

WORKBOOK + STREAMING VIDEO • SIX LESSONS



HELPER TRAINING WORKBOOK

A CARE PRAYER SHARE CLASS

Caring Relationships in Your Church Community



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All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from The Holy Bible, New International Version, NIV.

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Printed in the United States of America.

We are grateful for the support from The National Christian Foundation and Regent University for this work.

READY TO BRING THIS MINISTRY TO LIFE?

If you're interested in starting a Church Cares ministry in your congregation, visit www.thechurchcares.com. We're here to help you identify and equip the people in your church who are already wired to care—so they can offer Christ-centered support to those who need it most.

Hi there!

WELCOME TO THE CARE PRAYER SHARE COURSE!



THIS WORKBOOK PROVIDES TWO THINGS:

- 1. A way to follow the video training.** Active learning is important for the retention of the important materials.
- 2. A resource for the future.** As you begin your care ministry, you may want to return to some of the ideas you learned in this training. This workbook creates a way for you to do that.

LET'S BEGIN WITH A PRAYER FOR YOUR CARE MINISTRY.

Lord, I take a moment to reflect on Rev 3:20. "I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me."

As we begin this ministry training, Jesus would you please give me opportunities to show true hospitality to others, and to do it generously, joyfully and without grumbling. Would you give me grace to embrace interruptions as gifts from You, and help me make space for others in my schedule, at my table, in my home and heart.

Amen.



DR JIM & DR JEN

The Church Cares equips churches and ministries in helping skills to provide care.

The Doctors are both licensed psychologists, Endowed Professors at Regent University, and co-directors of the Charis Institute. Dr. Sells and Dr. Ripley have multiple books and publications on church ministry and helping Christian families.



WHEN HURTING PEOPLE COME TO CHURCH

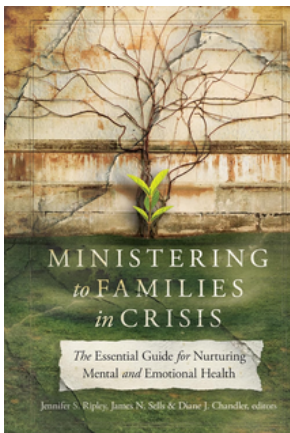
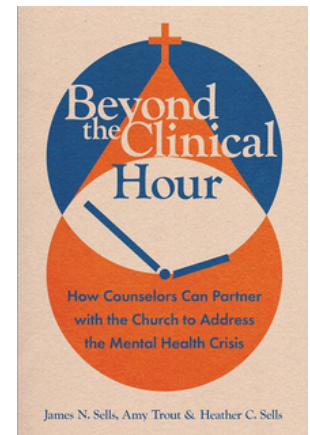
Shaunti Felhahn & Jim Sells

People are hurting at a scale we've never seen. They're dealing with an onslaught of issues like anxiety, grief, mental illness, family troubles, and hopelessness. Pastors and counselors can't see everyone in need. This book can help.

BEYOND THE CLINICAL HOUR

Jim Sells, Amy Trout & Heather Sells

Psychologists James Sells and Amy Trout and journalist Heather Sells know firsthand the urgency of the situation— In this book, they call clinicians, students, and educators to collaborate with churches and lay leaders to envision and then create innovative solutions in their own communities.



MINISTERING TO FAMILIES IN CRISIS

Jen Ripley, Jim Sells & Diane Chandler (Editors)

Ministering to Families in Crisis provides leaders with an essential shelf reference for supporting your community's mental and emotional health.

LEADER'S GUIDE FOR HELPER TRAINING:

A Care Prayer Share Course

We're so grateful you've stepped into a leadership role for this ministry at your church. This course was designed to be simple to lead—so your time and heart can be focused where they matter most: caring for your group, praying with and for them, and creating a safe, grace-filled space where real-life struggles are met with Christ-centered support.

BEFORE CLASS BEGINS: PREPARE YOUR HEART

- Take time to reflect on how God has met you in your own seasons of pain, struggle, and healing. Where has He carried you through heartache? Where are you still waiting, still hurting? As you step into this ministry, let your own journey shape your compassion for others.
- Spend a few quiet moments in prayer—listening, reflecting, and inviting God to prepare you for what's ahead.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

- When has God brought someone into my life who simply listened, stayed present, and helped carry the load?
- When have I felt abandoned, judged, or unseen in a time of need? Is there any forgiveness God is inviting me to offer as I begin this ministry?
- Lord, what kind of character do You want to shape in me as I lead this Care-Prayer-Share group?

BRINGING THE COURSE INTO YOUR CHURCH COMMUNITY

Every church is uniquely gifted and placed by God to care for its people and reach its community. That's why the Care-Prayer-Share course is designed to be flexible. Whether you're a small congregation or a megachurch, high church or low church, quiet or charismatic, full of new believers or seasoned saints—this course can serve your people well.

WHO IS THIS TRAINING FOR?

