



HOW TO LEAD A GO-CARE GROUP

Purpose – A Go-Care group focuses on personal transformation through breaking the silence and allowing participants to share their life story in an embracing and safe environment where God’s abundant and accepting love and care can be found.

1. **Leader** – A Go-Care group should be hosted by a person who has a recognized pastoral care gift, and is able to be open, honest, empathetic, and vulnerable. The leader must also have a demonstrated passion for the care and transformation of others.
2. **Introductory Session** – In the introductory session you must create a safe and relational environment for the group. Following a get to know you time, present the following group guidelines and ask each participant to agree:
 - **Commitment** – Each participant must be committed to connect on time and be faithful to the group.
 - **Consideration** – Each participant needs to consider and respect one another and treat them as they would want to be treated. This means that all that is said in the group stays in the group.
 - **Contribution** – Each participant needs to play their part and contribute to discussions by being open, honest, and ready to share.
 - **Change** – Each participant is asked to be open to the ways in which God is seeking to bring change into their lives.
3. **Session 1** – The leader shares their story first and thereby creates a safe space for others to share without shame. Following the sharing invite others to ask questions related to the story. Make sure to point to God’s involvement in the story. Then invite others share.
4. **Session 2+** – In the second and successive sessions invite others to share their full story (allow plenty of time). At the conclusion of the sharing ask the sharer how they thought God was involved in their story. The leader should demonstrate to others how to listen well, embracing them no matter how the story unfolds.
5. **Response to Sharing** – Following the sharing of each person’s story the leader should affirm the validity of the story and show active empathy (words and action) for the emotions felt and expressed. Encourage the group to embrace the person and their story as a whole. The person should feel seen, listened to, and cared for.
6. **Further Care** – The group should offer whatever further care and practical support is required. The leader should refer those that need extra care and counselling to gifted pastoral carers or to specialist counsellors as appropriate.
7. **“God Cares” Training** – In the concluding sessions take others through the “God Cares” material (see the IBCM Network App), teaching them to “have the caring heart of God.”
8. **Go-Care Group Training** – Teach others how to lead a Go-Care group by taking them through these Go-Care group guidelines.

“HAVING THE CARING HEART OF GOD”