

# **care**training **guide**

CEDARCREEKCHURCH

# Welcome

We are so grateful that you have chosen to serve as a vital part of our DreamTeam. Thank you for partnering with us to make a difference by loving others the way Christ loved us. We find that when we set out to do that, it is our hearts that grow the most, so we can't wait to hear what God does through your willingness to serve him.

This handbook is designed to provide information that is applicable to our DreamTeam members.

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## On Mission

The DreamTeam is a group of incredible people on mission to show every guest they matter by living out their God-given purpose to make an eternal difference.

MISSION STATEMENT:

**We exist to introduce people to Jesus and the life-changing adventure with him.**

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## Dreaming Together

We are a team of incredible people working and dreaming about the mission God has for us. Every single weekend, the DreamTeam understands that we are in the business of introducing people to Jesus and the life-changing adventure with him. That's what it means to make an eternal difference. It's all about God - what he is doing around and through all of us to reach those who are far from him, and to draw each of us toward loving others the way Christ loved us.

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## No Matter the Role

We understand that seemingly insignificant acts in the hands of an all-powerful God create eternal moments that change people's lives.

## Privileged to Serve

We view the opportunity to serve our guests on the weekend as a “Get To” experience and not a “Have To” experience. We understand that we’re here to accomplish something bigger than ourselves and it’s a privilege to serve on this team. We’re honored and thankful to God for choosing us.

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## On a Journey and Helping Others

The ultimate role of the DreamTeam is to love others the way Christ loved us, helping them to take a next step in their spiritual journey.

To help someone else **KNOW GOD**

To help someone else **FIND FREEDOM**

To help someone else **DISCOVER PURPOSE**

To help someone else **MAKE A DIFFERENCE**

## Becoming a Part of the DreamTeam

Is an honor because we get to serve God in the mission he has for our church and the communities we serve.

To equip every member of the team, we require DreamTeam members to take these steps before serving:

- ① Complete GrowthTrack
- ② Complete application
- ③ Participate in interview

## We gather to dream & celebrate:

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### **DreamTeam Launch**

At the beginning of each ministry year, we gather for a night filled with vision, inspiration, and worship. As a DreamTeam member, we ask that you join us to prayerfully and humbly trust God to accomplish great things in the upcoming ministry year.

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### **DreamTeam Celebration**

Once a year, just before spring, we throw a party for our amazing DreamTeam. It is a night filled with celebration as we honor our team members for the ways they are making a difference by living out their purpose.

## Our Values

**G**

### **GOD'S HEART**

We want every guest to know that they matter to God and they matter to us.

**U**

### **UPBEAT**

We create a fun and positive environment to make an amazing first impression and for the team to serve.

**E**

### **EXCELLENCE**

We pay attention to details because it shows our guests we care.

**S**

### **SEIZE WOW OPPORTUNITIES**

We are always looking for ways to make every guest's experience something they can't wait to share with others.

**T**

### **TAKE THE NEXT STEPS**

We want every interaction to point guests to their next step on the spiritual journey.

Know God  
Find Freedom  
Discover Purpose  
Make a Difference

### **Planning Center - How you will be scheduled**

Planning Center is an online system we use to schedule team members and communicate throughout the week. You will be given the opportunity to set up a username and password to log in; however, most team members find that receiving and responding to the scheduling request emails, as well as reviewing the updates sent to their email, is most effective. In addition, we will also have periodic team meetings and gatherings that will be scheduled and communicated through Planning Center.

### **ROCK**

Rock is our church database. For the Care Team, this is particularly important for organizing and tracking the hospital requests that are submitted.

Training for Rock will be part of your onboarding with the team.

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## Vision of the Care Team

The Care Team ensures guests have a next step during life's transitions and difficult times.

### **Guiding Principles**

- The role of the Care Team is to provide a next step, not to fix problems.

- The heart of the Care Team is to be a guide to a next step, as part of our mission to introduce people to Jesus and the life-changing adventure with him.
- Brief, compassionate care is key for the team to be able to serve in an ongoing, healthy way—"We can't want it more for someone than they want it for themselves."
- We leave professional counseling to the professionals through our updated and trusted referral list.

### **Your DreamTeam Leaders**

The Care Team fits within the existing DreamTeam Structure:

#### **Care Team Coordinator**

Oversee Care DreamTeam:

- Pastoral status preferred
- Oversee ministry area including vision, mission, strategy, development of team in their roles, and execution
- Schedule all teams, or appoint one schedule leader for the team
- Provide stories of DreamTeam wins and celebrations
- Develop the DreamTeam culture of being on mission together as we make a difference
- Pray for Coaches daily

#### **Coaches**

Oversee day-of ministry area for weekend and/or during week:

- Pray for Team Leaders and Co-leaders daily



- Oversee ministry area—vision, mission, team preparation, logistics flow, changeover in teams at services; ensure staffing; provide vision at each huddle
- Communicate weekly with Team Leaders
- Care for Team Leaders
- Develop the DreamTeam culture of being on mission together as we make a difference
- Celebrate team wins and share those wins with Care Coordinator

### **Team Lead**

Can either serve in multiple areas or specialize in one Care area as outlined below:

- Pray daily for team members
- Lead either one area of Care Team or, if Care Team serves on weekends, one service time
- Elevate areas where training is needed
- Maintain DreamTeam culture of being on mission together as we make a difference
- Identify and work through issues and problems with Coach and Coordinator

### **Onboarding**

- Complete GrowthTrack
- Complete DreamTeam Member Interview
- Complete Confidentiality Agreement
- Complete Child Abuse Neglect Training
- Join the Team!

