

TOOL KIT





DEBRIEFING

Disclaimer:

The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained therein

PURPOSE

GOAL

Debriefing is an experience that enables participants to connect activities and lessons they learned in an activity, experience, or program, to the outside world.

When Does Debriefing Take Place?

Debriefing may take place at the end of any activity or experience, including at the end of a segment of an experience, or the end of a series of activities. There is not one perfect time to debrief, or a set guidelines for how long each debrief should last. Variety of debriefing strategies can be used as well as using activities that give participants the knowledge and power to take the lead in their debriefing process.

(<http://experience.jumpfoundation.org/what-is-debriefing-and-why-should-we-debrief/>)

DESCRIPTION

INSTRUCTION

Debriefing Steps

Experiential activities provide a lot of discussion points. However, it's important to remember that if post-activity debriefs are not structured properly they may not be effective, and opportunities for learning may not surface.

In order to maximize the benefits of experiential activities, and enable participants learning and development through the process, it's helpful to follow a three step model for how to ask debrief questions: What? So What? Now What?

1. **The** **What**

Purpose: Review the activity to collect data of what happened

Explanation: The intention is to draw out as much information as possible from the group in order to refer back to it later on in the discussion. From this foundation of what happened, the facilitator can guide the discussion forward into greater understanding of the experience, and help draw out the learning from it.

Example Questions: What happened? What took place during that activity? What did you observe?

INSTRUCTION

2.The

So

What

Purpose: Look at details and interpret the data to draw out the significance of the activity in order to gain insight

Explanation: Moving from the descriptive and observable to the interpretive, the intention is to draw more meaning of what happened, and/or how it happened as well as to “unpack” the more subtle levels of what took place.

Example questions: How was your communication? What contributed to your team’s success? What role did you play in the group during the activity?

3.The

Now

What?

Purpose: Bridge from recent experience to future experience

Explanation: In order for what has just taken place to have significance or impact, the ‘now what’ questions get the participants to think ahead and possibly apply what they have learnt. It may also be appropriate for participants to look at what has just taken place on a metaphoric level and draw meaning or insight in that way.

(<http://experience.jumpfoundation.org/what-is-debriefing-and-why-should-we-debrief/>)

EXAMPLE



*Extra example: the activity and debriefing questions
“What do you see?” (look at another sheet)*

Outline of a typical structured debrief

<https://wattsyourpathway.co.uk/debriefing-research/>

1. Introductions

Who you are; who they are

Purpose of debriefing – confidential, lasts 2-3 hours

General details – where, how long, when returned

Overview – how was it?

2. Identifying what was most troubling

Identify 3 events / issues which were most stressful, upsetting or troubling – the worst parts (e.g. *incident; disturbing sight; relationship / communication difficulty; job / agency difficulties; overwork; boredom; culture / living conditions; being far from friends / family; health problem*)

3. Facts, thoughts and feelings

Take each event / issue in turn: ask about the facts, then thoughts, then feelings. DO NOT RUSH!

4. Any other aspects you want to talk about?

5. Symptoms



Did you experience stress-related symptoms at any point while overseas? What about now? – Take them through handout to indicate typical symptoms

6. Normalising and teaching

- Symptoms are normal in the circumstances – you are not over-reacting
- What methods can you use to reduce stress?
- What support is available to you / who can you talk to?

7. Anything that was positive?

Was there anything good / meaningful in your time overseas? What was best? What did you learn? Are you glad you went?

8. Return 'home'

How has the return 'home' been? Talk about normal reverse culture shock and adjustment

9. The future

- Ask about future plans
- Tell them where they can get further help if they want it (offer to make referral if appropriate)
- Ask whether they have any questions, other things they want to say
- Offer a follow-up meeting if appropriate. Otherwise arrange to follow up by phone or email (2-3 weeks later) to see how they are

10. Closing

Summarise the session, ask how they are feeling now.

PROS



What are the Benefits of Debriefing?

David Kolb, an American educational theorist and one of the forefathers of experiential education philosophy, believed that in order to truly learn from experience there must be time for reflection.

Debriefing is a core component of Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle. By reflecting on, and recognizing the knowledge, skills and attitudes used in an experience, ***participants develop personal awareness and insight and become aware of the inner resources that they can access in future experiences.***

(<http://experience.jumpfoundation.org/what-is-debriefing-and-why-should-we-debrief/>)

CONS



Debriefing is an important part of learning. Debriefing part should be handled with care and a good preparation, otherwise there is a risk of not concluding the learning cycle and even causing some harm. For instance, it is not appropriate to blame as it is not constructive and can lead to resentment and grudges. It can be very emotional too and if you are not ready to open “Pandora box”, be careful how to handle it afterwards. (Justina’s thoughts :)

TIPS



Prepare the activity and few extra questions in the debriefing part. Keep time. Be ready to go with the flow and be flexible but not too much and follow the debriefing questions. (Justina’s thoughts :)

SOURCE

RESOURCE

1. "What Is Debriefing and How Is It Done?":

<http://experience.jumpfoundation.org/what-is-debriefing-and-why-should-we-debrief/>

2. Appendix 1: Outline of a typical structured debrief:

<https://wattsyourpathway.co.uk/debriefing-research/>

PARTNERS



Faculty of
Mathematics
and Informatics