- **Anyone in Your Church:** This course works like any discipleship class—it equips everyday people to become more caring friends, neighbors, parents, and church members. The core skills are helpful for everyone.
- **Church Leaders:** Many churches use Care-Prayer-Share as part of their leadership development for pastors, elders, small group leaders, youth leaders, Sunday school teachers, and ministry staff. This course builds the relational and spiritual skills needed to lead well through seasons of struggle and pain.
- **Targeted Ministry Teams:** This training fits well with care teams, support groups, hospitality teams, welcome ministries, lay counselors, and mental health teams. It's also great for outreach ministries like food pantries, tutoring programs, or youth camps—any context where people show up in need of hope.
- **The Church Cares Ministry Team:** If your church is launching a formal care ministry through The Church Cares, this course serves as the foundational training. It helps orient and prepare those who will lead with compassion and walk alongside those in pain.

LEADER'S GUIDE FOR HELPER TRAINING:

A Care Prayer Share Course

WHAT'S THE FORMAT OF THE TRAINING?

The course includes 8 modules that are covered in six lessons.

Each module includes:

1. **Short Video Teachings** – Brief, engaging segments to introduce key concepts. You can find the videos at www.thechurchcares.com/how-it-works or scan the QR code at each video lesson in the workbook.
2. **Group Discussion Questions** – Designed for the full group or table groups in larger settings.
3. **Pair-and-Share Practice** – Participants pair up to share personally, listen well, and pray together—building real-life care skills.
4. **At Home Reinforcement** - This is an important part of the program and participants must find time to practice the skills they have learned.

| Six Session Breakdown | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| Session | Topics | Video Length |
| 1 | Introduction, Joining | 7:07 + 10:46 |
| 2 | Prayer | 15:42 |
| 3 | Focus, Ask, Boundaries | 9:48 + 6:06 + 8:05 |
| 4 | Looping | 12:49 |
| 5 | Summarizing | 6:07 |
| 6 | Connection to Direction | 14:48 |

This training is designed in six sessions. You can spread it out—one session per week over six weeks—or complete it over a focused weekend.

If you choose to complete the training in a single day or two, be sure to build in time afterward to practice what you've learned. Skill-building doesn't end when the videos stop.

For your care ministry to thrive, every helper needs to practice these tools with another team member before offering support to others. Listening well is a ministry—and like any ministry, it takes preparation.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN: WELCOME YOUR GROUP WELL

Reach out to participants before the first session to warmly welcome them to the Helper Training course. Share any key logistics they'll need (location, timing, what to bring), and extend a spirit of hospitality that reflects the heart of this ministry—gracious, personal, and prepared.

HOW TO USE THIS STUDY

*This workbook accompanies the training Video material
found on our website: www.thechurchcares.com*

The Helper Training course is a six-session video study designed for small groups but adaptable for individuals to complete with a partner. The video sessions are facilitated by Dr. Jim Sells and Dr. Jen Ripley, Professors at Regent University and Psychologists. The videos feature demonstrations of caring, prayer and sharing demonstrated by Sylvia Chipman, coach with Thrive Marriage Coaching and LaGaye MacDowell, Director of Church Care and Counseling Ministry at River Oak Church.

All participants watch the videos and complete the workbook to prepare them to develop gifts that involve caring for others. Spiritual gifts such as mercy, hospitality, help, shepherding, pastoring and serving all involve working with people who are suffering. This course equips the people in your church in skills that support these spiritual gifts.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- The videos are available at no cost on our Youtube Channel @TheChurch Cares. There is a QR code throughout the workbook to the playlist. or go to www.thechurchcares.com/course
- This workbook (one per person).
- Participants should bring their Bible to class and come ready to share.

EACH SESSION INCLUDES THREE KEY ELEMENTS:

Video Learning - Each group session features short, flexible video segments that introduce the core ideas of the Helper Training course. (TEACHING) Then the video contains a demonstration to show how to apply the skill. (DEMONSTRATION)

Group Discussion - Guided questions help participants apply what they've learned to real-life care opportunities—in the church, neighborhood, or beyond. (PRACTICE) Group leaders are encouraged to preview the questions and guide practical, grace-filled conversations.

Prayer and Share Connections - At the end of class time, members can meet in pairs or triads to check in, listen, and pray together. Entering Care ministry can feel stretching- the more practice you require of your team, the more confident they will be with their first care, prayer & share ministry meeting. These 30-minute meetups can happen anywhere. This time is powerful. Practicing care in real relationships helps the learning stick—and helps people feel seen and supported.

WATCH FOR THESE ICONS:



Play the video. This QR code takes you to the Youtube playlist for this course.



This is the teaching part of the video.



This is the demonstration part of the video.



Practice the skill you just learned with a partner.



Group Discussion. Go beyond the partner sitting next to you and discuss these things as a whole group or break into smaller discussion groups.



Pair and Share allows pairs of people to break off and practice together. This is an important part of the training.

Lesson 1: Joining Welcome & Opening Questions

What is one thing you are looking forward to as you begin this training?

WHAT MINISTRY ROLES MIGHT YOU APPLY THIS TRAINING ?