## Care Team Areas

The Care Team has five primary areas of responsibility:

- ❶ **Weddings and Funerals** (pastoral status required)
- ❷ **Crisis Response** (hospital visits, hospice visits, immediate visit to family after loss of loved one, eviction, etc.)
- ❸ **Financial Assistance and Guidance**  
(2-4 meetings at most)
- ❹ **Pastoral Guidance** (brief one-time meeting)
- ❺ **Next Step Guide** (to clarify next step at any point on life-changing adventure)

### LEVELS OF CARE

The Care ministry strategy at CedarCreek provides support for a range of life's challenges and includes a multifaceted approach depending on the level of care. Campus staff, Groups, and the Care DreamTeam all play a role in the care of our guests. See vision doc for more information.

To help define who is serving when, below are the levels of care we typically encounter and how each role lines up with the level of care:

#### Level Five Care

A physical safety need. Examples of this are when a guest or member of your Group may be faced with homelessness, or their physical safety is threatened by another member of the home. Immediately alerting a Campus staff member allows for a timely response with help.

- Who: Campus staff or Care Coordinator
- What to provide: Prayer and immediate referral to local agencies who can provide immediate assistance

### **Level Four Care**

Substance abuse and addiction needs. Examples of this are when a guest or member of your Group is struggling with alcohol or drug abuse or addiction, or other addictions such as pornography. In cases of spousal abuse or in cases where a Group member\* is bringing an addiction into the Group environment, please communicate these circumstances to your Coach and/or Hub Leader so they can alert a Campus staff member immediately.

- Who: Campus staff or Care Coordinator
- What to provide: Referral to Celebrate Recovery, hospital, or local in-patient treatment

### **Level Three Care**

Traumatic circumstances, such as serious illness, hospitalization, death, and/or divorce. Care Team members are involved for brief support and, if the guest is involved in a Group, Group members walk alongside the person who is suffering. Group members may want to consider providing prayer, visits, encouragement, hope, emotional support, and someone to listen.\*

- Who: Members of Care Team—Crisis Response or Pastoral Guidance, depending on need and/or Group leader (if guest is involved in a Group)
- What to provide: Prayer; brief visit for illness, hospitalization, or death; counseling referral

### **Level Two Care**

Emotional or spiritual struggles. Examples of emotional struggles are issues of circumstantial depression (not chronic), family differences, job loss, extended financial hardship, relationship issues, self-esteem issues, and self-worth issues. In most of these cases, a Group that provides a safe place for the individual to process and discuss his/her struggles, that prays for the individual, and that offers scripture is sufficient to meet the care needs of the individual. In some instances, where the emotional or spiritual struggles persist beyond the support that can be given by the Group, they may be referred to the Care Team.

- Who: Pastoral Guidance and/or Financial Assistance
- What to provide: Prayer; meeting one time to offer a next step (for financial assistance, may meet 2-3 times); counseling referral

### **Level One Care**

Prayer, visits, encouragement, hope, emotional support, and someone to listen are all types of care that are typically met through Groups, if the person is a member of the DreamTeam, or generally from anyone in the church. Some care needs exist because of positive circumstances. Group members provide care as they celebrate baptisms, new marriages, and the birth of children within the Group. Celebrating together and being part of these important life moments of those in your Group is one way you can see the wonderful work of Christ among the Group.

- Who: Next Steps Guide, Group leader
- What to provide: Dependent on need; keep in mind weddings and funerals are done by team members with pastoral status

\* Keep in mind that if this happens within a Group, this does not mean the Group doesn't still love and care for them, but that the needs are larger than the Group can independently provide. Group members should still provide encouragement, pray with them, listen as they share, and give them scripture to hold on to during these challenging times when possible.

## Overall Safety and System Protocols

No matter the level of care we provide as a team, we need to be aware of the safety protocols in place to protect us and those we are serving:

- ❶ Women should have another staff member present when meeting with a male. Having a male team member present would be preferable when meeting with someone you do not know.
- ❷ Men should always have another staff member present when meeting with a woman. Having a female team member present would be preferable when meeting with someone you do not know.
- ❸ Always have a staff person with you if you feel any sense of danger or awkwardness. Having two people brings in greater wisdom and wider perspective. It is better for both you and the person with whom you are meeting.

- ⚡ When meeting with anyone, take careful notes of what is said to you and what you recommend them to do, then post it in Rock within 24 hours.

If a person becomes pushy, harasses, or will not stay away after you have given him or her resources, let them know they are not allowed on campus anymore. Tell them if they return, you will notify the police. If at any point in the meeting you feel threatened or endangered, call 911.

### **Systems—what we are equipped to help with**

We are most equipped for Level One and Two Care. We provide brief care for some Level Three and Level Four with Celebrate Recovery. However, we often have questions come up as it relates to financial assistance and the level of care we offer financially. Specifically, a financial care need is supported through either the Community Care budget or the Congregational Services budget.

