

**HANDLING
CRISIS
SITUATIONS
IN YOUR LIFE
GROUP**

As a Life Group leader at Mission Hills, we know you are capable of caring for those in your community. However, sometimes a crisis may emerge that you feel is beyond your capabilities alone.

Your role is to support and walk with people through difficult times. If you encounter a crisis, rest assured that you are not expected to know how to handle it on your own. This guide provides you with resources to assist you and your group members during any crisis you may face.

Groups Emergency Number: (720) 955-1422

This emergency number connects you to Mission Hills staff members who can guide you through any crisis situation. Don't hesitate to call.

Suicide Hotline: 988

The Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (988) provides free, confidential support 24/7 where trained counselors listen, offer help, and connect callers with local resources during a crisis.

Care Ministry

The Mission Hills Care Ministry is here as a resource to help those in need! To connect someone with our care ministry visit missionhills.org/care

Some resources provided by Care Ministry include:

- > Biblical Counseling
- > Care Partners + Visitation
- > Financial Care
- > Care Groups

You don't have to face any crisis alone. The Mission Hills staff are here to assist, support, and walk with you, as you do the same for those in your group.

If you, as a leader, encounter any of these situations in your own life and are unsure of where to turn, please don't hesitate to reach out. We are committed to standing by you.

Groups Emergency Number:
(720) 955-1422

With any of these situations, remember to pray and ask the Holy Spirit to give you wisdom and guidance on what to say and do. He will equip you with everything you need.

LOSS
DIVORCE
SUICIDE
DEPRESSION
SICKNESS + SURGERY
FINANCIAL CRISIS
DOUBTING + CRISIS OF FAITH

LOSS

If someone in your Life Group loses a child, spouse, parent, relative, or close friend, here are some ways in which to help.

- > Show up right away. If appropriate, drop what you're doing and go be physically present with them. Don't assume someone else is already doing this.
- > Stay as long as you can, or as long as you're needed. When you have to leave, try and coordinate for someone else to be there.
- > Help with the practical things such as funeral arrangements, notifying schools, or organizing meal deliveries.
- > Pray with them and for them. Bring simple prayers and reminders of God's presence.
- > Stick around. Walk with people through their grief. Be with them for the long haul. There is power in presence.



Things to say when someone notifies you of loss:

I care about you and I'm praying for you.

I don't know what to say, but I am here for whatever you need.

What do you need today that I can do for you?

DIVORCE

If someone in your Life Group is contemplating, walking through, or has experienced a recent divorce, here are some ways in which you can help.

- > Identify immediate needs by asking how you can help. Get specific, what do they need right away?
- > Stay neutral. Avoid giving advice on the relationship.
- > Help connect them to the resources of the church. The Mission Hills Care Ministry is trained in helping people walk through divorce and has a support group program called DivorceCare.
- > Come around them as a group. Be the mobilizer of your group to help with childcare, going to legal appointments, etc.
- > Pray with them and for them.



Things to say when someone notifies you of divorce:

I don't know what to say and I wish I did. I'm sorry about what's happening.

Please join us (after a divorce, many people can be lonely, keep them in community).

How can we help you this week?

SUICIDE

If someone in your Life Group is discussing suicide or hinting at it either in your group or privately, here are some ways in which you can help.

- > Take it seriously. Never doubt that your group member is actually considering suicide. Listen and love, do not criticize or condemn.
- > Voice your concern. Ask what is troubling them, and express care and understanding. Assure them that they will be supported through this crisis.
- > Connect them to help immediately. Help could come from the suicide hotline (988), Colorado Crisis Services, or another care provider. They are the professionals who know how to help your group member.
- > Fight isolation by surrounding them with community (as appropriate). Make sure they never feel alone and know there are always people to care for them. Get involved in their life. Be a community.
- > Connect them with the resources of the church. When appropriate, connect them with our church care team and counseling services.



Things to say when someone notifies you that they are contemplating suicide:

I love you, and as your friend, I will be with you during this difficult time. What can I do to help?

Important note: If someone is actively threatening suicide or is in immediate danger, call 911 right away. Emergency responders will guide you through next steps.

In addition, the Suicide Prevention Hotline number is 988. When you call, you will be connected to free, quality, one-on-one assistance.

DEPRESSION

If someone in your Life Group is experiencing depression, here are some ways in which you can help.

- > Actively listen to them and let them share their sadness with you. This will help foster understanding.
- > Invite them into community. Spend time with them. Mobilize the people in your Life Group to spend time with them. Show them they don't have to walk through this alone.
- > Invite them into activity. Cook a meal together, exercise, hike, chat, go to church with them, take them to coffee, etc. Activity together is an important part of fellowship.
- > Make them feel seen. Without being obnoxious, text them or call them consistently, letting them know you are thinking about them.
- > Be patient, consistent, and persistent. Depression is a complex condition with ups and downs. Be a consistent person who can walk through them in life.
- > Pray with them and for them often.



