

REDEEMPTIVE CONVERSATIONS

Sharing God's Comfort with Others



Redemptive Conversations:

Bringing Gods Comfort to Difficult Situations

A Biblical Perspective on Care and Counsel

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.”

2 Corinthians 1:3-4

**Partner
Organization
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Welcome to Redemptive Conversations

We are delighted to have you join us for this transformative experience. This training is designed to equip you with practical tools and a fresh perspective for engaging in conversations that foster understanding, healing, and restoration through the gospel of Jesus Christ. In a world often marked by division and misunderstanding, redemptive conversations create space for grace, empathy, and meaningful connection. Over the course of our time together, we will explore principles that help us listen deeply, speak thoughtfully, and navigate challenging dialogues with courage and compassion led by the Holy Spirit. Thank you for investing in this journey—your presence here signals a commitment to being a life-giver and cultivating hope through the power of the gospel.

Training Objectives

By the end of this training, participants will be able to:

1. Understand the Core Principles of Redemptive Conversations\ Learn what makes a conversation redemptive and why it matters in personal, professional, and community contexts.
2. Develop Active Listening and Empathy Skills\ Practice techniques that foster genuine understanding and reduce defensiveness in dialogue.
3. Navigate Difficult Conversations with Confidence\ Gain strategies for addressing sensitive topics while maintaining respect and relational integrity.
4. Apply Practical Tools for Reconciliation and Restoration\ Explore actionable steps to move conversations toward healing and constructive outcomes.
5. Cultivate a Mindset of Grace and Courage\ Embrace attitudes that transform conflict into opportunities for growth, connection, and ultimately a salvation experience for the client.

Devotional Thought

“Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person” — Colossians 4:6

As we begin this training, let us reflect on the power of words. Every conversation is an opportunity to extend grace and bring light into someone’s life. When we listen with empathy and speak with humility, we mirror the heart of the Father. Today, ask yourself: Are my words life-giving? May this time together inspire us to be peacemakers who build bridges through the gift of dialogue.

Participatory learning

This training is intended to be facilitated using a “participatory learning” methodology, which encourages active participation among attendees, which is why they are called “participants” throughout the manual. It is most effective for adults to learn by discovering information and drawing on existing knowledge and personal experience. This is contrasted with lecture-based teaching, in which learners *receive* information from an instructor. Trainers are encouraged to ask open-ended questions from participants whenever possible.

Sample Schedule

| Day One | | | |
|---|---|------------|-------------|
| Time | Title | Session | Facilitator |
| 15 min | Introductions, Worship, Prayer | | |
| 30 min. | Redemptive Conversation | Session 1 | |
| 45min. | The Role of the Gospel | Session 2 | |
| 90 min. | Spiritual Foundations | Session 3 | |
| 120 min | Counseling with Integrity | Session 4 | |
| 90 min | Understand the Client | Session 5 | |
| 75 min. | Crisis Cycle | Session 6 | |
| 8.25 hours for day, including breaks and lunch | | | |
| Day Two | | | |
| | Worship | | |
| 10 min | Review and Expectations | | |
| 90 min | Communication Process | Session 7 | |
| | | | |
| Remainder of Day. Plan for 60 min. Lunch and 15 min. break | The Counseling Process: Skill Building | Session 8 | |
| 8 hours for day, including breaks and lunch | | | |
| Day Three | | | |
| | Worship | | |
| 10 | Review and Expectations | | |
| 90 min | Human Reproduction with Human Development, include practice | Session 9 | |
| 120 min | Abortion, After Abortion, include practice | Session 10 | |
| Remainder of day. | Next Steps for Life-giving Ministry Include break | Session 11 | |
| 30 min. | Certificates and Celebration | | |
| 8.5 hours for day, including breaks and lunch | | | |
| | | | |

Pre-Session: The Journey of a Life-Giver

Summary

Trainer Note: Please provide this section to participants one week before attending the Redemptive Conversations training.

In a series of valuable and motivating sessions, participants learn about the Biblical worldview on the value and dignity of human life, gaining valuable information on how to incorporate these truths into their lives and ministries. As these truths spread among families and congregations, the resulting impact will multiply within communities and regions. In this way, it will act as a life-giving agent spreading among nations worldwide.

The key points of each chapter of The Journey of a Life-Giver training curriculum are the following.

Chapter 1: The Journey of Christian Leader - Key Points

- ❖ A unique part of a Christian's life journey is their longing to understand the Father's heart for Life and learn to share His heart with other believers.
- ❖ God has always spoken - and continues doing it - to His people in many ways, such as through Scripture, the Holy Spirit, other people, signs, and dreams.
- ❖ Because God desires to speak to each person, every person should expect God to speak, learn to discern His voice, and understand what He is saying to them.

Chapter 2: Biblical Worldview - Key Points

- ❖ Everyone has a worldview: a set of beliefs and values by which we view reality and make sense of the world.
- ❖ A person's worldview is what gives them the basis for making decisions in life, including the decision to abort or carry a child to term.
- ❖ The Christian worldview affirms the value of all human life and the full humanity of the fetus.

Chapter 3: The Sacredness of Human Life - Key Points

- ❖ Humanity is unique among all creation because men and women are made in the image of God.
- ❖ All human life is of equal value and immeasurable from conception to natural death because humanity is made in the image of God.
- ❖ The devaluation of human life has resulted in the deaths of hundreds of millions of people and has caused incalculable harm around the world.
- ❖ We must value human life as God does and choose to be life-givers in our views and responses to all people, including the unborn.

Chapter 4: Becoming a Life-Giver - Key Points

- ❖ Jesus Christ came to bring abundant life into the world, and His disciples must follow His example.
- ❖ Being a life-giver is the most essential part of our lifestyle; it is how we live daily.
- ❖ Christ's redemption of a person's heart enables that person to reflect His heart to other people.
- ❖ A redeemed person reflects Christ's heart to others through redemptive thought, hearing, vision, words, and actions.

Chapter 5: Spiritual Foundations of Ministry - Key Points

- ❖ Intimacy with the Lord transforms our lives and leads to an effective impact in ministry.
- ❖ We must allow God to prepare our hearts for ministry.
- ❖ Meditating on and studying God's Word is the primary foundation of all ministry.

- ❖ We were created to worship God, and worship brings us closer to God.
- ❖ God longs for us to communicate with Him through prayer.
- ❖ Spiritual warfare equips us to understand God better, our enemy, and ourselves.
- ❖ Evangelism represents recognizing that only God can meet a person's deepest needs.

Chapter 6: God's Design for Marriage and the Family - Key Points

- ❖ God is the creator of the institution of marriage.
- ❖ God instructs husbands and wives to submit to each other.
- ❖ God's commandment to husbands is to love their wives, and His commandment to wives is to respect their husbands.
- ❖ Marriage between a man and a woman is the core of the Christian family.
- ❖ Children are not the property of their fathers and mothers but are equal image bearers of God.

Chapter 7: Biblical Sexuality - Key Points

- ❖ Biblical sexuality is for husband and wife to enjoy sex as a good gift created by God and to be enjoyed in marriage.
- ❖ Biblical sexuality is for husband and wife to live according to biblical principles of sexual purity and holiness.
- ❖ God's purposes for man and woman in marriage are procreative, joining or merging (becoming “one flesh”), and the image of God in the world.
- ❖ Engaging in sexual relations outside of biblical guidelines is sinful and causes spiritual, emotional, and physical consequences.

Chapter 8: Human Reproduction and Family Planning - Key Points

- ❖ God creates human life in the womb. Children are a blessing.
- ❖ Human life begins at conception when the sperm fertilizes the female egg.
- ❖ God is Sovereign over the conception and development of the fetus, so no child is “unplanned” or “unwanted” by God.
- ❖ The sexual act between spouses results in physical, emotional, and spiritual union.
- ❖ The sex of a human being formed at conception is determined by the attributes of the man's sperm.
- ❖ Each human being formed at conception is a distinct person, separate from its mother.
- ❖ God creates human life in the womb; children are a blessing.
- ❖ A married couple's decision to limit their number of children (with or without the use of contraception) is a moral and spiritual decision as well as a practical one.

