



Relationship Survival Guide: Move Abroad Edition

About this workbook

This workbook is designed to help people in long-term relationships prepare to move abroad together. The questions are meant to spark difficult and meaningful conversations. Please be advised that I am NOT a psychologist or a therapist! I did not create this guide alone. I asked for suggestions from a large group of immigrants here in Uruguay, and I've compiled them into this

workbook. This is not based on research or expertise...but most of the topics were suggested by multiple people who have made the move already. The topics and questions were also suggested by people in all different types of relationships. My goal is to make this as inclusive as possible, so if you notice something that needs to be changed, please reach out!

Lastly, my husband and I went to a licensed therapist for several months before moving abroad to discuss it, and I would suggest speaking to a qualified therapist to anyone and everyone who is able to do so. Moving abroad will test your relationship in a myriad of ways and it is worth the time and effort to prepare yourselves.

Units

After many conversations and lots of feedback from people in various stages of moving, four distinct phases seemed to emerge.

- A CLEAR AND HONEST EVALUATION OF YOUR CURRENT RELATIONSHIP
- MAKING THE BIG DECISIONS
- LOGISTICS
- PREPARING TO COPE WITH EMOTIONS AFTER THE MOVE

Unit 1: A Clear and Honest Evaluation of Your Current Relationship

1. What is my communication style? What about my partner(s)?

2. Historically, how have we made major decisions together?

3. How did we do (or how would we have done) during COVID? Moving abroad can feel very isolating at first, and you will only be able to contact old friends/family virtually.

4. What is my role in our family?

5. How do our parenting styles differ? Give two examples of ways we've responded differently to conflicts with our child(ren).

6. What specific kind of support do you need from your partner(s)?

7. How do I tolerate change?

8. How do we handle finances currently? How do I feel about this?

9. Think about at least one previous “Big Life Transition.” How did we handle it? What should we have done differently?

10. Think about times you’ve traveled together in the past. What did you learn about each other? What problems occurred and how did you respond?

11. Was moving abroad part of your life plan? If not, how does it affect your long-term goals? How do you feel about that?

12. How do I handle grief? How does that affect my partner(s)?

Unit 2: Making Big Decisions

- 1. What is MY 'Why?' Not our why. MY why. What is motivating me to consider this move?**
- 2. What is motivating my partner(s) to consider this move?**
- 3. What are some of my fears about this move? Are there any fears I downplay for my partner(s)?**

4. How is my physical health? How will moving affect my physical health?

5. What do I, individually, want my life to be like? Why isn't it this way now, what have I tried to do to fix it, and why do I believe moving abroad will help?

6. What are my non-negotiables in terms of choosing a location?

7. What emergencies might our family/friends encounter in the US? How will we respond if we are living abroad?

8. Previously, you answered, “What is my role in this family?” Will that change with the move? How? How do you feel about that change?

9. If you have children, how do they handle change? What kind of extra support will they need?

10. What financial resources am I comfortable contributing? What financial reserves should we keep untouched?

11. How will we financially support ourselves abroad? What is our Plan B? Plan C?

Unit 3: Logistics

1. What skills do we each have? Which tasks am I better suited to lead?

2. What legal status/citizenship do we want to work towards? What is the timeline for that?

3. How will we keep track of who is doing which tasks? How will we share our progress on tasks with each other?

4. How will we validate the information we find (whether specific information about documentation or broad information about culture and life in the country)?

5. What professionals do we need to hire to help? How will we vet those professionals together?

6. Is our End-of-Life documentation up to date and in order? How will it need to change with the move?

7. How often and how will we touch base about everything? Moving abroad comes with a flood of information...how will we make sure everyone is fully informed and on board?

8. How are we telling friends/family about our move?

9. Who will have the hardest time letting go of physical possessions? How will you support each other in this?

10. How will you communicate information about the move to your child(ren)?

11. Learning to budget in a new country is like learning to budget as a young adult in many ways. Everything is new and confusing. How will you handle the household budget after the move?

Unit 4: Preparing to Cope with Emotions After the Move

- 1. What is my plan to process any grief I may experience after moving?**
- 2. What relationships do I want to maintain in my home country? How will I do that?**
- 3. It takes time to make new friends. How will I cope with that?**

4. How integrated into our chosen country do we want to be? How will we achieve that?

5. What will be our rules/guidelines on sharing distressing news from 'back home' with each other?

6. Under what specific conditions would we decide this isn't working? What would trigger us to move back? Would we be prepared to live separately if necessary?

7. How often will we meet to assess how this big change is working?

8. How will we cope if we are having very different experiences in our new country? For example, if one partner really loves it while another hates it?

9. If one person speaks the language much better than the other(s), how will you make sure that person doesn't get overwhelmed?

10. What are things I notice about my partner(s) when they are getting overwhelmed before they notice them? How will I watch out for these and alert them?

11. Think of some practical ways to prioritize your relationship during a hectic time. (Examples: Taking a daily walk. Having a weekly special date. Writing notes to each other.)

12. What is going to be the best part of moving abroad together?