☐

LEADING GROUPS

Improve my listening when leading church groups or classes

☐

CHILDREN OR YOUTH

For any children or youth in your life, to increase a sense of being there for them

☐

PRAYER MINISTRY

When I pray for people, to improve my ability to hear the story of their pain

☐

EVANGELISM

When listening to those not (yet) following Jesus, to hear their story

☐

LOVE MY NEIGHBOR

Show hospitality to those in my life through being present & listening well

☐

THE CHURCH CARES

Matching with someone through this ministry to care and support them

☐

OTHER _____

☐

OTHER _____

Lesson 1: Joining



Helper Training Lesson 1: Video 1

INTRODUCTION (7:07 MINUTES)

CLICK THE QR CODE TO ACCESS THE VIDEOS
[YOUTUBE.COM/@THECHURCHCARES](https://www.youtube.com/@THECHURCHCARES) OR
[THECHURCHCARES.COM/COURSE](https://www.thechurchcares.com/course)



TEACHING

Meet “The Docs” Dr. Sells and Dr. Ripley

The Purpose of The Church Cares
We Hurt, We Connect, We Learn, We Care

Overview of 7 Steps to Caring

4 H's of Healing

Hear, Hope, Hindrance, Highway

This will move a person from being heard to having a sense of direction.



DEMONSTRATION

Meet Casey and Jordan. Jordan will model how to be a good helper. Listen closely to how Casey describes herself.



PRACTICE (5 MINUTES)

Practice just getting to know someone. With your partner share your favorite book of the Bible and why.

Lesson 1: Joining



Helper Training Lesson 1 Video 2

JOINING TO SEE AND UNDERSTAND (10:46)

TEACHING

Genesis 16: Story of Hagar
God sees us. God knows us. God loves us.



Seeing is a prelude to trust. To build trust we need to:

- Suspend _____
- Offer trust
- Use _____ words
- Invite the telling of the story.

Not only do we join to understand but we join to see.

- We are to be comforted in knowing that _____ sees us.

Did you miss one of the words? In the back of this workbook are the answers.

Lesson 1: Joining



DEMONSTRATION

What did you notice?

What would be a good response to “I don’t want to be a bother” ?



PRACTICE NOW WITH A PARTNER (5-10 MINUTES)

Do you find that often you don’t slow down and connect with anyone at church? What gets in the way? What could help with that?

Take a few minutes to slow down and connect with your partner.

Ask your practice partner to share any personal struggle or life circumstances that they feel comfortable sharing.

Practice the skills you learned in lesson one.

- Slow down to suspend time
- Offer trust
- Use few words
- Invite the telling of the story.

Lesson 2: Prayer

Helper Training Lesson 2

Start Here: Remember and Reflect

Before we dive into new material, let's take a moment to look back.

*Each lesson begins with a simple rhythm:
remembering, reflecting, and raising any questions.*

- Remember what stood out from the last lesson. What truth encouraged you? What skill or step have you been practicing?
- Reflect on how the past week went. Were there moments of growth—or moments that were hard?
- Raise any questions, struggles, or stuck points. This is a space where it's okay not to have it all figured out.

Bringing our questions into the light allows the group to grow together in honesty and grace. When we pause to reflect before moving forward, we make space for deeper understanding—and for God to meet us right where we are.

Let's begin with open hearts, listening ears, and a willingness to walk forward together.



Helper Training Lesson 2 Video 1

PRAYER FOR STRUGGLES (15:48)

- Not to say just the right _____
- Not to just end the conversation
- Connected to the _____
of the other

Lesson 2: Prayer



- Ears- _____ slowly
- Heart- Our hearts are broken
- Face- Turned towards _____
- Hands- Many types of _____
- Feet- Inspired to wise action
- Follow-up - Keep on Praying



GROUP DISCUSSION

5 minutes

Can you think of a time when you were really struggling and someone prayed for you in a way that really helped you? What did they do?



PRACTICE WITH A PARTNER

10 minutes

Share one life struggle right now.

Find 1-2 scripture verses that apply to your practice partner's situation. Read the scripture together, and pause to pray.

Pray in ways that are natural for you as you close the meeting.

Lesson 2: Prayer



PAIR AND SHARE

30 minutes

Find a partner follow up on the personal struggles that were shared last week. If you are practicing with a new partner, ask them to share some of their story.

Do you sense that this is the kind of situation that is

- Dramatic response from God
- Waiting on the Lord for a response
- Lamenting and accepting loss or struggle

**“God of Silence and
God of all sound, Help
me to listen.**

**Help me to do the deep
listening to the sounds
of the soul.**

**We are waiting to hear
your soft voice calling
us deeper into you.”**

Ignatian Prayer

Lesson 3: Focus, Ask, Boundaries

Helper Training Lesson 3

Start Here: Remember and Reflect

Before we dive into new material, let's take a moment to look back.

*Each lesson begins with a simple rhythm:
remembering, reflecting, and raising any questions.*

- Remember what stood out from the last lesson. What truth encouraged you? What skill or step have you been practicing?
- Reflect on how the past week went. Were there moments of growth—or difficult?
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Bringing our questions into the light allows the group to grow together in honesty and grace. When we pause to reflect before moving forward, we make space for deeper understanding—and for God to meet us right where we are.

Let's begin with open hearts, listening ears, and a willingness to walk forward together.

