

Concepts for Providing Care to a Hurting Heart

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At one level counseling is a skill that someone can learn – at another level it is a gift that God gives to some individuals to provide special care for the needs of God’s people.

Care givers must be led by the Holy Spirit and have a heart of love for people and be filled with goodness and knowledge so they can admonish others.

All believers are “counselors.” All are called to care for one another. Some believers are called and gifted for a special ministry in this area.

1. Connect on a *heart* level with the person in need-speak words of *hope* to them

Hope contains truth

Hope creates vision of possible healing

Provides alternative to negative thinking and living

Hope provides encouragement

Hope implies personal responsibility

Gives them ownership sense of control of situation

2. Ask them to tell their story (do not ask them to repeat this over and over again)

They can become their story

Their story can be embellished over time

Find the fact story

Find the feelings story

3. Listen attentively to all they have to say – watch for emotional responses

Be reflective

List or write down pertinent information they give – tell them that you are going to take some notes to help you remember and keep the story straight. Assure them of complete confidentiality – file the notes safely and destroy them after the situation is out of your hands.

Note categories – family, work, etc.

4. Help them to *see the truth* (John 8:32)

-about their experiences – instead of denial

-about self – instead of image maintenance

-about others – instead of image maintenance

-about God – instead of wrong thinking

Listen for patterns of thinking and behavior

Look for possible dependencies

- Ask about areas of difficulty
 - Childhood
 - Spiritual and emotional health of family
 - Relationships
 - what kind of relationships do they make?
 - what is their level of health in the relationships
 - do they have boundaries in these relationships
 - home, family, school, church, work, etc.
- Addictions and compulsive behaviors
- Seek to tell the truth in each area of life

5. Identify the areas of painful experience – begins sense of responsibility

- Emotional
- Physical
- Spiritual
- Sexual
- Financial

Be careful – these are painful areas - ask good, appropriate questions

Memories may be suppressed or repressed

Encourage them to express

Do not “dig” for problems

Allow the Holy Spirit to reveal them in His time

Deal with them as they arise

6. Experience the pain – as Joseph did

- Acknowledge the offense – it did happen – they may be in denial
 - Feel the hurt
 - Grieve the loss
 - Ask Jesus to take away the pain – He is there for you
 - Have friend or spouse accept the hurting little girl/boy inside
 - use word pictures of healing – Jesus holding you close
- Many people live all of life with hurts of childhood

7. Forgive the offender(s) “Father forgive them for they know not...”

See the offender through God's eyes

See the offender as the hurting person that he/she is

Pray for and minister to the offender

See forgiveness notes – not necessary to confront the offender in every case

Do not cause more trauma than necessary to resolve

Resolve as far as possible – forgive what cannot be resolved

Result is freedom from bondage and joy in freedom

8. Forsake old ways by confession

confess wrong paths/self medications

-Hostility, bitterness, anger, laziness, fears, greediness,

-Ask for forgiveness of those they have hurt

9. Healing – wounds become scars – less defensiveness – new self

-go slowly

-new boundaries –

-new experiences –

-new relationships

-open self to love and be loved by Godly people

-stop old ways, interrupt old paths (Ps. 147:3, 34:8)

-give areas of shame and false guilt to Jesus for healing

-develop word picture of healing

Psalms are full of word pictures

10. Develop and restore functional life-give *home work* – be directive

-Reconnect to lost relationships – and to God

-Interrupt mechanisms – with powerful rejection of Satan's attack

With goodness filling the mind – music, scripture, etc

-Learning and relearning – where wrong associations have been built

- Not erase but replace old, painful memories and experiences

-Open your heart to allow others to love you – you are valuable

-Become new person – trust self, trust thoughts, trust decisions

-Build core of close friends -

-Become a giver -

-People become attracted to your gifts -

11. Build and rebuild relationships – as new, healed person

- With self – strong, honest, disciplined, unselfish, diligent, loving
- With others – strong, honest, love, truth, integrity, trust, stable
- With God – prayer, Bible study, meditation, love, power of Holy Spirit