Chapter 9: Abortion Procedures - Key Points

- ❖ Abortion is the deliberate, violent, and unnatural destruction of a living human being.
- ❖ Chemical abortions are induced through the use of drugs, usually taken in pill form, although injections are sometimes used.
- ❖ Surgical abortion is a form of abortion in which the embryo is removed from the uterus by surgical methods.
- ❖ Many alternative methods of abortion are performed outside of a recognized medical facility.

Chapter 10: After the Abortion - Key Points

- ❖ The ripple effects of abortion (beyond the death of the child) are far-reaching and affect the parents, the aborted child's immediate and extended family, the church, the community, and more.
- ❖ Abortion can affect all areas of life (physical, spiritual, emotional, and relational) of the woman and man who have participated in an abortion decision.
- ❖ God knows all sins, including abortion, even if it has taken place in secret. He is ready to forgive the sin of abortion and heal its wounds.
- ❖ Confession, repentance, and forgiveness are vital steps on the road to healing after an abortion.

Chapter 11: Repentance, Forgiveness, and Healing - Key Points

- ❖ The greatest need of every born-again man and woman is forgiveness.
- ❖ The self-centered nature of sin quickly leads believers away from God to defeat and condemnation.
- ❖ Repentance is changing one's attitude toward sin and God. It includes a change of both heart and mind.
- ❖ Christ's work on the Cross has made forgiveness and healing possible for those who repent and turn to Jesus.

Chapter 12: Next Steps – Key points

- ❖ It allows participants to experience listening prayer and share what God reveals with others.
- ❖ We will work to develop a strategic action plan that will guide the next steps following this training.
- ❖ We must seek God's heart to discern His plans for us and ministry.
- ❖ It is essential to share and pray with others what we feel God is speaking to us for confirmation and accountability.
- ❖ A brief study of Nehemiah's actions will serve as a road map for discerning God's direction.

Session 1:

Redemptive Conversations

“All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”

2 Cor. 5:18-20 ESV

Facilitator Help: “The Learner Will,” “Key Points,” and “Scripture References” are provided for you to prepare for teaching. You should not read through these points to the participants.

Remember to plan your time well. Allow the group time to share in pairs or threes the ways they have experienced God speaking, or a time when they benefited from a “redemptive conversation.” How much time you allow will depend on the schedule and the number of participants.

Redemptive Conversations curriculum equips individuals to engage with men and women who are facing unplanned pregnancies and considering abortion. Through activities, interactions, and exercises, participants will gain confidence in guiding these sensitive conversations. Participants will awaken to the powerful truth that God has uniquely equipped them to be vessels of hope and healing for those He places in their lives.

Being trained in Redemptive Conversations is an equipping opportunity for ministry leaders to minister effectively, with the heart of the Father, by speaking truth in love, to the person the Lord sends to them for counsel. While you will gain insight and skills, this training does not replace or provide you with the credentials of a professional counselor. All conversations must be entered into as humble servants of the Lord, with prayer and sincere motives to help the other person, not to bring correction or discipline.

Recommended Time 30 minutes

The Learner Will:

1. Define the term redemptive conversation.
2. Be introduced to their role as the “counselor” in the life of a person facing a pregnancy or life decision.

Note: Throughout this manual, the word “client” will be used to describe the person you are talking to, even though the person may be a friend, cousin, spouse, neighbor, or community member.

Key Points:

- Our words have the power to impact others, for better or for worse.
- Redemptive conversations include the hope of the gospel, healing, and guidance.

Scripture References: 2 Cor. 5:18-20; Proverbs 18:21; John 11, Luke 10; Ephesians 1:7; James 1:5; Colossians 4:6; Ephesians 4:15; 2 Corinthians 1:3-4

Supplies Needed: None

Opening Exercise

Facilitator: Ask the following question and allow time for a response.

Is God Speaking? If God is speaking, are we listening? If He is speaking and we are listening, what is He saying?

Thought to work with (to be worked on): We speak with words from the One who has already spoken and is speaking now to us. In redemptive conversations, the focus is on listening more than speaking. And if we don't listen to God's voice, we have no business using ours.

Introduction: The Power of the Tongue

Have you ever had a conversation that changed the way you saw yourself, your circumstances, or even the way you saw God? Maybe it was a moment when someone spoke words of encouragement that lifted you when you felt like giving up. Or perhaps it was a hard truth that hurt at first but led to healing. Those moments remind us that conversations are not just words; they can be turning points.

"Death and life are in the power of the tongue" Proverbs 18:21

You have likely experienced the power of the tongue in both of these ways throughout life, how someone's words felt destructive to your soul, and another's words brought life.

Remembering the power of the tongue while engaging in conversation will help you to restore rather than destroy. In a world filled with brokenness, shame, and lies, God invites us to use our words for redemption, applying our redeeming speaking, and to be life-givers.

Redemptive Conversations

FACILITATOR ASK: What comes to mind when you hear the word redemptive?
How is a redemptive conversation different than other types of conversations?
Allow time for participants to respond.

We are here to learn and grow in the way we have redemptive conversations with hurting and lost people. We will explore how to live out these conversations in our daily lives and apply them in life-giving ministry.

The root of "redemptive" is "redeem," which means to buy back, restore, to rescue, or to set free. In Scripture, redemption is the central theme of the gospel. Redemption is God's act of restoring what was lost.

"In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace." Ephesians 1:7

A conversation is “redemptive” when it participates in God’s work of restoration; it is not about winning an argument or proving that you are right and the other person is wrong. These conversations are about helping another person move closer to hope, closer to truth, closer to God’s purpose for their life. Jesus Christ came to redeem the world from sin and shame. He restores us to the Father; salvation is the primary redemption.

One of the unique features of the Gospel of John is the capturing of several powerful and personal conversations between Jesus and another person. Nicodemus, the woman at the well, Martha near the tomb of Lazarus, and Pilate are four of the main ones. There is also a conversation with Thomas and Phillip at the Last Supper that is similar in structure. All of them begin with the other person discussing a subject on a shallow or immediate level, and Jesus gently inviting them deeper. They all want something, but Jesus wants to lead them to their real need.

Exercise: Go through the story of Jesus and Martha in John 11 with the group. Let questions lead you through this discussion. Some questions to consider. What is Martha’s disposition when she meets Jesus? Luke 10 records a prior story of Jesus with Martha and Mary. What is different about their behaviors in the two stories? What is different between what Martha is thinking about the situation and what Jesus wants her to see? Why might Martha be reluctant to trust Jesus? What is the significance of Jesus asking her to state her belief before He raises Lazarus? What are we to learn about our own relationships and the conversations that we have?

Facilitator: Be prepared by studying John 11, and preparing a flow of questions that lead the participants to understand how Jesus was directing them toward redemption.

If you examine the story of the Samaritan Woman in John 4. On the surface, it begins as a casual conversation about water, but Jesus takes that moment and transforms it into something that is life-changing and redeeming. He acknowledges her past with tender honesty, but He does not stop there. He offers her Living Water. A conversation that began at a well restored a woman’s identity, gave her hope, and turned her into a witness who brought her whole town to Jesus. That is a redemptive conversation.

As we continue through the materials, we will build on a simple working definition: A redemptive conversation is an intentional exchange of words guided by love, truth, and the Holy Spirit that leads to salvation, restoration, freedom, and alignment with God’s purpose.