### **Community Care Budgets**

**Budget Use:** Caring for our Congregational Members who need financial support

**Examples:** Food gift card, utility bill, benevolence, FPU, etc.

### **Congregational Services Budgets**

**Budget Use:** Caring for our Congregational Members who are experiencing a major life event—a birth, a death, etc.

**Examples:** Flowers, baby gift, sympathy cards/gifts

**NOTE:** Local Outreach Budgets are NOT part of Care, since the primary purpose is to support efforts serving people outside the church, sometimes in partnership with organizations or during opportunities like Serve Day and Second Saturday Serve.

While the Financial Assistance Policies cover Community Care budget use in detail, there are a few areas we want to be sure the Care DreamTeam is aware of overall, both financially and relationally:

- ❶ Our systems are not set up to provide emergency assistance beyond a one-time gift of gas and/or grocery cards. If guests need help beyond that, they will need to meet with a Care Team member specific to Financial Assistance and Guidance, and/or a Campus staff member.
  - a. Gift cards can only be given out by an approved Care Team member at your Campus.
- ❷ Financial assistance requires a form to be filled out. Those forms are not available due to our inability to serve everyone who may need assistance, but they are always available to staff and the Care Team Coordinator to provide to a guest.
- ❸ We do offer short-term financial guidance (2-4 brief meetings), but a good option for long-term financial mentoring is a Financial Peace University (FPU) Group.
- ❹ We also partner with other ministries in our area. For example, each Campus has a list of local agencies that we partner with or can help connect someone with. In many cases, we give financially to these organizations to help resource what they do.
- ❺ We do not offer long-term counseling options. The counselor referral list is vetted and approved so that a long-term option is available through

that list. We ask that no counselor be recommended outside of that list.

If you have any questions about other areas of Care, ask your Care DreamTeam Coordinator or the NextSteps Director of Groups.

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## Care Team Areas of Responsibility

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### **Weddings and Funerals**

All training for weddings and funerals is part of Pastoral Ordination.

Forms needed for weddings and funerals can be found on CreekHelp.

### **Crisis Response - Hospital Visits, Hospice, Nursing Care, Etc.**

Crisis Response team members typically perform hospital visits, hospice/nursing home visits, immediate visits to family after loss of loved one, etc. These visits are almost always needed WITHIN 24 HOURS of receiving notice.

As a member of the Care DreamTeam Crisis Response, you are bringing the love, hope, and peace that only God can offer into the crisis. This requires preparation and a plan, but also a tremendous amount of flexibility to respond to where people are in this crisis moment.

Visit requests (hospital, hospice, nursing home, or home) are captured in Rock when a guest, DreamTeam member,



or staff member fills out the form at [CedarCreek.tv/care](https://CedarCreek.tv/care) (or enters it from the internal side of Rock). Care Team members then have access to this through [my.CedarCreek.tv](https://my.CedarCreek.tv) so that all team members are aware of the needs and can work together to ensure the request is answered within 24 hours. Specific training on how to use Rock for care is provided on CreekHelp.

Below are the recommendations on how to do the crisis visit (some are specific to hospital visits but can be used for any crisis visit):

### **Preparation**

- Pray for wisdom (James 1:5).
- Have a plan, but be flexible. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you.
- Check Rock to see what you can learn about them before arriving, but be discreet with this knowledge—use it to help equip you to serve them, not as a “I saw this in Rock about you” conversation starter.
- Check the visiting hours, especially if the patient is in ICU.
- Bring your name tag, a business card, and a copy of “God Will Use This for Good” by Max Lucado to leave with the guest (available through NextSteps Director).

### **Arrival**

#### **HYGIENE**

- Wash your hands both before seeing a patient and after you leave. In the absence of soap and water, use antibacterial foam available from dispensers in each hospital room and in hallways.

- Never touch wounds, bandages, IV lines, catheters, or tools used to treat the patient.
- The health of some patients may require additional measures to visit the patient, such as precautions of wearing mask, gowns, and gloves, and strict hand washing. In some cases, you may not be able to bring personal belongings into the room.
- For the patient's safety, please let us know if you are not feeling well so we can contact another volunteer for the visit.

### Checking In

- On occasion, there may be a "No Visitors" or "Isolation" sign. Check with the nurses' station for instructions.
- If you get resistance from the nurse regarding your visit, ask them to check with the patient to determine if he/she would like a visit.
- Do not ask staff for details about the patient's health.
- If the patient already has visitors, knock and ask, "Are you up for more visitors or would you just like me to leave this (book) for you?"
- Assess the situation. If you feel the patient has become critical, please report back to Campus staff ASAP.

### During the Visit

#### GENERAL GUIDELINES

- If you are visiting a child or someone of the opposite sex, leave the door open.
- Introduce yourself clearly and distinctly. Refer to your name badge.

- Let the patient or family member take the lead in shaking hands.
- Don't make assumptions about other people in the room. Someone who looks considerably younger than the patient may be the spouse, etc.
- Be sensitive to the atmosphere of the room. Let the patient set the tone for the visit. Visiting someone with a broken leg will be different than someone with cancer.
- Sit or stand in the patient's line of vision.
- Avoid sitting on the bed, and be careful not to jar the bed.
- Be careful not to disturb any apparatus or equipment near the bed.
- Be natural. Help the patient relax by being relaxed yourself.
- Do not show visible signs of uneasiness at their physical appearance, e.g. loss of hair, sutures, bruising, etc.
- Please respect the patient's confidentiality.

