preferably it is carried out face-to-face at our premises near Edinburgh but can be offered remotely by Skype, Zoom or What’s App. Generally, appointments are arranged during our opening hours which are Tuesday to Friday 8.30am – 4.30pm. Appointments can, if necessary be arranged out-with these hours if being conducted remotely eg: by skype and in order to accommodate time differences.

The aim is to help the individual unpack and reflect on the issues they have faced or are facing and think about whether further help is needed. It is both structured and person-focused; it aims to strengthen psychological and spiritual wellbeing and resilience and encourages good coping strategies. Debriefs are termed ‘Personal Reviews’ on our website to differentiate them from agency-led debriefs.

In some circumstances, perhaps where there are time constraints, an extended personal review can be helpful, offering several appointments concentrated over two to five days. It is particularly suitable for clients who have had a tough time involving conflict, strained relationships or other significant difficulties such as burnout. We recommend that the individual or couple take time out of their busy schedule and stay near to our premises for a few days. The initial debrief session lasts 90 minutes whilst subsequent sessions are one hour each. Space is also given to walk, read, reflect, pray and restore.

**CHARGES AND AVAILABILITY**

- Psychological Debrief (90 mins)  
  **£140**  
- Extended debrief first session  
  **£140**  
- Subsequent sessions  
  **£50**

**Psychological Debrief (Group, 90-120 mins)**

Prices correct at time of publication (May 2019).

Please discuss cost with us; price dependent upon group size and location.

Our hope is that you find this guide helpful as you explore options to help with your transition home.

If you need any assistance or guidance then please contact your Crew Support Coordinator. Mercy Ships UK do not accept any responsibility for the information or services provided by in this guide. It is simply meant as a guide. It is your responsibility to research and choose an appropriate service for your needs.