This lesson we focus on three skills that communicate presence, care, and valuing love when someone is sharing their story of struggle. The skills are in three videos.

- **Lesson 3 Video 1: Non-verbal communication**
- **Lesson 3 Video 2: Curious questions.**
- **Lesson 3 Video 3: Recognizing emergency situations & getting help**



Helper Training Lesson 3: Video 1

FOCUSING THE CONVERSATION (9:47 MINUTES)

Lesson 3: Focus, Ask, Boundaries



TEACHING

To create connection with others in non-verbal communication skills, the 3 Vs and a B are

- V _____
- V _____
- V _____
- B _____



DEMONSTRATION

As you watch Jordan's body posture. What did you see?



PRACTICE

5 minutes

Find your partner to practice non-verbal listening skills.

- One partner plays the role of speaker and tells a story of some past struggle in your life for about 2 minutes.
- The listener does not speak. The listener's job is to practice the 3Vs and a B of non-verbal listening.
- Take about 2 minutes focusing on your non-verbal communication.

Then switch roles so you both have a chance to try it.

It often feels awkward to focus on non-verbal communication and body posture. That is a normal feeling.

Is there one way you could improve your non-verbal communication learned from this activity?

Lesson 3: Focus, Ask, Boundaries



GROUP DISCUSSION

10 minutes

Christianity is an embodied faith.

Jesus came not as an idea or a vision, but in a body—a crying infant in a manger. He lived in a body, served in a body, suffered in a body, and rose again in a body. His incarnation affirms what God first declared in Genesis: our bodies are “very good.”

So we ask: What does it mean that God Himself walked among us in a human frame?

What does that say about our worth, our wounds, and how we care for one another?

So much of our communication happens without words.



Helper Training Lesson 3 Video 2

ASKING CURIOUS QUESTIONS. (6:06 MINUTES)

I should not give my opinion, but listen with curiosity



I agree

Lesson 3: Focus, Ask, Boundaries



TEACHING

How are _____?

_____ is happening?

Can you tell me _____ about that?

How did that _____ you?

How were you shaped by this _____?

Where does God show up in this story, or is _____?

Can you see any _____ options for this situation?



DEMONSTRATION

As you watch Jordan ask questions. Take notes on what you noticed. How did she demonstrate curiosity with questions? Can you think of any other curious questions that could have been asked in this scenario?



PRACTICE

5 minutes

Together with your partner consider what questions you might ask Casey in the role play?

What are curious questions you could ask?

Lesson 3: Focus, Ask, Boundaries

Helper Training Lesson 3 Video 3



PITFALLS DANGERS & SOLUTIONS (8:05 MINUTES)

TEACHING

- Avoid being overly responsible. I am not responsible, I am _____ in my role in this ministry.
- I don't need to make sure my friend makes it to church on Sunday, or make things happen for the person.
- You are joining with the _____ of another person.
- God is the ultimate caregiver.
- Limit your _____
- Humility: Not _____
- I should not be alone but bring any burdens or painful stories to _____

RESOURCES FOR EMERGENCY SUPPORT

- Dial 988 for mental health emergency care 24-7
- See your church leader for local resources and if/when emergencies happen

If you have time, stay now and practice this skill.

If the time is over, then schedule a time to meet this week and practice- on the phone or internet is fine.

Practicing with a partner after watching the training is essential to being ready to listen in real life.

Lesson 3: Focus, Ask, Boundaries



Common non-verbal habits to improve:

Not looking at someone who is speaking

Nodding too much

Interrupting the other person

An anxious voice tone

Body posture that is slouching or turned away

Facial gestures that distract from the story like laughing when it's serious

Invading personal space or sitting too far away

PAIR AND SHARE

30 minutes

When you meet with a partner to practice, follow up on personal struggles that were shared last week (If you are practicing with a new partner, ask them to share some of their story)

Practice listening for 5-10 minutes each and pay attention to your body posture, eye contact, voice tone, and general non-verbal communication.

Ask curious questions to help the other person tell more of their story.

Have your practice partner give you feedback on your non-verbal style and curious questions.

Are there any nonverbal habits you'd like to grow in?

It's important to notice the difference between patterns you want to intentionally improve and behaviors that only show up when you're anxious. Ironically, stressing about how you come across can actually make things harder. Self-awareness helps—but so does self-kindness.

Pray in ways that are natural for you as you close the meeting.

Lesson 4: Looping

Helper Training Lesson 4

Start Here: Remember and Reflect

Before we dive into new material, let's take a moment to look back.

*Each lesson begins with a simple rhythm:
remembering, reflecting, and raising any questions.*

- Remember what stood out from the last lesson. What truth encouraged you? What skill or step have you been practicing?
- Reflect on how the past week went. Were there moments of growth—or difficult?
- Raise any questions, struggles, or stuck points. This is a space where it's okay not to have it all figured out.



In this lesson, we will focus on the “Looping” of content and emotions. Looping is very helpful when listening to someone share their story. This is the heart of the listening skills portion of this training.



Helper Training Lesson 4 Video 1

LOOPING CONTENT AND EMOTIONS (12:49 minutes)

Loop content:

Take the idea of what they said, and looping it back to them in their own words to help them feel heard.