Things to say when someone notifies you that they are struggling with depression:

How can I pray for you?

We love you and we're here for whatever you need.

I'll call you later this week and see how you're doing.

I've been thinking about you today.

You're doing a great job with...

SICKNESS + SURGERY

If someone in your Life Group is dealing with an illness, recovering from surgery or other medical crisis, here are some ways in which you can help.

- > Organize a meal train. This is an opportunity for your group to come together and serve one another by taking care of an urgent need.
- > Visit. If appropriate, visit them during recovery. It can be a lonely time, and your presence can be comforting.
- > Pray for their recovery. Pray with them and pray for God's specific healing.
- > Include them in your Life Group by allowing them to join over FaceTime, Zoom, etc.



Things to say when someone notifies you of surgery or sickness:

How can I help right now? What about later this week?
We'll see you later when we come back to visit again.

FINANCIAL CRISIS

If someone in your Life Group is experiencing a financial crisis, here are some ways in which you can help.

- > Comfort them in this crisis by praying with them and ask them what you can do to help.
- > Connect them with the resources of the church. Mission Hills has a variety of resources for those in financial need including potential short term assistance for financial needs.
- > Help meet immediate needs as a group. Whether your group member needs a place to stay, some groceries, a car to borrow, or some basic necessities.
- > Help out financially. There may be some ways you can help people financially whether it is giving money for Christmas gifts, anniversary dinners, etc. This may come with certain caveats and boundary guidelines, use your best judgement on how to serve or consult our care team for best practices.



Things to say when someone notifies you that they are experiencing a financial crisis:

We can work through this.

Let's bring this to God in prayer.

What are some of your most pressing needs right now?

ADDICTION

If someone in your Life Group is struggling with addiction, here are some ways in which you can help.

- > Remove cues and triggers at group gatherings. If someone is struggling to quit gambling or quit alcoholism, keep alcohol out of view and sports betting out of the conversation.
- > Use your group to support them as a team. Rally around them, encourage them, send them regular texts asking them how they are doing, and follow up regularly.
- > Pray with them and ask God to heal them from this addiction.
- > Connect them with the resources of the church. Mission Hills offers Re:Gen, biblical counseling and other recovery ministries that can help people through a variety of challenges.
- > Respect confidentiality. Make your Life Group a safe place for the person to open up if they choose to.
- > If they have a partner or spouse, remember that addiction is incredibly difficult on the partner as well. Make sure you care for them too.



Things to say when someone notifies you that they are struggling with addiction:

You are not alone.

Is there anything we as a group or the church can do to help in your recovery?

Additional Notes for Pornography Addiction:

- > Surround them with community. Temptation regarding pornography is often the most present when people are alone.
- > Become an accountability partner for these individuals or set them up with one.
- > Connect them to resources such as counseling or Covenant Eyes.

DOUBTING + CRISIS OF FAITH

If someone in your Life Group is struggling with doubts or dealing with a crisis of faith, here are some ways in which you can help.

- > Remind them that they are not alone. Most people struggle with doubt from time to time, some severely. Maybe you have too. Assure them they are not alone and tell them your story. Surround them with Christ-centered community.
- > Listen to what they have to say and do so without judgement.
- > Walk, not preach. Someone who is doubting does not need someone to preach another sermon to them, but rather a friend to walk with them in their struggle.
- > Spend time with them. Often those experiencing a crisis of faith feel that they don't have a place in the church because of their doubts. Prove to them this is not true—they hold a space in your life and the church no matter their doubts. The church is place we belong before we believe.
- > Call out the things you see. If you have seen genuine faith in this person before, show them what you saw. Remind them of the things God has done in their life.
- > Remember that the objective of deconstruction is reconstruction. If someone is deconstructing their faith, help them reconstruct it. Encourage honest exploration. If you have been encouraged by particular books and podcasts, send those to them. Show them what good Christian community looks like. Focus on Jesus. Pray together. Deeply explore God's word, its origin, and its veracity. Talk to a biblical counselor.

DOUBTING + CRISIS OF FAITH (CONTINUED)



Things to say if someone notifies you that they are facing doubt or a crisis of faith:

I'm sorry to hear you are struggling with this, I'm here to listen.
I've struggled with some of the same doubts. Can I tell you my story?
Would you want to grab coffee? I want to hear more about your struggles and walk through this with you.

See the following page for a list of additional resources available to you.

To find out more about handling any of these situations or others you may encounter, visit our Care Ministry Resources Page to find sermons, podcasts, and books that may be able to help you in assisting others through difficult situations in life.

missionhills.org/careresources

For more resources handling more specific or nuanced care, check out the Care Ministry Referrals Page to find leads for professional Christian counseling, support groups, and community resources.

missionhills.org/referrals

Much of this material was inspired by or adapted from Group Publishing's book "Group's Emergency Response Handbook for Small Group Leaders" © 2006.