- **Intentional exchange of words.** To be intentional is to be guided by prayer and preparation when we speak and when we listen. When we engage with people in crisis through meaningful conversation, the purpose is to reveal the Father’s heart for life and guide them to life-giving decisions. We do this both in our speaking and as we listen well and understand the person in need of help.
- **Guided by love, truth, and the Holy Spirit.** We speak with a Christ-like love, motivated by care and spoken from the heart of humility. And in love, we speak the truth (Ephesians 4:15). Even when others are struggling in sin, we graciously guide them to restoration and maturity of faith. Dependence on the Holy Spirit in our role as counselors is essential for the discernment and wisdom we need.
- **Leads to salvation, restoration, freedom, and alignment with God’s purpose.** When restoration is the goal, we show a desire for their good rather than our need to succeed. When the Holy Spirit empowers us to bring God’s love and truth to others, they can experience freedom from shame and guilt and be guided into alignment with God and His purposes. Their need for salvation must not be neglected; the counselor must be sensitive to how the Holy Spirit is guiding and creating opportunity for the gospel message to be shared.

When these elements come together, a simple conversation can become a tool God uses to redeem someone spiritually and address their perceived daily needs within their circumstances. Each of these concepts will be discussed and expanded throughout the manual.

Application

The Holy Spirit can guide us even in the hardest of circumstances. One of the most challenging situations for any individual to face is an unwanted pregnancy. At times, they may feel that there are no positive options available to them. Choosing to give birth or to abort, parenting a child or releasing for adoption, are hard choices that may feel overwhelming or even life-threatening to themselves and their future.

Isolation is an additional burden for people in these circumstances because family, cultural, and religious pressures can prevent an individual from reaching out for much-needed help. The strength of these pressures often prevents one from imagining that the child could be a gift or that her arrival might bring joy. They may lose hope if the situation appears too large to overcome.

Very few people feel comfortable discussing these subjects, and even fewer feel equipped to offer counsel to individuals facing these challenging circumstances. Many people are eager to find a way to make the “problem” go away. Tragically, this is true even within the church. Pastors and lay leaders within the Christian church—the ones who should be the *most* receptive to hurting people—are often unprepared to address the challenges created by unwanted pregnancy and abortion within their congregations.

The stakes are as high as they seem: every preborn child is unique and valuable, an image bearer of God. And the ripple effects of an abortion decision will be felt not only by the mother and father but by grandparents, siblings, cousins, community, and beyond. People involved in an unexpected pregnancy are in desperate need of someone to confide in, someone who will speak the truth and give them hope. Christ calls the church, His followers, to bring comfort to the hurting in the same way He has brought comfort to them (2 Corinthians 1:3-4).

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| <p>Facilitator: Ask participants to turn to the two or three people near them and ask them to share a way that they have experienced God’s guidance as they spoke to others. How did He help them? Limit this to 5 minutes.</p> |
|--|

Conclusion

The heart of Redemptive Conversations is to bring lost, hurting, and wounded people who face difficult life decisions or events to the gospel message—the hope of Jesus Christ; no one is beyond God’s reach. The good news and hope for counselors and helpers is that God is always present, speaking, and working, as He guides to bring that same hope and comfort to others.

Session 2

The Role of the Gospel in a Redemptive Conversation

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written ‘The righteous shall live by faith’” Romans 1:16-17

Facilitator Help: “The Learner Will,” “Key Points,” and “Scripture References” are provided for you to prepare for teaching. You should not read through these points to the participants.

Remember to plan your time well. Allow the group time to share in pairs or threes the ways they have experienced God speaking, or a time when they benefited from a “redemptive conversation.” The amount of time you allow will depend on the schedule and the number of participants.

Engage participants through conversation, good questions, and personal stories.

The Learner Will:

1. Understand the role of the gospel in a redemptive conversation.
2. Connect the gospel to felt needs, understanding that the real need is salvation.

Key Points:

- Elements of the gospel and speaking with grace and truth.
- Know the difference between felt needs and the real need.

Scriptures Used: Acts 8:26-40; Romans 1:16-17; Romans 5:8; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4; Ephesians 1:7; 2 Corinthians 5:18-20; James 1:19; 1 John 1:9; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Romans 8:1; John 11:25-26; Ephesians 4:15; Galatians 6:1; Colossians 4:6; John 16:8; Revelation 3:20

Supplies Needed: None

Recommended Time: 45 minutes

Introduction

As was presented in the first session, redemptive conversations are intentional dialogues that aim to bring hope, restoration, and transformation through the truth of the gospel. These conversations are not merely about winning arguments or persuading someone intellectually; they are about reflecting Christ's love and guiding others toward reconciliation with God. To use the gospel effectively in such conversations, we must understand its core message, approach with humility, and communicate in a way that meets people where they are.

Explore the story of the Ethiopian Eunuch in Acts 8:26-40 with the participants. Discuss as many aspects of the encounter he had with Philip as possible, to avoid theological controversies by focusing on the known facts of the situation. Scripture tells us the Ethiopian was a royal treasurer; what does this mean? We also see that he came to Jerusalem to worship. What does this reveal? He is reading from Isaiah; we do not know how he obtained this portion of Scripture, but we read that he did not understand it.

Miraculously, by the power of God, Philip is directed to travel on a path that leads directly to the Ethiopian. Philip engages in an authentic redemptive conversation; he asks questions, responds to questions, and takes action. Philip joins him in the chariot, they read the Scriptures together, and Philip has the privilege of preaching Jesus to this man. Philip presents the invitation for salvation: "If you believe with all your heart, you may," and he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

After the baptism, Philip was swept away by the Holy Spirit! Philip was gone, and the Ethiopian left rejoicing.

Consider the client who may sit in front of you. You may not know their entire story, they may have heard the gospel before, they may even own a Bible, but they say they do not understand it or find it confusing.

Miraculously, God has placed you with this person to engage in a redemptive conversation. You may be the first person to share with them, and they may believe, or you may be the tenth person to share. It is possible that you share the gospel and they still walk away unbelieving, or you may not know the outcome (consider the rich young ruler who walked away from Jesus in Matt 19, Mark 10, and Luke 18)

What is important is your readiness to meet them where they are, to share the truth of the gospel, and offer them what they may not have, hope and salvation.

Exercise: Ask participants to pair up in groups of 2-3. They will each have 3 minutes to share about when they came to Jesus. This is NOT a time of personal testimony. How old were they? How many times had they heard the gospel before they believed? Were they raised in a Christian home, a home from a different faith, or no faith? What did they feel in the moment they said yes to Jesus and surrendered their life to Him?

Keep the time to no more than 15 minutes of sharing.

What did you learn from your discussion?

Understanding the Gospel's Role in Redemption

The gospel is the good news that Jesus Christ lived a perfect life, died for our sins, and rose again to offer forgiveness and eternal life (Romans 5:8; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4). Redemption is at the heart of this message—it restores broken relationships between God and humanity (Ephesians 1:7). In a redemptive conversation, the gospel is not an abstract concept but a living truth that speaks to real struggles: guilt, shame, fear, and hopelessness. By presenting the gospel, we offer a pathway from brokenness to wholeness (2 Corinthians 5:18-20).

Listening Before Speaking

Effective redemptive conversations begin with listening. James 1:19 reminds us to be "quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger." People often carry deep wounds, doubts, or misconceptions about God. Before sharing the gospel, take time to understand their story. Ask open-ended questions like:

- "What has shaped your view of faith?"

- “Where do you find hope when life feels overwhelming?” Listening communicates respect and empathy, creating a safe space for the gospel to be heard as good news rather than judgment.

Connecting the Gospel to Real Needs

A client may express felt needs such as seeking an abortion, food, shelter, finances, or other materials. A real need of every person is to find salvation through Jesus Christ, by the grace of God in faith alone.

The gospel addresses the real needs: forgiveness, identity, and purpose. When someone feels trapped in guilt, emphasize Christ’s forgiveness (1 John 1:9). If they struggle with meaning, highlight the new identity and purpose found in Him (2 Corinthians 5:17). For example:

Guilt: “The gospel assures us that no sin is too great for God’s grace” (Romans 8:1).

Fear: “Jesus’ resurrection shows that death and despair do not have the final word” (John 11:25–26). By contextualizing the gospel, we make it personally relevant and transformative.