You are heard, understood,
----- and known.

Lesson 4: Looping



Loop emotion:

Loop back the emotion.

Reflecting: Bouncing back the same idea of what they said

Paraphrasing: Using your own _____ to loop back the emotion.

Clarifying: I'm not sure if it's this or _____.

Emotions can be _____ and have _____



DEMONSTRATION

As you watch Jordan's looping. Take notes on what you noticed. How did she loop in this clip?

PRACTICE

12 minutes

Take turns looping content and emotions.

As the help-seeker, pause frequently so your partner can practice looping.

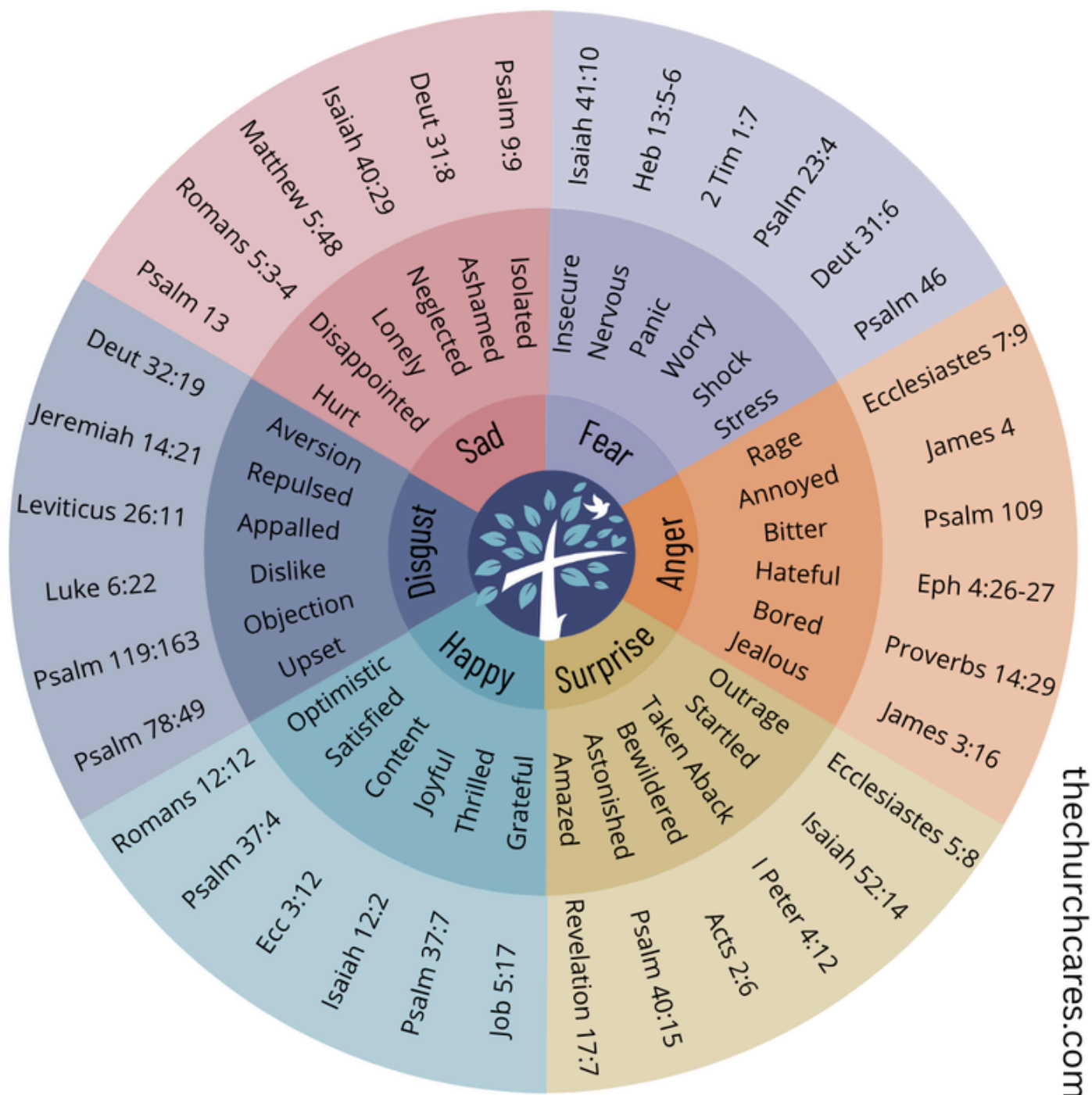
When you hear an idea, reflect an idea.



Take 5 minutes and swap roles You might need to set a watch or timer. It's normal to feel like 5 minutes was a long time.

After you finish, give your partner some feedback on what they are doing well, and how they could keep getting even better.

The Emotions Wheel



thechurchcares.com

We invite helpers to reflect on these Scriptures, especially in areas where certain emotions may feel less comforting or familiar. This isn't a quick-fix of emotions, but to explore and experience emotions.

Lesson 4: Looping



GROUP DISCUSSION

10 minutes

Read Lamentations 3:25-33

25 The Lord is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him;

26 it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord.