## Conversation

Conversation openers:

- "What is your connection to our church?"
- "Tell me a little about your situation."

## Do

- Listen and generally let the patient guide the conversation.
- At times, you will need to move the conversation to spiritual matters.

- Be reassuring but not phony. Follow at the patient or family's pace when discussing the illness and prognosis.
- Speak in moderate tones, neither too softly nor too loudly.
- Ask the patient if you may pray with them.

### **Don't**

- Don't help the patient out of the bed or touch any equipment.
- Don't bring the patient meals or snacks without permission from the hospital staff.
- Don't whisper or speak about the patient in low tones to other persons in the room, even if the patient is asleep or unconscious.
- Don't wake the patient if sleeping.
- Don't mention case histories of people you have known with a similar condition if the consequences were poor.
- Don't ask details about their illness unless they offer.
- Don't criticize the hospital, treatment, or doctors.
- Don't make assumptions about their spiritual condition. Look for opportunities to have a conversation.

### **Pray**

The following passages provide guidance for specific circumstances:

- **Comfort**—Psalm 23
- **Strength**—Isaiah 40:27-31
- **Anxiety**—Philippians 4:4-9
- **Rest**—Matthew 11:28-30

- **Peace in Time of Anxiety**—Psalm 4; John 14
- **Courage in Time of Fear**—Psalm 46;  
Hebrews 13:5-6; 2 Corinthians 4:8-18
- **Relief in Time of Suffering**—Psalm 41; 91;  
2 Corinthians 12:8-10; Hebrews 12:3-13
- **Guidance in Time of Decision**—Psalm 32;  
James 1:5-6; Hebrews 4:16
- **Rest in Time of Weariness**—Romans 8:26-28
- **Comfort in Time of Sorrow**—Psalm 43;  
2 Corinthians 1:3-5
- **Strength in Time of Temptation**—Psalm 1;  
James 1:12-16; 1 Corinthians 10:6-13

### **Ending the Visit**

- The average visit is usually between 10-20 minutes.
- Watch for signs of patient fatigue or pain and leave promptly when you observe them.
- Be prepared to leave the room if the doctor or provider arrives to examine or talk to the patient. Offer to step outside and wait or, if possible, return at a more convenient time.
- Leave a next step.
- Add them to prayer request list for their campus. Let the patient know that they will be in your ongoing prayers.

### **Follow-Up**

- Ensure you take notes after your visit and enter them into the Care Card, available on each person's profile in Rock under the Care tab.

- Communicate with staff about your visit and if a follow-up is needed.

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## Pastoral Guidance

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### **Purpose**

The goal of Pastoral Guidance is to provide one-time support, offering encouragement, scripture, prayer and a next step. If this sounds familiar, this is what we ask our Group leaders to do too—ESPN—and it works just as effectively for Pastoral Guidance meetings. While we often want to meet more than once, we have found that trained, professional Christian counselors can best meet the needs of guests seeking counseling and ensure true healing is found, both spiritually as well as mentally.

### **Scope**

Pastoral Guidance is generally assisting someone who wants to speak with a pastor or has an immediate emotional need and needs to talk with someone.

### **Resources**

Resources used for Pastoral Guidance include scripture, prayer, our counselling referral, and/or an understanding of current Groups available that may be a next step.

## Structure

Pastoral Guidance is a one-time meeting to get the person seeking guidance connected to a trustworthy referral or a positive next step.

## Session Overview

The time spent with the guest should be brief, with the goal of identifying a next step:

- Seek to understand the issue or struggle they are facing.
- Listen empathetically and with compassion for where they are.
- Identify their next step, whether it's meeting with a counselor from the referral list or joining a Group specific to their need like CR, FPU, etc.
- Offer to pray for them.
- Offer a Scripture verse with encouragement.

See Appendix B: Caring for People in Crisis, as well the other appendix, for specific Care situations we may encounter.

## Follow-Up

After the Pastoral Guidance meeting, complete the Care Card in Rock under the Care tab to ensure your meeting time is documented and the next step is identified.

Please note: As a member of the Care Team, if you suspect abuse of a minor or someone who is disabled, we must report child abuse and/or neglect. (That's why part of the process to join the Care Team is to complete the Child Abuse/Neglect Training.) If you suspect this is the case or have any flags come up around this during a Pastoral Guidance meeting, please get the NextSteps Director involved in the situation immediately so you can walk through the process together.

## **Financial Assistance and Guidance**

### **Purpose**

The goal for Financial Assistance and Guidance is to assist families with meeting their immediate need and guide them toward making biblical financial (and career) decisions going forward. Scripture tells us that “the poor will always be with us”; however, the long-term goal is for each guest we serve to break the cycle of poverty/poor choices, helping them to think beyond today and make wise choices for the future.