Speaking with Grace and Truth

Redemptive conversations require a balance of grace and truth. Grace shows compassion and patience; truth confronts sin and points to Christ as the only Savior. Ephesians 4:15 calls us to “speak the truth in love.” Avoid harshness or superiority—our goal is restoration, not condemnation (Galatians 6:1). Use Scripture wisely, not as a weapon but as a source of life and hope (Colossians 4:6).

Inviting a Response

A redemptive conversation should lead to an invitation, not coercion. Ask gentle questions like:

- “Would you like to explore what trusting Jesus could mean for you?”
- “Can I pray with you about what we’ve discussed?” Keep the conversation relational and Spirit-led, allowing God to work in their heart (John 16:8; Revelation 3:20).

Facilitator: If time allows, consider asking one participant about a time when they shared the gospel with someone who then believed and followed Jesus.

No more than 3 minutes.

Conclusion

Using the gospel in a redemptive conversation is about embodying Christ’s love while clearly presenting His truth. It involves listening deeply, connecting personally, and speaking with grace. When done prayerfully and humbly, these conversations can become powerful moments where lives are transformed by the hope of the gospel (Romans 1:16). Our words, guided by the Holy Spirit, can be instruments of redemption, leading others to restoration, freedom, and alignment with God’s purpose.

Session 3

Intimacy Before Impact: Spiritual Foundations for Ministry Leaders

“But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us.” 2 Corinthians 4:7 ESV

Facilitator Help: “The Learner Will,” “Key Points,” and “Scripture References” are provided for you to prepare for teaching. You should not read through these points to the participants.

Remember to plan your time well. Allow the group time to share in pairs or threes the ways they have experienced God speaking, or a time when they benefited from a “redemptive conversation.” How much time you allow will depend on the schedule and the number of participants.

The Learner Will:

1. Understand how the Spiritual Foundations of Ministry create intimacy with the Father and result in genuine and fruitful impact in ministry.
2. Create a personal plan for implementing the Spiritual Foundations of Ministry.
3. Be equipped to share with others on their ministry team and develop a plan for intimacy with the Father that will have an impact in their ministry setting.

Key Points:

Facilitator Help: Provided for Facilitators’ lesson planning. You will not read this list to participants; it serves as a teaching outline for facilitators.

- Spiritual Foundations work in cooperation with one another. Each foundation is essential and leads the follower of Jesus to experience the fullness of God.
- Prepare Your Heart: Devoted, humble, repentant, forgiving, generous, and obedient are the attributes of a heart prepared for ministry.
- Build on God’s Word: As the Holy Spirit leads us to speak the encouragement, correction, and hope of God’s truth, we find ourselves falling more in love with the One whom the Scriptures reveal, and we cannot help extending His great love to others.
- Begin with Worship: Through God’s call to us in redemption and our response to Him in worship, we draw near to God, and He draws near to us.
- Prayer as a lifestyle. As you talk and listen to God, He will direct you and provide what you need to minister to the people He brings into your path.
- Engage in Spiritual Warfare: Learning to approach spiritual warfare scripturally helps us understand God, our enemy, and ourselves, fostering deeper intimacy in our relationships.
- Live out the Gospel: Understand how the spiritual foundations will impact your worldview
- Rest and Sabbath: Rest and Sabbath are God’s gift and command. Ignoring it reflects a subtle pride that assumes our efforts sustain the ministry rather than God’s power.

Recommended Time: 90 minutes

Scripture References:

Supplies Needed: Clay Potter Images, Foundations written on plain paper, Copies of Self Evaluation for each participant at the end of the session.

BEGIN FACILITATION HERE

Session Introduction

As image-bearers of Christ, we are to reflect His character. Many of Jesus' encounters with others demonstrate His response to their various needs, physical, personal, emotional, and spiritual. As we strive to imitate Jesus and reveal His nature and character to the world, we must be mindful of the needs of the people we encounter. We should not only notice their needs but also respond in life-giving ways.

Christ-like responses to the needs of others flow from personal transformation through abiding in Christ (John 15:5-17). Jesus constantly prepared for His ministry through spending time alone with the Father (Luke 5:15-16), seeking to always be in step with Him (John 8:28-29).

If we genuinely wish to impact the lives of others, we must do so out of a place where we are reflecting the Father's heart. When we seek the Father and abide in Christ, we experience divine love and transformation. The redemptive work of the Holy Spirit in our lives occurs when we experience redemption through faith in Jesus Christ, resulting in the transformation of our minds and in our listening, seeing, speaking, and living as we submit to and abide in Him. The more we receive God's love and experience transformation, the more we will have His love flow from us into the lives of others.

A heart prepared for ministry is wholly devoted, humble, repentant, forgiving, generous, and obedient. "...Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water through the word" (Ephesians 5:25-26). To join God in His work, we must first be made clean and allow Him to prepare our hearts. God can also, at His discretion, choose to use anyone at any time to accomplish His will. Scripture provides many examples of whom God equipped and how He equipped them: Abraham, Joseph, Moses, David, Isaiah, John the Baptist, Elizabeth, Mary, and the Twelve Disciples.

Facilitator Helps: If time allows, you may use the images of the Master Potter to discuss pouring into others. Due to time constraints, participants will not have sufficient time to sort and place the pictures in the proper order. The pottery images will serve as a review for those who have already completed the Journey of a Life-Giver curriculum.

Exercise: Show the pictures or slides to participants and ask them what they see, what is happening, and why it is important. What is the message we should learn from these images? Help them connect the message of being made for a purpose — cleansed, poured into, and pouring into others — as foundational for ministry, with the heart of the Father, to impact the lives of others.



Just as a clay vessel is carefully shaped and distinctively crafted, each of us is unique and hand-formed by God the Father, made in His image.



The Lord identifies areas of our lives that need to be cleansed, and He is there to help clean and purify those areas. This is an ongoing process: we're always called to *go back* to this intimate place with Christ, so He can reveal to us the things we need to be working on.



Once the cup has been made clean, the Master can fill it with something good. He empowers us and gives us all that we need to complete the work that He has set before us.



God often gives us the wonderful opportunity to pour into others: to minister to their needs, care for them, bring the Living Water to them.



Something marvelous then happens after we pour into others: *they begin pouring into those around them*. God's ministry is multiplied through His church as we are faithful to share His life with others.

Introduction to Spiritual Foundations

Ministry leaders are often filled with a deep passion to answer God’s call, whether to pastor a congregation, preach as an evangelist, or minister to a specific group of people. God’s call is noble and necessary, but a genuine and fruitful impact does not come from activity alone. It flows from intimacy with the Father. God called Paul to preach the Gospel, and Stephen to serve widows and orphans. Both men are held in high esteem not because of their accomplishments, but because the glory of the Lord was revealed through them.

Intimacy with God is not a one-time event; it is an ongoing process of spiritual growth and development that results in wisdom, discernment, and power for ministry. Without intimacy, impact becomes unsustainable. Together, we will explore spiritual foundations every ministry leader must cultivate to deepen intimacy with God and increase effectiveness in their calling.

FACILITATOR HELP: Engaging Participants in Spiritual Foundations

People learn best when they participate actively rather than passively listening. As a facilitator, your role is to create space for interaction, creativity, and reflection, not to lecture. The ultimate goal is to help participants seek the heart of the Father for deeper intimacy that leads to fruitful ministry. To accomplish this, encourage participation by asking open-ended questions, inviting personal stories, and affirming contributions. Be creative by using discussions, activities, and visuals to make concepts tangible. Above all, focus on transformation; the purpose is not to fill time but to help participants encounter God and apply these foundations personally.