27 It is good for a man to bear the yoke while he is young.

28 Let him sit alone in silence, for the Lord has laid it on him.

29 Let him bury his face in the dust— there may yet be hope.

30 Let him offer his cheek to one who would strike him, and let him be filled with disgrace.

31 For no one is cast off by the Lord forever.

32 Though he brings grief, he will show compassion, so great is his unfailing love.

33 For he does not willingly bring affliction or grief to anyone.

As you develop the skill of being a good listener, what is your end-goal and hope for how you might use this skill in your life?

For example. Listening well with

Friends and family members

Ministry roles in the church

Evangelism

Groups I lead at church or elsewhere

Workmates, colleagues or customers

Other?

Lesson 4: Looping

Many people feel unsure whether waiting, or “just listening” is actually helping others. We want a quick fix, and wish we could actually solve their problem that they are talking about. Do you feel that way sometimes?



PAIR AND SHARE

30 minutes

Follow up on personal struggles that were shared last week (If you are practicing with a new partner, ask them to share some of their story) Practice listening for 10 minutes each and practice your looping skills.

This works best if the person talks for about one minute and then the listener loops content or emotions.

The listener should loop content or emotions to help the other person tell more of their story. If finding emotion words is hard, the emotion wheel can be a handy tool.

As the speaker, make sure that you pause about once a minute to let your partner practice their looping skill.

Ask the other person for feedback on your looping. Pray in ways that are natural for you as you close the meeting.

Lesson 5: Summarizing

Helper Training Lesson 5

Start Here: Remember and Reflect

Before we dive into new material, let's take a moment to look back.

*Each lesson begins with a simple rhythm:
remembering, reflecting, and raising any questions.*

- Remember what stood out from the last lesson. What truth encouraged you? What skill or step have you been practicing?
- Reflect on how the past week went. Were there moments of growth—or difficult?
- Raise any questions, struggles, or stuck points. This is a space where it's okay not to have it all figured out.

This lesson we will focus on summarizing.

Summarizing someone's story is a powerful way to show that you've truly been listening.

It also allows you to close the conversation with care and clarity—helping the person feel seen, heard, and valued.

Helper Training Lesson 5 Video 1



SUMMARIZING (6:07 minutes)

Summarizing is useful for...

Establish: Establish _____ in the conversation.

Alter: Alter the _____ of a conversation.

Bring: Bring closure and introduce a new

_____.

Lesson 5: Summarizing

TEACHING

How to summarize



1. Think back over the last 15 minutes of what they have been talking about, or over the whole time.
2. Summarize the main ideas.
3. Ask “Did I _____ it?”
4. Transition to a new topic, or finish the meeting with prayer.

It’s good to be _____. Being wrong actually clarifies what is most important.

DEMONSTRATION

As you watch Jordan’s summarizing, what did you notice?

How did she summarize well in this clip?



PRACTICE

10 minutes

Take turns using all of the skills you have learned so far, and then giving a summary.



1. Use good non-verbal and body language.
2. Verbal tracking- listening
3. Curiosity with good questions, not advice
4. Loop content & emotions
5. Summarize for a gracious transition or close of conversation.

Set a timer for 4 minutes and just listen well, doing all the skills, 1, 2, 3 & 4 above. When the timer goes off try #5, summarize as though ending the meeting

Swap roles and Give feedback to each other.

Lesson 5: Summarizing



GROUP DISCUSSION READ I CORINTHIANS 12: 21- 28

10 minutes

We include verses 28 here for emphasis

28 And God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, **of helping (Greek word antilēmpseis)**, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues.

Strong's lexicon defines: "The term "antilēmpsis" refers to the act of providing help or assistance. In the context of the New Testament, it is often associated with the spiritual gift of helping or supporting others within the Christian community. This gift is seen as a vital function within the body of Christ, enabling the church to operate effectively and compassionately.

The gift of helping is not just volunteering for your church, but is an important gift for the body of Christ.

How do you think the gift of helping should be viewed by the church?

Have you found listening to be helping?

Lesson 5: Summarizing

Just one lesson to go!

Before we wrap up, we'd love to hear how this experience has been for you. Please take a few minutes now to complete our program evaluation.

As a university-based training initiative, your feedback genuinely shapes how we improve. **We read every comment** and use it to strengthen the way we equip others to care well.



If this does not work for you, visit www.thechurchcares.com/feedback

Pair and Share

30 minutes



When you meet, follow up on personal struggles that were shared last week (If you are practicing with a new partner, ask them to share some of their story)

Take some time to practice all your skills for about 10-15 minutes each, as you have time. At the end of your time, practice a summary statement. Setting a timer on your phone or watch will help you avoid going beyond the time you have available.

Ask the other person for feedback on your helping skills. Pray in ways that are natural for you as you close the meeting.

Lesson 6: Connection to Direction

Helper Training Lesson 6

Start Here: Remember and Reflect

Before we dive into new material, let's take a moment to look back.

*Each lesson begins with a simple rhythm:
remembering, reflecting, and raising any questions.*

- Remember what stood out from the last lesson. What truth encouraged you? What skill or step have you been practicing?
- Reflect on how the past week went. Were there moments of growth—or moments that were hard?
- Raise any questions, struggles, or stuck points. This is a space where it's okay not to have it all figured out.

