

# Handout „Debriefing Teenagers“

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Aim of the workshop:

To experience debriefing in the workshop  
To learn some practical skills in debriefing  
Getting to know some creative material

#### **Definition Debriefing from a dictionary:**

to interrogate (a soldier, astronaut, diplomat, etc.) on return from a mission in order to assess the conduct and results of the mission.

You brief somebody, when you send him for a certain mission and on his return you debrief, whether the mission was accomplished.

Aim of a debriefing is :

- to bring people to reconciliation
- to bring closure
- to normalize feelings
- to assist if necessary in resolving conflicts
- to provide support for re-entry
- to help people look at the future
- to settle back in the home culture

Debriefing is considered by the UK government, People in Aid, OM... as  
“the least we can do for our people”

#### **TEEN –AGE or Teenager**

1. Brainstorming on Teenage /Teenager                      with post its on a flipchart

What is the meaning of the word teenage for me? What comes to your mind, when you hear that word? How do I speak to a teenager? What is the difference between teenagers and children or adults?

#### **Definition by Wikipedia:**

“A **Teenager**, or **teen**, is a young person, whose age is between thirteen and nineteen (13-19). They are called teenagers because their age number ends in “teen” .....

Adolescence is the name for the tricky in –between period of transition. Teenagers go through a lot of physical and mental changes during this time. “

There are many psychological milestones that occur in a teenager life- one of these is pulling away from parental figures, in favour of peer or love interest. During this “pulling away phase”, the teenager is learning to make decisions for him or herself, and seeking out a life direction, including a potential career.

Obviously, during this experimental teen phase, much trial and error happens. Sometimes, conflicts with authority figures, such as teachers and parents can result in problems at school, home or any other place, where a certain standard of conduct is expected. However, some teens do glide through the teenage years more smoothly. Some psychologists believe, that there is a connection to the phase of newborn to 5 years. If this phase was smooth, also the teenage years will be smooth....

Conclusion:

Teenage – years are a very important and interesting phase in our life, but at the same time a challenging period of transition in which a child becomes an adult person.

Therefore, if possible:

- major additional changes should be avoided e.g. like moving to another place, changing school... ( or at least well prepared and accompanied)
- parents should be aware of the major changes in their children
- it's a big advantage if the teenager has a good coach in that phase. This can be an older friend, a young counsellor or a peer friend. Even you as a TCK Advisor can be that person.

### **Characteristics of this age group**

#### **1. Mental abilities:**

- the teenager can express himself with a rich range of vocabulary
- is able to make abstract considerations
- is able to put different events in a context
- is able to draw conclusions
- is able to evaluate consequences

#### **2. Relationship to adults**

- is often critical toward the values and principles of his/her parents
- becomes more and more independent
- learns to make decisions by himself
- seeks out a life direction
- begins to define his own values and principles
- challenges authorities e.g. parents, Teacher ( OHNE REIBUNG KEINE REIFUNG)  
without friction there will be no maturity !
- he may have problems to open his heart to you, if he sees you as an authority person, on the other hand he may use the opportunity to open up to somebody, who is out of his well-known area, if he has no fear that this person tells it to anyone
- sometimes he may ignore feelings, because he/she wants to be “normal” . Then it is good to do the debriefing in a relaxed setting, where he can be himself.

### 3. Relationship to himself

- emotions are constantly changing
- develops his identity
  - o physical aspect: Tall, short, thick /Thin, pretty...
  - o sexual signs develop
  - o cultural: Where do I come from ? What are my values? Where are my roots?
  - o How do other people see me !!!!

### 4. Relationship to peers

- is very important
- needs to be approved by peers in order to build his self esteem
- begins to know how the others see him /Her

### Challenges and benefits of debriefing teenagers:

#### Benefits:

- the teenager realizes what happens in his life
- he is able to reflect
- he can express himself with a rich range of vocabulary
- we help him to express his feelings
- the teenager feels valued if we listen to him, it affirms his self esteem

#### Challenges:

- the mood of a teenage person can change quickly
- some teenagers are allergic to adults
- sometimes they are shy, doubtful
- their identity is not stable

### **Organizing a debriefing session with teenagers:**

- Important is that the teenager feels secure and valued. Assure him of your confidentiality, even towards the parents!!!
- In family Debriefing it is helpful to have time set aside with only the teenager (without parents)
- Groupdebriefing with a group of teenagers can be very productive. The groupdynamic can multiply the learning effect in the debriefing.
- Choose a setting, where the teenager feels at ease!
- Icebreaker in the beginning is very important e.g. let him show you pictures of the country he was in
- If there is enough time it can be very helpful to just take him out e.g. to minigolf and while you play you talk and debrief😊
- use creative material , where you can show and explain important issues e.g. blob bridge

## **Methods / Material:**

1. Time line draft to get an overview
  - What has happened and when?
  - Include the 5 c's: Change, concern, critics, conflict, crisis
  - What highlights did you experience
2. Make a collage of your life in or your friends, before-after
3. Make diagrams like: How was life in Cambodia, how is life in Germany
4. Let him /Her show pictures
5. Blobbridge (available in the internet) to explain transition ; where are you right now?
6. Unpack your suitcase( What did you bring with you )
7. Transition model from David Pollock
8. Talk about losses and the grief that comes along with it ( Griefcurve )
9. Cross workshop at the end of the debriefing. Jesus can become the place, where we can bring our losses, hurts... to .