There are several interactive approaches you can use. One option is Foundation Breakout Groups, in which participants divide into small groups, each assigned a Spiritual Foundation with its corresponding Bible verses. Their task is to develop a practical plan to make this foundation an intentional part of spiritual growth, and then share it briefly with the larger group. Another idea is a Creative Teaching Exercise, where each group creates a five-minute interactive teaching on their assigned foundation. For example, the “Begin with Worship” group might lead a short time of singing and praise, while “Prayer as a Lifestyle” could offer prayer ministry or creative prayer stations. Encourage creativity through visuals or testimonies. A third option is the Devotional Outline Challenge, where groups collaborate to write an outline for a devotional that incorporates all foundations and present it in 5 minutes. Finally, consider a Clay Vessel Reflection activity: provide pictures of clay vessels, assign each group a picture, and ask which Spiritual Foundation it represents and how it reflects Intimacy Before Impact. Groups then share their insights.

To guide discussion, use prompts such as: How will going deeper with the Father change the way you approach ministry? Which foundation challenges you the most and why? What practical steps can you take this week to live out these truths? As you facilitate, use the Practical Steps and Why It Matters sections as conversation guides—not scripts. Resist the urge to read lists aloud; instead, empower participants to discover and apply these truths themselves. Keep your tone encouraging and invitational, not instructional, so participants feel inspired to engage and grow.

Prepare your heart

Intimacy with God requires yielding to His will, even when it is uncomfortable or inconvenient. Jesus modeled perfect obedience in Gethsemane, praying, “Not my will, but Yours be done” (Luke 22:42). This posture of surrender is essential for ministry leaders because God’s plans are always higher than ours (Isaiah 55:8-9). Obedience is not about legalism; it is an act of love and trust that deepens intimacy with the Father.

Why It Matters

Disobedience creates a distance between you and God, while surrender draws you closer to His heart. When leaders resist God’s direction, they risk burnout, frustration, and ineffective ministry; conversely, learning to trust and obey positions us to experience His power and provision. Abraham’s willingness to sacrifice Isaac (Genesis 22) and Mary’s submission to God’s plan (Luke 1:38) remind us that surrender often requires faith beyond understanding.

Biblical Foundation

Psalm 51:10, “Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.”

Ezekiel 36:26, “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.”

Proverbs 4:23, “Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.”

2 Corinthians 5:17, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come, the old has gone, the new is here.”

John 14:15, “If you love me, you will keep my commandments.”

James 1:22, “But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.”

Romans 12:1,2, “Present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.”

Practical Steps

1. Regularly Ask God to Reveal Areas of Resistance. Pray Psalm 139:23-24: “*Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts!*” Invite Him to expose pride, fear, or self-reliance.
2. Take Immediate Steps to Obey His Promptings. Delayed obedience is disobedience. When God speaks, through His Word, prayer, or wise counsel, respond promptly, even if it stretches your comfort zone.
3. Celebrate Obedience as an Act of Love, Not Obligation. Shift your perspective: obedience is not a burden but a privilege. Each act of surrender is a declaration of trust and love for God.
4. Practice Daily Surrender. Begin each day with a prayer like: “*Lord, I yield my plans, my time, my desires, and my ministry to You. Lead me according to Your will.*”
5. Learn from Biblical examples and reflect on stories of obedience, such as Noah building the ark, Moses leading Israel, and Paul enduring hardship for the Gospel. Their surrender produced an eternal impact.

Build on God’s Word

The Word of God is the foundation of wisdom and discernment. Joshua 1:8 instructs us, “This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.” Meditation is not mere reading; it is dwelling on the truth until it transforms your thinking and actions. It moves Scripture from your mind to your heart, shaping your decisions and character.

Why It Matters

Without a deep connection to God and a thorough knowledge of God’s Word, ministry leaders risk relying on personal wisdom or cultural trends rather than on divine truth.

Without intentional meditation, Scripture can remain head knowledge instead of heart transformation. Ministry leaders who only skim the Bible risk making decisions based on personal wisdom or cultural trends rather than God’s truth. Meditation renews the mind (Romans 12:2), strengthens faith, and equips you to lead with clarity and conviction. It is the difference between knowing about God and truly knowing Him.

Decision-Making Based on Scripture. When facing a leadership challenge, instead of relying solely on personal experience, seek biblical principles. For example, if there’s conflict in the team, apply Matthew 18:15-17 for reconciliation rather than worldly methods of conflict resolution.

Teaching and Preaching Rooted in Scripture. Prepare sermons that are grounded in the text, not just inspirational ideas. For instance, if preaching on forgiveness, use passages like Ephesians 4:32 and Matthew 6:14-15 to ensure your message reflects God's truth.

Personal Devotion and Meditation. Spend time daily meditating on Scripture, not just reading quickly. For example, take Joshua 1:8, "Meditate on it day and night", and reflect on how obedience to God's Word impacts your ministry decisions.

Applying Scripture to Leadership Practices. When setting goals for your ministry, align them with biblical priorities, such as making disciples (Matthew 28:19-20), rather than focusing solely on numerical growth or popularity.

Counseling and Mentorship. Use Scripture as the foundation when advising others. For example, if someone is struggling with anxiety, share Philippians 4:6-7 and guide them in prayer based on that promise.

Modeling Biblical Living. Live out the Word in your own life so others see it in action. For example, practice servant leadership as Jesus taught in Mark 10:45, showing humility and service rather than seeking status. Today, more than ever, people are searching for authentic leaders who live what they teach. Exercising authentic integrity in every area of your life, personal, family, ministry, and community, is a life that God can use.

Biblical Foundation

Joshua 1:8 – "This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success."

Psalm 1:2-3, "His delight is in the law of the Lord, and on His law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season."

2 Timothy 3:16-17, "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in all righteousness."

Practical Steps

1. **Read Scripture Slowly and Reflectively.** Take time to absorb each word. Read passages multiple times and ask, "What does this reveal about God's character? How does this apply to my life and ministry?"
2. **Journal Insights and How They Apply to Your Ministry.** Write down observations and specific applications. Journaling creates a record of God's guidance and helps you track spiritual growth.
3. **Memorize Key Verses That Speak to Your Calling.** Hide God's Word in your heart for encouragement and wisdom. Start with verses like Joshua 1:8, Matthew 28:19-20, and Philippians 4:6-7.

Begin with Worship

We worship because God alone is worthy, He commands it, and it transforms us by drawing us closer to Him. Worship is both our duty and our delight. Worship shifts our focus from ourselves to God's glory. Worship is one of the primary ways that we experience His presence and power. Psalm 22:3 says God inhabits the praises of His people. When ministry leaders cultivate authentic worship, they lead others into God's presence by example.

Why It Matters

Worship is more than music or a moment in a service—it is a lifestyle that shifts our focus from ourselves to God's glory. When we worship, we acknowledge His sovereignty, goodness, and power. Our lives become a rhythm of grateful and humble adoration for the grace He has given us through His perfect plan of salvation. Psalm 22:3 declares that God inhabits the praises of His people, meaning His presence manifests when we exalt Him. For ministry leaders, authentic worship is essential because it renews the soul, strengthens faith, and sets the tone for leading others into God's presence. Worship reminds us that ministry is not about performance or popularity—it's about glorifying God.

Biblical Foundation

Psalm 95:6, “Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker!”

John 4:23-24, “The hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship Him.”

Hebrews 13:15, “Through Him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge His name.”

Practical Steps

1. **Begin Each Day with Praise or Thanksgiving.** Start your morning by acknowledging God’s goodness. Sing a hymn, play worship music, or simply speak words of gratitude. Set your heart in alignment with His presence before the day begins.
2. **Incorporate Worship into Personal and Team Gatherings.** Make worship a priority in meetings, prayer times, and ministry events. When leaders model heartfelt worship, it encourages others to engage authentically.
3. **Avoid Performance-Driven Worship; Focus on Intimacy.** Worship is not about impressing people; it is about honoring God. Lead with humility and sincerity, keeping your heart centered on Him rather than on stage presence or musical perfection.
4. **Use Worship as a Weapon in Spiritual Battles.** Worship silences fear and confusion. When challenges arise, choose to praise God rather than focus on problems (see Acts 16:25, where Paul and Silas worshiped in prison and experienced a breakthrough).
5. **Practice Private Worship.** Don’t limit worship to public settings. Spend time alone with God in praise, whether through music, prayer, or simply declaring His attributes.