### **Scope**

The process for receiving financial assistance ranges widely, depending on the guest’s situation and their engagement with the church.\* Each guest is asked to complete an application (available on CreekHelp) based on if they are a guest, regular attender, or active attender. This will help diagnose their current financial condition at the initial intake meeting. Forms are provided based on their level of engagement with the church.

### **Structure**

Unlike Pastoral Guidance, the process for Financial Assistance and Guidance can extend to 3-4 meetings, but again, anything beyond that is best done within a FPU Group. If an issue outside of financial guidance comes up, then it is best to make a referral as the next step rather than continuing with the Financial Guidance meetings.



## Session Overviews

Below is an overview for Financial Guidance sessions:

- Application completed by guest
- Meeting #1—Diagnose their spiritual condition and current financial picture; develop an action plan, including level of assistance provided (the level of assistance provided is also captured in Rock)
- Meeting #2—Follow-up meeting for financial and career planning; update action plan
- Meeting #3—Check in on financial and career; update action plan
- Meeting #4—Final check-in

Long-term tools for assisting families to make better choices going forward include Financial Peace University Groups or working with other agencies as determined by guest needs. If the guest refuses to attend FPU or refuses to follow guidance from the Care DreamTeam or Campus staff, we are no longer under obligation to assist the family financially (other than one-time immediate food needs). Although we want to assist families with their physical needs, our primary goal is to be sure their spiritual needs are met and their spiritual condition (salvation) is assessed.

All other resources for Financial Assistance and Guidance are available to the Care DreamTeam Coordinator and NextSteps Directors at your Campus.

## Follow-Up

- If financial assistance is provided, follow the Benevolence process in Rock.
- If hosting financial guidance session(s), note their spiritual condition and identified action step using the Care Card under the Care tab in Rock.

## **Counseling Referral**

We often get asked, “How is a counselor placed on the referral list?” Below is the process to add a professional counselor to our CedarCreek referral list:

- The professional demonstrates interest in getting added or a staff member identifies a potential counselor to add and approaches them about the opportunity
- Counselor completes Counselor Application form
- Staff member completes Counselor Referral Interview
- Our Executive Board reviews the application and interview, providing final approval
- The referral list is reviewed and updated every six months

As a member of the Care Team, you may hear about personal experiences with the counselors on the referral list. It is always best to share those with the Care DreamTeam Coordinator and NextSteps Director of Groups.

## **Community Resources**

United Way 211 is a community resource available in all of the communities where we have a Campus.

Each Campus also maintains a list of resources specific to their local community, as well as ministries that we partner with and often resource with either people or funding.

### **Next Step Guide**

One of the dreams for the Care Team is to have team members who are gifted and equipped to help people determine their next step on the life-changing adventure, acting as the “guide” at a point on the other person’s adventure!

In the meantime, the Next Steps Resource (available on CreekHelp) is very helpful for providing any team member with questions to determine where someone is on the life-changing adventure. Starting with “Tell me when Jesus became more than a name to you” can help you quickly discern where they are. If they have crossed the line of faith, then the Next Steps Resource can help with follow-up questions and potential next steps. If they have not crossed the line of faith, then whatever has brought them to you and the Care DreamTeam may be just what was needed to introduce them to Jesus for the first time.

The reality is that attending weekend services regularly may be the most common step you offer, but Celebrate Recovery (CR) is another step to keep in mind. A good rule of thumb is that if they are facing more than two major life issues, then CR is the best Group recommendation we can make. In the case of financial assistance, the problems the person’s facing are usually NOT just financial bad luck. There are usually some hurts, habits, or hang-ups affecting their financial wellbeing. It’s important to treat the whole person, not just the money issue.

Whether it’s weddings, funerals, crisis response, or pastoral guidance, it’s always important to remember we are serving the whole person, not just the specific issue that has brought them to meet with you. Our first

priority is spiritual and missional—to introduce people to Jesus and the life-changing adventure with him. Be bold and clear in the next step you offer—it's ok to not be ok, but God doesn't want people to stay there.

## **APPENDIX A—Caring for a Suicidal Person**

A little history:

- 80% of those who die by suicide have communicated their intention to do so to someone else prior to the act.
- If you get the call or someone comes by who is suicidal, you need to be the person to handle that situation. Passing them off to someone else communicates to that person that you do not care, and that is a recipe for disaster.
- Take every hint or threat of suicide that a person makes seriously, even if you are certain they are just trying to get attention. There are people trying to get attention who fumble a suicide attempt and end up dying.

### **Quick Steps:**

If anyone contacts you and talks about wanting to end their life, you can assess the situation by asking the following three questions:

**Question 1:** Are you having thoughts about suicide?

**Question 2:** Do you have a plan? (Drug overdose, shooting self with a gun, hanging, etc.)

**Question 3:** Do you have access to the .... (pills, gun, rope, etc.)?

**Ask for a promise:** Can you promise me that you will call (counselor, parent, pastor, etc.) before you do anything to hurt yourself?

**Then get help.** The more lethal, available, and specific, the more serious the situation. If the person has already taken pills or is in immediate danger, get their location and have someone call 911.

