

ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES

Adapted from North Coast Church

As we seek to “do life together”, we will inevitably face difficulties. Life brings challenges our way and as a Christ-centered community our heart is that we wouldn’t avoid the challenges, but that we would address the challenges by the power of God’s Holy Spirit. This hand-out will help prepare you on how to handle some of the challenges your group may face this quarter.

The right perspective to have when addressing challenges:

“And we urge you, brothers and sisters, warn those who are idle and disruptive, encourage the disheartened, help the weak, be patient with everyone.” 1 Thessalonians 5:14

MAJOR LIFE GROUP CHALLENGES

LIFE CRISIS

- Death of family members
- Marriage crisis
- Prodigals

DIFFICULT PEOPLE

- The Dominator
- Emotional hijacker
- Hobby horse person

SIN ISSUES

- Addictions + life dominating sin
- Subtle or “Respectable” sins
- Offenses within your group

FIGURING OUT WHAT'S GOING ON

When a challenge is presented to you, these four questions are a helpful way to approach addressing the challenge.

THE FOUR QUESTIONS

1. How long have you been dealing with this? (Duration of Issue)

When did this first occur? How long have you been dealing with it?

2. Who else knows? (Involvement of others)

Have you talked to anyone else about this? If so, who? How often? Any other people know? When was the last time you talked to someone about it? How did they respond?

3. Have you received any advice or counsel on how to deal with this?

What have those you've talked to said about it? Have you sought any other help or resources regarding this issue?

4. Do you have any plans for your next steps?

What do you think might be your next step? Would you like me to check on some other resources? Don't make the calls, but give them referrals, etc.

IMPORTANT: We don't expect you to know how to handle every situation that comes your way, and that is why we have developed a coaching plan.

Also, remember to reach out to your coach for assistance in handling the challenges in your group.

Life Group Coaches

The purpose of coaches is to support and care for you as a Life Group leader, as you care for the people in your group. Your coach is your "go to" person when issues arise in your group, but is also available to assist you in how to develop deeper community within your group.

Some of the things that your coach may help you navigate through are:

- Addressing the major challenges within your group (life crises, difficult people, sin issues, etc.)
- How to care for members that are experiencing loss
- What to do when someone confesses a serious sin issue

- Encouraging Life Group members on how to take their next steps toward Jesus.

COMMUNICATION WITH YOUR COACH

The coach-leader relationship hinges on good communication. It will be important for you and your coach to determine which mode of communication best fits you: phone, text, email, facebook messenger, face-to-face, etc. Once you've determined which communication works best, it's important to respond to communication from your coach in a timely manner

LIFE GROUP

Trouble Shooting Guide

Situation---Someone is talking too much

OPTIONS:

1. Take this person aside and address the issue. Explain to them that when any one person dominates the discussion it doesn't allow those who are more introverted to share in the discussion. Ask them to limit their input.
2. Share what the vision of Life Group is and help them contribute accordingly.
3. After you pose the question ask someone else specifically to answer so the talker doesn't have time to interject.

Situation---You have a critical person in your Group

OPTIONS:

1. Take the person aside and remind them of the purpose of Life Groups and what the consequences are of their critical spirit.
2. Help this person to see that his critical spirit hurts people and doesn't help make Life Group a safe place to build healthy relationships.

Situation---You have someone who is extra needy

OPTIONS:

1. It is important to establish clear boundaries with the person early. For example, when they phone you, immediately let them know you only have a few minutes to talk. After a few minutes gently let them know you appreciate the call but you have to go now.
2. Address the situation. Pull them aside and gently bring the situation to their attention with a suggestion and an offer to help solve it. Let them know you are bringing the issue up because you love them.
3. Understand that some issues such as sexual abuse, alcoholism, or drug abuse require professional help. Help that person to get in touch with the appropriate resources that can truly help them.

Situation---Someone leads the conversation off track every week

OPTIONS:

1. Immediately following the person's response redirect the group back to the original question by restating it.
2. Have a private chat and bring the matter to the person's attention. Ask them to stick to the subject at hand when they respond to a question.
3. When the person's response derails or gets off track, redirect them, even if you have to cut the person off.

Situation---Someone is consistently late to the Group

OPTIONS:

1. Address that person in private. Ask them what keeps them from getting to Life Group on time and how you or the Life Group can help them make it there on time. They might have a very legitimate reason. If so, ask their permission to share that reason with the rest of the group so that everyone is aware of what is happening.
2. Remind the group of the starting time.
3. Explain to this person how being on time shows respect to everyone in the group.

Situation---Someone dominating group discussion

OPTIONS:

1. Take some time to get to know this person. It could be that this person is a natural leader who needs some coaching on how to balance their leadership and people skills.
2. Remind them that their style can come across as challenging to people in the group. Ask them to monitor themselves.

Situation---Someone has a hard time opening up

OPTIONS:

1. Take some time as a leader to talk one-on-one with this person.
2. Create smaller groups from time to time for this person to share in.
3. Take some time to call them and let them know you are glad they come to your Life Group. This may help them feel a part of the group and help them feel safer.