Read James 2:14-18 to prepare for this lesson.

In this last lesson we focus on moving from Connection to Direction. You will learn how to help someone make plans to address problems they are facing.



Helper Training Lesson 6 Video 1

Connection to Direction (14:48 minutes)

TEACHING

Paul and Silas in Jail (Acts 16: 16-34)

Sometimes we can do something and
sometimes we have to _____ on the
Lord and pray.

Lesson 6: Connection to Direction



The 4 H's

Hear the Story. Push away or _____ towards.

- How can you push away from the problem
- And at the same time how can you pull towards the creative solution?
- You often have to hold both at the same time.

Hope. Our hope is in _____.

- It's okay to lament and cry. _____ wept (John 11:35).
- God will not leave us alone.

Question: What is it that God is asking you to do next (hint: It may be waiting, or it may be action) to rely on the Hope that you know but cannot see?

Hindrance. Consider the limitations and realities of choices we have.

- Choices make our lives _____ and bring stress.
- What are hindrances that can't be moved, and what can be moved?

Highway. An elevated path.

- Courage is not merely telling them to have courage.
- Courage is instilled by invoking the presence of God, the _____ way.

Lesson 6: Connection to Direction



PRACTICE

15 minutes

Think through the 4 H's in the role play scenario of Casey and Jordan

Work through the PLAN & PRAY sheet together.

How would you fill in the worksheet with the Casey & Jordan scenario?

Or if you are feeling comfortable you can use something from your own personal lives instead.

Make a Plan & Pray - the 4 Hs

Hear their story still: What is the concern?

Hope: What has to wait and what can be changed?

Resources: spiritual, personal, church, community, family, friends

Create a plan for the coming weeks/months

Hindrances: Discuss them

HIGHway: Where is God in this plan?
Prayer

PLAN & PRAY



DATE: _____

HEAR THE CONCERN

What is the concern?
Be clear & specific.

HOPE

What can change, and
what waits on God?
Make a plan?
What resources? spiritual,
personal, church, family,
city, friends, etc.

HINDRANCES

What will make this
difficult? Plans to respond
to hindrances?

HIGHWAY

Where is God in this plan?
Pray over it.

Lesson 6: Connection to Direction

GROUP DISCUSSION



10 minutes

Think through the 4 H's in the role play scenario of Casey and Jordan

How do you see the Plan and Pray working out for someone who is

1. Stuck in a situation that can't really change such as the death of a loved one or job loss.
2. Young, like a teenager so doesn't have many resources or great skills yet at problem solving.
3. Seems to reject any idea of improving and only sees hindrances.

Put your heads together as a group on how you can use hearing, hope/ identifying resources, respecting hindrances, and God's Higher way to help people like those above take small steps forward addressing their problem appropriately to the situation and their abilities.

WHAT IF I DON'T HAVE WHAT IT TAKES TO HELP THEM?

Sometimes in care ministry, you realize that someone's struggles are deeper than you can walk with alone. That's not failure—it's wisdom. When that happens, ask your church leadership for a list of trusted local professionals you can refer to, so you can continue to walk alongside the person while they receive the help they need. Being a bridge to a higher level of care is an important ministry too. And you can continue to care and pray for the person while they get higher level medical, financial, or mental health care.

I ' M T R A I N E D N O W W H A T ?

Congratulations on completing The Church Cares Helper Training!

You've taken an important step toward becoming a steady, trusted presence for those in need of care. Many new helpers begin by continuing to meet with classmates—or connecting with others in their church or ministry—to practice listening, share real-life experiences, and grow together. That's a meaningful first step into care ministry.

Some of you may feel led to offer this training to others in your community. If that's you, we'd love to support you.

Next Steps:

- **Keep Practicing:** Pair up with someone from your class or ministry to keep listening and learning together.
- **Talk with Your Church Leader:** Let them know you've completed the training and are ready to serve.
- **Get Equipped to Lead:** Interested in offering this course to others? Reach out to us at info@thechurchcares.com or www.thechurchcares.com for tools, guidance, and encouragement.

Remember: Care begins with presence—not perfection. You don't have to do everything. Just do the next right thing.

Looking for support as you continue in care ministry?

- TheChurchCares.com offers practical resources on a wide range of life challenges you may encounter as a helper. It's your go-to hub for care tools, guides, and encouragement.
-
- 7cups.com/thechurchcares is a 24/7 platform where trained helpers and help-seekers can connect anytime. You'll find opportunities to practice your listening skills to people who are hurting, provide care, receive support, and access additional training at your own pace.



THE ANSWERS

MISSING AN ANSWER OR TWO FROM THE FILL-IN-THE-BLANK?

WE GOT YOU.

1. Introduction: We Learn

Joining to understand: Suspend time, Offer trust, Use few words, Invite the telling of the story. God sees us.