Reference: Wright, H. Norman: Crisis & Trauma Counseling: A Practical Guide for Ministers, Counselors, and Lay Counselors. Ventura, CA: Regal, 2003. Resource: National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, 800-273-8255 (TALK)

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## **APPENDIX B—Caring for People In Crisis**

One of the most rewarding and difficult things about being a member of the Care Team and/or a pastor is access. You have access to the deep recesses of people's lives. You may be asked to stop by a hospital while someone is nearing the end of their life and have the opportunity to share the Gospel with them one last time before their time on earth slips away. You may be asked to meet with someone who has just experienced a traumatic event and doesn't know where to turn.

As a member of the Care Team and/or a pastor, you will learn things about people—their personal lives, mistakes they've made, regrets they've hung on to—and you'll be expected to provide help and hope. Thankfully, you do not do any of the heavy lifting. Christ Jesus works through us to pick up the broken pieces of our congregation's lives.

## **We don't do the saving—Jesus does.**

People, even non-Christians, will intuitively reach out to a pastor in their time of need. There is something about talking to a pastor that can bring warmth and comfort. People assume you've got an "in" with the Big Man, so if they don't feel comfortable talking with him directly, a pastor is probably the next best thing.

### **Setting Up the Meeting**

When you have the gift of mercy without the gift of discernment, it's a recipe for disaster. So many pastors are well meaning but can't see through someone's story or pain. You've got to look for what's really happening beneath the surface while you're listening.

When in doubt about what the content of the meeting will be about, you may want to bring another trusted advisor into the process. There is strength in numbers here!

Never meet alone with someone who is in crisis without a trusted staff person close by. They do not need to be part of the meeting; give them a heads-up that you'll be meeting with someone, for accountability's sake. They will also then know where to find you in case of emergency.

Try to meet in a private place where you won't be interrupted. A workspace that is shared by multiple staff members is not a good place to meet with someone who is hurting.

If the door doesn't have a window, don't close it completely.

Have tissues available.

If you need to set a timer on your phone, you may do so. Set a timer for a 5-minute warning and another for a hard stop time.

### **Maintaining Good Boundaries**

People will try to make their emergency your emergency. They will run you over if you can't draw good boundaries.

Be selective about when and where you meet. If it's during a weekend service, you may need to ask someone to wait until after the service or during the message. You need to protect your schedule so you can give everyone your best.

When you agree to meet with someone, make sure you have the time to do so. If you're rushing or looking at your watch, the other person may feel like you don't really care.

Let the person know that what they share is confidential. You are their pastor and want them to be able to trust you. However, if they share anything that could potentially harm themselves or others, you will need to share that information.

Touch is powerful but can be misconstrued. Even if it's well meaning, you're putting yourself at risk by holding hands or putting an arm around the person you're meeting with.

After a meeting, people will sometimes want a hug. Use your discretion and do not initiate physical contact. That might seem cold or callous, but awkward physical contact can and will be used against you.

You may want to refer back to the Ten Staff Points of Accountability: <https://creekhelp.com/wp-content/uploads/Staff-10-Points-of-Accountability.pdf>

If helping someone via email or social media, consider cc-ing another staff member for accountability's sake.

Live out in the open—don't give the devil a foothold.

### **How to Help**

Because we are not trained counselors, our best play is to meet one time, listen, pray, and point them to a next step. This is usually CR or a trusted professional Christian counselor.

You will need to use intuition when hearing someone's story. Always lead with love, care, and compassion. Jesus had the gift of listening, but also of seeing the heart. Jesus told us to be wise as serpents and gentle as doves—not so we can judge others, but so that we can be protected.

Be caring. As John Maxwell says, "People don't care what you know until they know that you care."

Be slow to share your story. Keep the focus on them. You may have the opportunity at some point to share about yourself and establish a connection, but focus first on being a good listener.

Be an active listener. Give good non-verbal cues. Don't keep checking your phone or watch. Look the person in the eye. Ask them follow-up questions.

Don't stop people from crying or being emotional. This can actually be helpful as they are trying to process.

We always point people back to Jesus. We can't heal anyone—Jesus does the healing. Don't try to be a fixer. Take in the data, listen carefully, be caring, and then remind people that Jesus is the great healer. Jesus wants



to be in control of their life, not for control's sake but for the sake of grace. Jesus wants to know them intimately and do the healing work on their hearts that needs to be done.

You can try to give practical advice, and that's certainly within your right to do so. However, it's always best to point the person back to Scripture. God's wisdom is far superior to human wisdom!

Statements push and questions pull. The last thing people want is to be given clichés or pushy advice.

**Cliché phrases to avoid:**

- God won't give you more than you can handle.
- You'll be stronger for this.
- What doesn't kill you makes you stronger.
- Think of how many people have it worse than you.
- Everything happens for a reason. (This implies that God has some divine lesson for us every time we experience suffering. God CAN use our worst moments for good, but it doesn't mean he's actively causing them. Sometimes the "reason" we experience suffering is because other people have free will and are jerks.)
- God has a plan for you. (This is true, but not necessarily helpful for someone trying to come to terms with a horrible event in their life.)
- I see so much strength in you right now.

**What to say:**

- I'm so sorry you're going through this.
- I'm heartbroken for you.
- Thank you for sharing openly and trusting me with this.
- Let's pray.

### **End in Prayer**

When you sense the meeting is nearing an end, ask if you can pray for the person. Take some time praying for the individual elements of the story they just shared with you. Use the person's name and ask God to remind them just how much he loves them. Ask God to intervene in the situation(s) they just shared and help the person in their time of need.

