Global Connections
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CHOPS Inventory

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In Matthew 10:16 Jesus sent His disciples out as "sheep in the midst of wolves." This exercise explores ten "wolves"--which we refer to as stressors--that cross-cultural workers frequently encounter. We use the acronym "CHOPS" as a way to help identify and deal with these stress-producing "wolves".

Directions: Using a separate piece of paper, write down some of the stressors that you have experienced over the past several months. Refer to the 10 stressors and some of the examples mentioned below. Put these under a column labeled "Struggles." In a second column, "Successes," list some of the helpful ways you have dealt with stress during the last several months. Next, under a "Strategies" column, jot down some of your ideas for better managing stress in the future. You may also want to do the same for some of the important people in your life, such as individuals and groups found at the bottom of this page (use additional paper). Discuss your responses with a close friend or a counselor. Note that each stressor can be both a source of stress and/or a symptom of stress.

Struggles _____ Successes _____ Strategies

Cultural (getting needs met in unfamiliar ways: language learning, culture shock, reentry)

Crises (potentially traumatic events, often unexpected: natural disasters, wars, accidents, political instability)

Historical (unresolved past areas of personal struggle: family of origin issues, personal weaknesses)

Human (relationships with family members, colleagues, nationals: raising children, couple conflict, struggles with team members, social opposition)

Occupational (job-specific challenges and pressures: work load, travel schedule, exposure to people with problems, job satisfaction, more training, government "red tape")

Organizational (incongruence between one's background and the organizational ethos: differing with company policies, work style, expectations)

Physical (overall health and factors that affect it: nutrition, climate, illness, aging, environment)

Psychological (overall emotional stability and self-esteem: loneliness, frustration, depression, unwanted habits, developmental issues/stage of life issues)

Support (resources to sustain one's work: finances, housing, clerical and technical help, donor contact)

Spiritual (relationship with the Lord: devotional life, subtle temptations, time with other believers, spiritual warfare)

Answers apply to (circle): self, spouse, child, friend, department, team, company, other