Prayer as a Lifestyle

When prayer is a lifestyle, it is far more than any ritual. Ministry leaders and workers should not be confined to corporate worship or blessing the meal; while these examples are worth practicing, the Father desires more. A healthy ministry leader and worker intentionally spends time with the Lord through prayer and meditation and incorporates prayer into every area of their daily life. Jesus made the way for every Christian to enter into the presence of God; what a privilege.

Hebrews 4:14-16, “Seeing that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast to our confession, for we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

Why It Matters

Prayer is the lifeline of intimacy with God. It is more than a ritual; it is a relationship. Through prayer, we align our hearts with God’s will, receive His strength, and experience His presence. Scripture reminds us to “pray without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17), which means maintaining an ongoing conversation with the Father throughout the day. For ministry leaders and workers, it must be personal, consistent, and Spirit-led. Without prayer, ministry becomes a human effort rather than a divine partnership.

Prayer Creates Connection. Just as communication strengthens human relationships, prayer strengthens our relationship with God. When we talk to Him honestly and consistently, we experience His presence and learn to **trust His character.** “**Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you**” (James 4:8).

Prayer Aligns Our Hearts with God’s Will. Through prayer, we surrender our plans and desires, inviting God to lead. Jesus modeled this in Gethsemane: “Not my will, but Yours be done” (Luke 22:42). This posture of dependence fosters intimacy by acknowledging God’s sovereignty.

Prayer Builds Trust Through Listening. Prayer is not just speaking; it is listening. When we pause to hear God’s voice through His Word and the Holy Spirit’s prompting, we grow in discernment and confidence in His guidance. This two-way communication deepens closeness.

Prayer Invites God’s Peace and Presence. Philippians 4:6-7 promises that when we bring our requests to God with thanksgiving, His peace will guard our hearts and minds. Experiencing that peace in prayer reminds us that He is near and faithful.

Prayer Transforms Our Character. As we spend time in God’s presence, He shapes our attitudes, desires, and responses. Transformation is evidence of intimacy; our lives begin to reflect His heart.

Biblical Foundation

Philippians 4:6-7, “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” This passage reminds us that prayer is the antidote to anxiety. When we bring our needs to God with gratitude, His peace—beyond human comprehension—becomes a shield for our hearts and minds.

1 Thessalonians 5:17, “Pray without ceasing.” Prayer is not limited to a specific time or place; it is a continual conversation with God that keeps us connected to Him throughout the day.

James 5:16, “The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.” Prayer brings change in our lives and ministries.

Luke 18:1, “And He told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart.” Persistent prayer strengthens faith and prevents discouragement in the face of challenges.

Practical Steps

1. **Set Aside Dedicated Time Daily for Personal Prayer.** Make prayer a non-negotiable part of your day. Schedule it like an appointment with God, whether early in the morning, during lunch, or before bed. Use this time for adoration, confession, thanksgiving, and supplication. Consistency builds intimacy.
2. **Pray Scripture to Align Your Heart with God’s Word.** Turn Bible verses into prayers. For example:
3. When anxious, pray Philippians 4:6-7: “Lord, I bring my requests to You with thanksgiving. Guard my heart with Your peace.”
4. When seeking guidance, pray Psalm 25:4: “Show me Your ways, Lord; teach me Your paths.” Praying Scripture ensures your prayer reflects God’s truth rather than personal feelings alone.
5. **Develop a Habit of Listening During Prayer, Not Just Speaking.** Prayer is a two-way conversation. After you speak, pause in silence to listen for God’s prompting through His Word or the Holy Spirit. Keep a journal nearby to record impressions, Scriptures, or ideas that come during these quiet moments.
6. **Use Prayer Throughout the Day.** Practice “breath prayers” are short, heartfelt prayers you can say anytime, like “Lord, give me wisdom” or “Jesus, I trust You.” A brief prayer keeps you connected to God even in busy moments.
7. **Pray for Others Intentionally** Create a prayer list for your family, ministry team, and those you serve. Intercession not only blesses others but also deepens your compassion and dependence on God.

Engage in Spiritual Warfare

Ministry is not just a physical or organizational endeavor—it is a spiritual battle. Every time you step into your calling, you enter a war zone where the enemy seeks to discourage, divide, and derail the work of God.

Why It Matters

Paul reminds us in Ephesians 6:12, “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.”

If ministry leaders ignore spiritual warfare, they risk burnout, compromise, and defeat. The enemy is strategic, targeting your mind, your relationships, and your sense of purpose. But God has equipped you with everything you need to stand firm and overcome. The challenges you face are not merely human conflicts or logistical problems; they are spiritual attacks designed to weaken your faith and effectiveness.

Spiritual warfare is real, but it is not a battle we fight for victory; it is a battle we fight from victory. Jesus has already triumphed over Satan and the powers of darkness through His death and resurrection. This truth gives ministry leaders confidence and authority as they engage in spiritual battles. We do not fight in our own strength; we stand in Christ’s finished work.

Biblical Foundation

James 4:7, “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” \ This verse highlights the importance of submission to God and active resistance against the enemy.

1 Peter 5:8-9, “Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary, the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith.” It reminds leaders to stay alert and steadfast in faith.

2 Corinthians 10:3-5, “For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds.” This passage teaches that our weapons are spiritual, not physical, and that they are powerful through God.

Luke 10:19,

Colossians 2:15, “He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in Him.” Jesus’ victory at the cross stripped the enemy of his power and authority.

1 John 3:8 – “The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.” \ Christ’s mission included breaking the power of sin and Satan.

Romans 8:37 – “In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.” \ Our victory is secure because of Christ’s love and sacrifice.

Revelation 12:11 – “And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony.” \ Believers overcome through Christ’s blood and their faith-filled confession.

Practical Steps

1. Put on the Full Armor of God Daily. Follow Ephesians 6:13-17 by intentionally praying through each piece of armor:
 - a. Belt of Truth, Commit to honesty and God's Word.
 - b. Breastplate of Righteousness, Guard your heart with holiness.
 - c. Shield of Faith, Trust God to extinguish doubts and fears.
 - d. Helmet of Salvation, Protect your mind with assurance of salvation.
 - e. Sword of the Spirit, Use Scripture as your weapon against lies.
2. Stay Rooted in Prayer. Prayer is your lifeline in battle. Pray for strength, wisdom, and protection for yourself and those you lead. Include intercession for your ministry team and those you serve (Ephesians 6:18).
3. Use Scripture as Your Weapon. Just as Jesus did in Matthew 4, counter lies and temptations with God's Word. Memorize verses like James 4:7 ("Resist the devil, and he will flee from you") and Luke 10:19 ("I have given you authority...").
4. Guard Your Mind and Heart. Avoid opening doors through bitterness, pride, or fear. Philippians 4:6-7 reminds us to replace anxiety with prayer and thanksgiving so that God's peace will guard our hearts and minds.
5. Engage in Corporate Prayer and Accountability. Do not try to fight spiritual battles alone. Join with other believers for intercession and encouragement (Matthew 18:19-20). Isolation makes you vulnerable.
6. Live in Obedience and Holiness. Sin gives the enemy a foothold. James 4:7 says, "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." Obedience strengthens your spiritual authority.
7. Stand in Christ's Authority. Remember that your authority comes from Jesus, not your position or experience. Declare His victory over every area of ministry.
8. Use the Name of Jesus in Prayer. Pray boldly in Jesus' name, knowing that His power defeats every scheme of the enemy.
9. Live in the Freedom Christ Provides. Reject fear and condemnation. Walk in the confidence that the enemy has no legal claim over you because of the cross.
10. Proclaim the Gospel Boldly. Every time you share the good news, you advance the Kingdom and push back darkness.

