

CommunityGroup Leader

Dealing with Difficult Situations

RECOGNIZE ❖ RESPOND ❖ REFER

As a Community Group Leader, you are not expected to be a counselor. Your role is to **recognize** when people are in distress, **respond** with compassion, **refer** people to the appropriate care resources, and ensure safety.

		RECOGNIZE	RESPOND	REFER
ZONES OF DISTRESS	No Distress	There are no visible or outward signs of distress	Continue with building community through the Community Group.	Ensure your Community Group knows about the Care Ministry opportunities offers at Christ Community.
	Mild / Moderate Distress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anxiety, sadness, overwhelm • Situational stress (grief, divorce, job loss) • Still functioning day-to-day 	Take some time to talk 1:1 with the individual, and do the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask questions • Listen empathetically • Respond with compassion • Offer resources and support 	Possible resources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Care Night • Widow/er Care • Individual Counseling - Christ Community can provide counselor referrals. • Loop in a pastor on staff.
	Ongoing / Impairing Distress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persistent depression or anxiety • Diagnosed mental health conditions affecting daily life • Relationship or work disruption • Emotion expression that doesn't match words • Withdrawal or isolation • Reckless behavior 	In this zone, only providing support from the Community Group is not enough. Take some time to talk to the individual and do the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask questions • Listen empathetically • Respond with compassion • Strongly encourage connection with pastor or counselor through the church 	Possible resources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Care Night • Widow/er Care • Individual Counseling - Christ Community can provide counselor referrals. • Loop in a pastor on staff and encourage professional help.
	Crisis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suicidal thoughts, self-harm, violence risk • Mania, psychosis, intoxication with risk • Abuse or immediate danger • Crying, agitation, visible self-harm marks • Suicidal or self-harm comments • Giving away possessions • Neglecting basic care 	In this zone, it's important to respond immediately depending on the situation. If ever you feel that someone's safety is in jeopardy, please contact 911 and a pastor at your campus. If you're not sure, please contact a pastor at your campus.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suicidal thoughts or plan: Call or text 988 • Active self-harm or violence risk: Call 911 • Domestic violence: 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) • The Community Groups leader should always follow up with a pastor.

Special Situations FAQ

What happens when someone brings up a difficult situation beyond my ability to support during our Community Group gathering?

- Stay calm and present, but be honest. Share that you're not sure how to address this issue, but connect with them after your Community Group gathering to ensure they have resources for support before leaving (e.g., Care Night, a Counselor Referral, etc.).
- Ensure safety by asking questions and bringing in others if needed (e.g., co-leader, coach, pastor, etc.). If you feel that the individual's safety is in jeopardy, call 911.

What happens when someone continues to bring up past trauma or pain during our Community Group gathering?

- Validate the person's pain. Then, gently redirect the group back to the topic.
- Follow up privately with the person.
- Use curiosity over correction.
 - Example: "What have you been going through?" Not: "What's wrong with you?"
- Encourage them to explore Christ Community resources for healing and support (e.g., Care Night, Counselor referral, etc.). Offer to connect them with a pastor on staff or the Care Ministry.

What happens when someone tells me that they are harming themselves?

- Take it seriously, even if they "seem okay."
- Ask about safety and current risk. If the risk is "active", not "passive", then action must be taken to involve the police or EMTs for a well-check. Call 911.
- Do not promise confidentiality because there are ethical and legal limitations.
- Contact a pastor if there is self-harm disclosure.

SCRIPTURAL ANCHORS

Carry each other's burdens,
and in this way you will
fulfill the law of Christ.

Galatians 6:2

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.

2 Corinthians 1:3-4

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