### **Give a Next Step**

Always try to leave the meeting giving the person a next step. We all have a next step we need to take. It could be something as simple as saying, "I want you to go to your Bible and look up a plan that has to do with depression or anxiety. This week I want you to read through that plan." Giving someone a next step gives them direction for what might be next for them. It leaves them feeling hopeful about the future.

### **Some potential next steps:**

- Taking a week to pray on the subject
- Joining FPU or a Group
- Seeking out wise Christian counsel in their life
- Filling out a financial app (online)
- Attending Celebrate Recovery (Know your CR contacts at your campus. Who do you have confidence in that you can make a handoff to—someone who will make this person feel cared for?)

### **Evangelism**

At some point, the Holy Spirit may prompt you to ask a person about their relationship with God.

You can say, “Can I ask you something? Where do you stand with the concept of God and Jesus? Have you accepted God’s grace in your life? Tell me about that.”

Be ready to lead that person to faith in Christ if they have never crossed the line of faith and want to.

Scripture verses for leading someone to Christ: Romans 3:23, 6:23; Ephesians 2:8; Romans 10:9-10

### **When to Call for Help:**

As a mandatory reporter, we must report child abuse/neglect by law. (That’s why part of the process to join the Care Team is to complete the Child Abuse/Neglect Training.) If you suspect this is the case, please involve a staff member in the situation immediately, and you can walk through the process together.

If the person admits that they are suicidal, it’s important to determine if they are an immediate threat to themselves or others. If you think that person is an immediate threat to themselves or others, advise the person that you can and want to call 911 with them still there. If this isn’t an option for any reason, as soon as the meeting finishes and the person has left the meeting place, call 911. If the meeting took place during the weekend, go immediately to one of the officers in your building and discuss the situation. Inform your direct report (whether you are on staff or a part of the DreamTeam).

It’s generally a good idea to err on the side of caution. They may be upset with you for revealing info about suicide to others, but it’s best to treat every mention of suicide as a real threat.

## APPENDIX C—How Do You Help Someone Who Is Hurting?

“Every day, it’s the same routine. You get up out of bed early to turn on the dialysis machine that you rented for home use for your spouse who suffers from kidney failure. You feel tired and overwhelmed most days because you know you are going to have a fight with your spouse because she does not want to go through with the treatment. Worse yet, she continues to eat unhealthy and nags you all day with demands. You wonder if she’s just given up on life... and then you begin to wonder if you should just give up trying too.”

“Calling one particular friend always seems overbearing. He constantly complains about his circumstances; how terrible his life is, how lonely and depressed he is and how no one seems to care about him anymore. You’ve tried and tried to get him help but your friend just complains about his life rather than doing anything about it.”

“You just plain feel hopeless. Your friend is dying of cancer and you just don’t know what to say or do. So, you stay away for fear that you may say the wrong thing. Then, you feel guilty because you aren’t there when she needs you most...”

### **What are you supposed to do?**

Helping someone who is hurting can be overwhelmingly challenging. Most of us are not equipped with what to say or do. So, we resort to our own tactics of trying to fix the problem ourselves by offering suggestions, which can result in more pain, or by telling them to just get over the pain, or by just staying away for fear of screwing up or feeling completely incapable of helping.

### How did Jesus help the hurting?

You might immediately say, “Well, Christ healed them.” And you would be right. But, more often than not, Christ extended compassion, love, and generosity. When Christ was asked what the greatest commandment of the law is, in Matthew 22:36-40, he responded that we should love the Lord our God with all our hearts, souls, and minds, and the second commandment is to love others as we love ourselves. So we too should show love above all else when someone is hurting.

### How do you put on love to help the hurting?

Perhaps these tips will help:

- ① **Just listen.** We recognize that listening is an art form that most of us can learn to master. We are not just talking about any type of listening—this is active listening. By listening more and engaging in the process of active listening, you will build a better relationship with those who are hurting and avoid conflict and misunderstandings.
- ② **Don't offer unsolicited advice.** People usually will ask for advice later if they need it. If you are spending more time listening, you have less time to offer unsolicited advice.
- ③ **Let people know it is okay to cry.** Some days are just hard. If the person you are helping feels uptight, they may not feel like it's okay for them to be themselves. Give them room to cry and perhaps vent.
- ④ **Give non-verbal and verbal (when appropriate) messages of support.** Your non-verbal cues go a long way—smile and use affirming words. Show 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 kind of love.

- ⑤ **Get support from others.** The fact is you will need time to rest and support from others. You may benefit from a support group.
- ⑥ **Suggest a Christ-centered support group to those who are hurting.** Perhaps the person could use the support of others through a Christ-centered program as they travel through their pain.

### **Is helping ever hurting? It's important to know when NOT to help.**

Sometimes we start out trying to help someone, but based on the circumstances or our behavior, we can actually end up hurting someone, even though our earnest desire is to help them.

Every time we do something to cover up for or minimize the effects of someone else's mistakes, mistreatment, addiction, or actions, we engage in "enabling." The more we enable, the chances that the struggling friend or loved one will change become unlikely.