2. Prayer: words, heart, listening, God, prayers

3. Focusing the conversation: Visual eye contact, vocal quality, verbal tracking, body posture/ position

4. Asking Curious Questions: things, what, more, affect, loss, missing, wise

5. Boundaries: a caregiver (or similar word), church, suffering, God, meetings, hero, the coordinator

6. Looping Content & Emotions: regarded, words, that, congruent, layers

7. Summarizing: focus, direction, perspective, wrong

8. Connection to direction: wait, pull, God, Jesus, complicated, High



GROUP RULES FOR CARE PRAYER AND SHARE COURSE

1. People may choose to share personal struggles in this course. I will treat each person's story with respect, care and Christian love.
2. I will not gossip or talk about the personal struggles people share outside of this group.
3. If I will be late or can't attend the group one week, I will let the leader know.
4. I will get my needs met by God and rely on God first for any struggle or issues in my life. I won't expect people in this group to fix me.
5. I will graciously accept care, prayer or sharing from fellow members of the group.
6. I understand we are all learning to care, pray and share. We will sometimes misunderstand or make mistakes. No one here is perfect.
7. I will pray for the people in my group.

4.1 What Happens After the Class?

AFTER THE TRAINING: A SIMPLE GUIDE FOR YOUR CHURCH

Imagine This...

No one struggles alone. Your church is now a place where trained lay listeners quietly serve as Christ's hands and heart, walking alongside those in pain. People feel seen, cared for, and encouraged toward hope and healing—and your staff, pastors and local counselors are supported by a well-organized system of lay care.

This document provides a simple, practical roadmap for the CARE Coordinator about what implementation looks like after your volunteers complete the Helper Training. (Some steps will be arranged prior to the training so they can be seamlessly launched after the training.)

1. Publicly Celebrate & Cast Vision

- Announce the launch of the ministry (trained lay listeners) just as you would a new ministry or small group sign-up. Share from the platform, in bulletins, via email, etc..
- Clearly explain what this will look like:
 - Is there a dedicated way for people to request help?
 - If someone is interested in being trained as a listener, what can they do?
 - How does this enhance existing care options? Ensure members know this is adding a layer of care to existing pastoral / counselor care, not replacing it.
- Invite participation:
 - As **help-seekers** – encourage those who need a listening ear to reach out.
 - As **future helpers** – encourage others to consider training in the future.



4.1 What Happens After the Class?

- Consider a short sermon series or pastoral message on mental and emotional health to normalize conversations around care, help launch this avenue of ministry, and ensure people are engaged in the new process. This will be especially important if the church's care culture has been primarily based on referring to clinicians.

2. Create Ongoing Systems for Seeking Help

- Provide **easy ways to request help**:
 - Add a "Would you like a call back from someone in our care ministry?" section to the church's Contact Card or digital Contact form (such as a QR code or NFC "tap phone here" sticker on the back of each pew or seat).
 - Ensure all small group and other leaders know the preferred method for referring a need to the care Coordinator (e.g. calling the church office, texting the Coordinator, etc.).
- Establish a **Coordinator role** to receive all requests, respond within 24–48 hours, and determine next steps.
- The Coordinator will funnel appropriate requests to trained listeners and/or relevant ministry groups, and refer higher-level needs to pastors or counselors.

**Example: Jessica, a mom struggling with anxiety, taps her phone on the NFC sticker and fills out the digital form. The Coordinator connects her with Angie, a trained listener who has walked a similar road.*

3. Deploy Trained Lay Listeners Thoughtfully

- **Start simple**: Assign new listeners to "basic" needs (e.g., normal grief, life transitions).
- **Refer upward as needed**: Ensure listeners pass higher-level needs to the Coordinator, who passes them to a pastor or counselor.
- **Match interests**: Listeners can serve post-service, in prayer groups, or specific ministries (e.g., Celebrate Recovery, grief support).
- **Use pairs or teams, especially at the outset**: Build confidence and ensure backup support.



4.1 What Happens After Class?

4. Facilitate Ongoing Supervision & Support

- Schedule **regular debrief sessions** (every month or two) for listeners to:
 - Share experiences and questions (no names, confidentiality protected).
 - Receive guidance and encouragement.
 - Process difficult interactions and prevent burnout.
- Create a **feedback loop** so the Coordinator / pastor(s) hear of any needs for additional training or ministry.
- **Provide continuing education** for listeners: Invite guest experts, share micro-trainings, and celebrate care successes.
- **Care for your volunteers:** Encourage prayer support, offer breaks when needed, and remind them that self-care is vital.

5. Integrate Listeners Into the Broader Care Ecosystem

- Encourage listeners to always consider the bigger picture; not just caring for the person short-term, but ensuring they get connected into ongoing fellowship in a small group or other support group.
- Clarify their role in the larger care map:
 - **In-scope:** Listening, praying, encouraging.
 - **Out-of-scope:** Counseling, medical/mental health intervention, pastoral advice.
- When referring to professionals, consider the **“referrals with” model**. In some cases, listeners, support groups or other ministries may continue walking alongside.

6. Measure & Celebrate Success

- **Share wins** to build momentum, engagement, and trust. Simple metrics:
 - Help-seekers connected in first 90 days.
 - Active trained listeners.
 - Anonymous success stories shared in newsletters or services.
- Celebrate publicly—**thank volunteers** and share testimonies (with permission or anonymized).