Live Out the Gospel

The Gospel is not just a message we preach; it is a life we live. The Lord calls ministry leaders to embody the truth of Jesus Christ in every aspect of their lives. Paul writes in Philippians 1:27, "Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ." Our words, actions, and attitudes should reflect the transforming power of the Gospel.

Why It Matters

People are watching. Your life is often the first sermon they hear. If your lifestyle contradicts your message, your credibility and witness are compromised. Living out the Gospel demonstrates authenticity and draws others to Christ. Living out the Gospel is a daily commitment to follow the Lord; John 14:15, "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments," is an example of how to live for the Lord. It begins with the love and humility that rise when we truly recognize the depth of our own sin and the incredible gift of Grace, God's beautiful plan of salvation. When we see our sin, it reminds us of our deep need for a Savior. And from that intimacy of knowing His grace is sufficient, you can respond from love and not to accomplish a task.

Biblical Foundation

Philippians 1:27, "Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel." Our conduct should align with the message we proclaim.

Matthew 5:16, "In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven." Living out the Gospel means demonstrating Christ's love and character in a way that draws others to the Father.

James 1:22, "But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves." Faith expressed through obedience and action is not mere knowledge; it is authentic.

John 13:34-35, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." Love in action is a visible testimony of the Gospel.

Galatians 2:20

Practical steps

1. Forgive Others Freely
 - a. When wronged, choose forgiveness instead of bitterness, reflecting Christ's grace.
 - b. *Scripture:* Ephesians 4:32, "Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you."
2. Serving with Humility
 - a. Lead by serving others rather than seeking status or recognition.
 - b. *Scripture:* Mark 10:45, "For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."
3. Showing Love in Action
 - a. Demonstrate sacrificial love to your family, congregation, and community.
 - b. *Scripture:* John 13:34-35, "By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."
4. Practicing Integrity
 - a. Be honest in finances, relationships, and leadership decisions.
 - b. *Scripture:* Proverbs 11:3, "The integrity of the upright guides them, but the crookedness of the treacherous destroys them."
5. Living Generously
 - a. Give time, resources, and encouragement freely, trusting God to provide.
 - b. *Scripture:* 2 Corinthians 9:7, "God loves a cheerful giver."
6. Sharing the Gospel Boldly

- a. Look for opportunities to share Christ in everyday conversations, not just from the pulpit.
 - b. *Scripture:* Romans 1:16, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation.”
 - c. Responding to Trials with Faith When facing hardship, demonstrate trust in God rather than fear or despair.
7. Fellowship and Accountability Isolation is a danger for ministry leaders. Proverbs 27:17 reminds us that “iron sharpens iron.” Fellowship with other believers provides encouragement, wisdom, and accountability. It guards against burnout and moral failure.
- a. Join or create a small group for ministry leaders.
 - b. Seek out a mentor or spiritual advisor.
 - c. Be transparent about struggles and victories.

Rest and Sabbath

Rest is not laziness; it is obedience. God modeled rest in creation and commanded it for His people; rest is for renewal, worship, and trust in Him. When the Israelites wandered in the wilderness, God was faithful to provide Manna daily, and enough for them on the sixth day to rest on the Sabbath without collecting. Ministry leaders often neglect rest, believing that constant activity equals faithfulness. In reality, rest renews intimacy and sustains impact.

Taking the Sabbath is an act of obedience and trust. From the very beginning, God modeled rest in creation: “On the seventh day, God rested” (Genesis 2:2). This was not because He was tired, but to establish a rhythm of work and worship for His people. The Sabbath is a gift, not a burden—a sacred space to cease striving and remember that God is the ultimate source of fruitfulness.

Why It Matters

Obedience to God’s Design: Sabbath is a command, not a suggestion. Ignoring or neglecting rest and Sabbath may reflect a subtle pride that assumes our efforts sustain the ministry rather than God’s power. Jesus often retreated to be alone for reflection, worship, and rest.

Renewal of Intimacy: Rest creates margin for prayer, worship, and listening to God. Without it, leaders risk spiritual dryness and burnout.

Sustained Impact: Ministry is a marathon, not a sprint. Regular rhythms of rest preserve emotional health, creativity, and long-term effectiveness.

Biblical Foundation

Genesis 2:2-3, God rested and blessed the seventh day.

Exodus 20:8-11, The Sabbath commandment.

Matthew 11:28-30, Jesus invites the weary to find rest in Him.

Mark 2:27, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.”

Mark 1:35, Jesus retreats to a solitary place for prayer.

Luke 6:12-13 & Mark 3:13, Jesus retreats BEFORE ministry to prepare.

Luke 5:15-16, Mark 1:45: Jesus retreats from the large crowds.

Matthew 14:23, Mark 6:46, Jesus encouraged the disciples to go to a quiet place.

Jesus has a clear pattern of rest that goes beyond practicing the Sabbath. He began and ended His ministry day with rest and prayer. He found time to be alone with the Father, “Very early in the morning,” and in the “evening,” and other times He spent “all night.” Jesus rested and prayed in places beyond the Synagogues and the Temple; He enjoyed mountain tops, gardens, and the wilderness. Above all, He was intentional in spending time with the Father.

Practical Steps

1. **Schedule Sabbath Intentionally:** Block out a full day each week for spiritual renewal. Treat it as immovable as any ministry appointment.
2. **Disconnect from Ministry Tasks:** Turn off notifications, emails, and work-related calls. Sabbath is about presence, not productivity.
3. **Engage in Life-Giving Practices:** Use this time for prayer, Scripture meditation, journaling, and enjoying family or creation.
4. **Practice Micro-Rhythms of Rest:** Beyond weekly Sabbath, incorporate daily pauses—morning devotions, midday prayer, evening reflection.
5. **Guard Against Guilt:** Rest is not wasted time; it is worship. Trust that God works even when you cease.

Suggested Practices for Each Day

- Begin with Scripture reading.
- Spend 10–15 minutes in silence.
- Journal one insight or prayer.
- End with gratitude.

Application

Take time to evaluate your current spiritual practices:

- Which of these foundations is strongest in your life?
- Which needs attention?
- What practical steps can you take this week to deepen intimacy with God?

Closing Exhortation

Impact without intimacy is unsustainable. When we draw near to God, His glory shines through us, and lives are transformed, not by our strength, but by His Spirit. Ministry leaders who prioritize intimacy will experience refreshment, lasting fruit, and eternal significance. Let us commit to building these foundations so that our ministries reflect the heart of God and bring Him glory, resulting in wisdom and discernment.

It is essential for you, as a leader, to establish a plan to practice and grow in Spiritual Foundations for ministry. It is equally important for you, as a leader, to encourage those who minister with you to follow these practices as well. Consider ways to lead them into the practice of the Spiritual Foundations for personal growth, and ways to incorporate them into your daily work routines.

Personal Assessment Taken from *Intimacy Before Impact*, Chapter 4, *Preparing Your Heart*
"Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."—Psalms 139:23–24

1. From a Divided Heart to a Devoted Heart. Have you fully surrendered to God in all areas of your life? (If not, surrender now.)
2. Are you growing in your personal devotions and worship? (On most days, when do you plan to meet with the Lord personally? Do you need a new plan?)
3. From a Proudful Heart to a Humble Heart. Where or when is it hardest for you to be humble? (Ask God for opportunities to humble yourself.)
4. From an Unrepentant Heart to a Repentant Heart. Do you have a sinful habit like gossip, criticism, manipulation, greed, laziness, self-centeredness, racism, elitism, or a need to be in control? (If so, confess and repent.)
5. From an Unforgiving Heart to a Forgiving Heart. Is there anyone you need to forgive? (If so, forgive them.)
6. Is there anyone whom you need to ask for forgiveness? (Go to God in repentance. Make a plan to ask for this person's forgiveness.)
7. From a Stingy Heart to a Generous Heart. Are you tithing (giving 10% of your income) to the Lord? (If not, confess this and begin.) Is there some area in your life where you can grow in generosity?
8. From a Rebellious Heart to an Obedient Heart. Do you have any non-biblical relationships now? (If so, get out of them now.)
9. Do you have an area in your Christian walk where you struggle? It may be in worship, church attendance, holy living, Bible reading, prayer, giving, forgiving, witnessing, etc. (If so, repent, and ask God for help to succeed.)
10. Have you made rest and Sabbath a part of your walk with the Lord? If not, create a plan for yourself.