Trying to manage people and circumstances by not letting the consequences happen is a recipe for disaster in the long run. It's difficult to stop offering help to someone who won't take responsibility for their behavior, but in the end, it could be the most loving thing you can do.

Next steps to help someone who is hurt:

- ① **Start with prayer.** It's wonderful that you are willing to help someone who is hurting, but only God can change their hearts as well as their circumstances, not you.

- ② It's good to provide resources to the person you are trying to help, but don't make yourself responsible for making the phone calls or appointments necessary to actually get them help.
- ③ Keep good boundaries when it comes to giving money or allowing someone to live with you, especially if you are not financially or emotionally capable of offering the necessary assistance.

### Scripture

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching. **Hebrews 10:24-25 (NIV)**

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. **1 Corinthians 13:4-7 (NIV)**

### Books

Boundaries

by Drs. Henry Cloud and John Townsend

Parents with Broken Hearts

by William L. Coleman

Conquering Depression

by Mark Sutton, Bruce Henningan

## **APPENDIX D—Is Your Life in Crisis? Jesus Christ Will Help You Endure Tough Times!**

“I just don’t understand how so many things in my life can be going wrong at the same time. It’s like I’ve hit the ‘bad’ lottery and everything that could be going wrong IS going wrong. My husband and I are getting a divorce and I lost my job two months ago. I’m thankful that my kids are healthy but they are teenagers and giving me a lot of attitude because they are angry that their father and I are splitting up. I can’t sleep at night because I’m worried about the bills, anxious about going through a divorce, and I’m just really, really upset that this is my life. I don’t see how anything is going to get better anytime soon. I just want to not feel so bad all of the time about everything. Help!”

### **What can trigger a life crisis?**

Perhaps you or someone you know has experienced the death of a loved one or lost a job; maybe divorce is looming, or a child is acting inappropriately. Whatever it is—that’s tension. If you do not allow Christ to help you manage the tension, you will go into crisis mode.

### **What does a life in crisis look like?**

- A general feeling of being overwhelmed or panicked
- An inability to cope with basic everyday tasks
- Constant irritability and angry outbursts
- Crying easily, and seemingly endlessly, at the drop of a hat
- Constant upset stomach—your body and mind react as if your life is in danger and digestion is secondary to survival



- Panic, fears, and phobia
- Irrational behavior that puts you and your family at detrimental risk, harm, and/or imminent danger

### **Crisis can happen in anyone's life!**

When we hear “crisis” in the same sentence with “life,” typically we think someone is having a “mid-life crisis,” but in fact, crisis can happen at any stage of a person's life. Many psychologists have done numerous studies on life crisis, but none have been as well documented and quoted as that of Erik Erikson, who is known for his theory of social development of human beings.

Erikson believed that every human being goes through a certain number of stages to reach his or her full development, theorizing eight stages that a human being goes through from birth to death. Erikson's research suggests that each individual must learn how to hold both extremes of each specific life-stage challenge in tension with one another, not rejecting one end of the tension over the other. It is only when both extremes in a life-stage challenge are understood and accepted as both required and useful that the optimal virtue for that stage surfaces.

Basically, if you are living, you can expect tension to exist. Let's face it; we don't live in the Garden of Eden any more. We now have to deal with our own sinful nature and the evil one, Satan. In our own lives, when we fail to recognize and accept that tension exists and that only through Christ can we manage that tension effectively, our lives turn into crisis.

**Great News!** Christ can help you manage the tension so you don't experience a crisis. Here are some important first steps to remember:

- ❶ First of all, recognize the fact that tension exists. Tension exists between balancing work life and home life, the fact that there is life and death, the fact economies fall and they rise, the fact children are obedient and then can become disobedient—that's the tension.
- ❷ You can't fix or totally resolve the tension. Once you start fixing a tension that exists, you'll likely see another tension pop up. Say for instance you resolve never to allow your daughter to date so she doesn't get into trouble—other tensions will surely arise as a result of resolving the previous tension.
- ❸ Trouble will come, so be prepared. It's true, in this life we are not expected to live without issues. However, we have a Savior who has overcome the world, and through this and this alone, we can find hope. But we must arm ourselves by believing, trusting, and worshiping our God, and reading the word of God every single day.
- ❹ Give up control and allow Christ to help you manage the tension. It's important to understand that only Christ can help you manage the things that happen in our lives. The bottom line is we don't have to live shattered, overwhelmed, or in crisis. We have Christ, and that is a blessed assurance.

- ⑤ **Pray!** While there is no timeline for a crisis to begin or end, be assured that God's power and strength can carry you through any crisis you face for as long as it lasts. Connect with God and ask him to send other Christians to help you grow in your faith as you endure tough times.

### **Scripture**

"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." **John 16:33 (NIV)**

"Stand your ground, putting on the belt of truth and the body armor of God's righteousness. For shoes, put on the peace that comes from the Good News so that you will be fully prepared. In addition to all of these, hold up the shield of faith to stop the fiery arrows of the devil. Put on salvation as your helmet, and take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." **Ephesians 6:14-17 (NLT)**

### **Books**

Where is God When it Hurts  
by Philip Yancey

Purpose Driven Life  
by Rick Warren

Get Out of the Pit  
by Beth Moore

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