

Returning Home From a Disaster Assignment Checklist

Use the following checklist as a reminder for the activities that you will engage in as you prepare to return home from each assignment:

Preparing for the Transition Back Home from a Disaster Assignment Outside Your Community

- Make travel arrangements
- Alert people at home once arrangements have been made.
- Return any extra supplies and/or vehicle
- Settle your financial accounts, including reimbursements.
- Write a narrative about your disaster experience.
 - Reflect on your role and responsibilities.
 - Identify any challenges you faced in your role.
 - Identify any broader systems issues for which you have recommendations or suggestions.
 - Reflect on the most rewarding part of your experience.

Disengaging from “Disaster Mode”

- Brief the arriving (or replacement) team.
- Prepare documents the new team may need.
- Help the new team make a smooth transition.
- Say goodbye to everyone with whom you have developed a connection.
- Decide whether or not bringing home gifts is appropriate.

Returning to Family and Work

- Anticipate that not everyone at home will want to hear your stories or comprehend what you have done.
- Expect sudden changes in emotions (mood shifts).
- Listen to your children and let them share in your experiences.
- Anticipate piles on your desk when returning to work.
- Expect mixed responses from co-workers on your absence and the importance of what you have done.

Attending to Post-Disaster Self-care

- Rest, rest and more rest.
- Give yourself time for your body and mind to reorient.
- Adjust your pace downward to those around you.
- Assess how much information sharing should take place.
- Be sensitive to the lives of those who stayed at home.
- Seek help if unable to settle back in; discuss your feelings and thoughts with another behavioral health or spiritual care professional.