Session 4

Counseling with Integrity

*“Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith.”
Hebrews 13:7*

Facilitator Help: “The Learner Will,” “Key Points,” and “Scripture References” are provided for you to prepare for teaching. You should not read through these points to the participants.

Remember to plan your time well. Encourage the participants to add to the conversation as much as possible. You may also need to limit the time for sharing. It is common for participant groups to have one or two people who want to share their thoughts. Try to balance the group by asking others who have not had an opportunity to share.

The Learner Will

1. Identify the difference between a counselor’s goals, desires, and responsibilities
2. Begin developing your listening skills to enhance understanding.

Key Points

- Counselor goals are the objectives you want to meet during conversations.
- Counselor Desires are the outcomes a counselor prays for and requires the cooperation of the other person.
- Responsibilities guide your behaviors and attitudes with the client.
- Introduce love, know, speak, and do; connect, understand, and guide.

Recommended Session Time: 90 minutes

Scripture References:

Hebrews 13:7; James 1:19; Col. 3:12; I Peter 5:5; John 8:32; Eph. 4:15-16

Supplies needed:

Large flip chart paper, markers.

Session Introduction

We may feel we already know a great deal about helping and caring for people, or we may have been introduced to the idea of counseling from a Biblical perspective before. It does not matter how long you have been a Christian; it is easy to forget what we have learned if we do not use or practice them every day. We can think our hearts are fine and know the Word of God, but if we stop reading and learning, we may start believing the enemy's lies.

If the enemy is speaking lies to you every day through others, television, music, and various other influences, we can begin to believe them. Soon, our lives will resemble the world more than they do Jesus.

Redemptive conversations are opportunities for you to share the gospel, to correct a wrong idea or behavior, and to help restore a person who has moved away from Jesus. Redemptive conversations and training do not give us permission to seek out or insert ourselves into the lives of people who need correction or confrontation. A redemptive conversation happens when someone comes to us for help, prayer, and counsel. Recognize the sovereignty of God as you engage in redemptive conversations by approaching conversations using the attributes of an effective counselor or helper.

In an authentically redemptive conversation, at least three people are always present: you, the other person, and the Holy Spirit. During this time, you can be instrumental in helping another person say what is troubling them so that the three of you can work together to explore and examine their experiences and relationships, focusing on truth and aiming toward the hope and redemption that can be provided only by God the Father.

Facilitator Help:

Before beginning this exercise, familiarize yourself with the list of counselor goals and responsibilities for redemptive conversations (found in session four).

Exercise 2.1 *(45 minutes)*

1. On a large piece of paper, create three columns. Title from left to right: Goals, Desires, and Responsibilities. Tape this paper to the wall and keep it there throughout the training as a reference. Keeping it posted makes it easy to refer to and add ideas as they are discovered throughout the remainder of the training. (After the session, move it to a different wall.)
2. Ask the group to define the difference between goals (or outcomes), desires, and responsibilities. Definitions and possible answers are located after the exercise instructions.
3. Give the group about 20 minutes to identify some goals that a counselor might have for a conversation with a client. Record their responses on the board. Ask participants: "Why are these goals important?" The group may identify more or less than the examples provided.
4. Give the group about 20 minutes to name some desires that a counselor might have for a conversation with a client. Record their responses on the board. The group may identify more or less than the examples provided.
5. Ask participants: "Why are these desires important?" Remind them that persuading the client to make a particular decision is not their responsibility as a counselor.
6. What is the counselor's responsibility in the session with the client? The group may identify more or less than the examples provided.

7. If participants misidentify between the three, gently guide them to the definition, or ask them how they could make a counselor goal a desire, or how the goal is a desire.
8. Once the discussion has concluded, keep the list visibly posted in the room, when possible, for the remainder of the training. You may add to the list throughout the training.

Counselor Goals

Counselor goals are the objectives you want to meet during your conversation. A goal is something that you have control over. It does not require the cooperation of other people. For example, you have a goal to exercise every day. You have control and can plan for success.

1. Exhibit a godly perspective, modeling God's unconditional love and acceptance of the client by choosing life-giving words that reflect the truth found in Scripture, free of judgment and condemnation.
2. Explore and clarify the situation from the client's perspective.
3. Empower the client to make an informed decision by educating them about fetal development and abortion procedures.
4. Identify support resources in your community and assist the client in obtaining them.
5. Prayer: Without it, the counselor is powerless in the counseling session. Spiritual foundations play a vital role in our effectiveness; setting personal goals to employ these foundations daily is essential.

Counselor Desires

Counselor Desires are the outcomes a counselor prays for and requires the cooperation of the other person; remember that the Holy Spirit is present with you. To continue our example, I can set a goal to exercise every day. I cannot choose a goal for you to exercise every day. I want to see you improve your health, so I hope you will join me in exercising every day.

1. She chooses life for her baby, recognizing that it is her decision.
2. Her salvation and relationship with Jesus are beyond our control, as we cannot choose this for her.
3. She has or develops healthy relationships with the people around her.

Notice how each of these desired outcomes are out of our control. Remembering this will keep us humbly dependent on the Holy Spirit and help us avoid telling her what to do rather than guiding her to good decisions.

Counselor Responsibilities

Responsibilities guide your behavior and attitude during conversations.

1. Be trustworthy:

Think of a person in your life whom you consider trustworthy. What about that person makes you know they are trustworthy? (Give time to answer and add to the list on the wall.)

Your client needs someone they can trust with their problem. Often, they have not shared their circumstances with

anyone else. They need to know that you are a person of integrity and of safety, and that you will not divulge their story to anyone else without their permission. If you want to be a person that others trust enough to approach for counsel and prayer, you must prove yourself trustworthy.

Being worthy of trust requires self-discipline, as it is easy to reveal things shared in confidence to others. Once you have violated confidentiality, you have broken a promise made to your client, as well as violated a responsibility given to you by God. (Proverbs 11:13; 25:9, 1Timothy 5:13). You may not have harmful or malicious intentions when sharing details from someone else's story, but the impact on others can lead to additional trauma. In some cases, violating confidentiality may also result in legal accusations.

Some nations have mandatory reporting laws when a minor or other vulnerable person has been harmed, is in danger, or there is danger of a client hurting themselves or others. A counselor should become familiar with their ministries and government policies and procedures regarding confidentiality and reporting.

2. Be a good listener:

How do you know someone is listening to you? (Create a list from their answers. Ten signs are listed below. They may have more or less signs than listed.)

One of your primary responsibilities is to listen attentively to your client (James 1:19), and listening is a skill that requires self-discipline and practice. One can always become a better listener!

As your client speaks, listen for clues to deeper issues. Take your time and help your client explore and identify the specific challenges they may be facing. Challenges can arise in your client's life if you, as their counselor, respond hastily without fully understanding the nature of the problem. And the only way to be sure is to listen!

10 Signs of an Effective Listener

1. Shows sincere attention
2. Shows respect and acceptance
3. Does not rehearse their input/response while another person speaks
4. Pays attention to nonverbal communication
5. Is aware of the "big picture" while listening to details
6. Tolerates periods of silence and uses them effectively
7. Does not allow emotional moments to throw them off track
8. Asks questions for clarification
9. Maintains proper eye contact
10. Recognizes that every person is unique

3. Stay Focused on Her:

What does it look like when someone is focusing on your needs? How did it look when Jesus focused on the needs of others?

When Jesus met the woman at the well, He focused on her as He explored her situation. She felt understood, which allowed Him to help her think about her spiritual, physical, and relational situations.

Think of a Biblical example where Jesus focused on the needs of another person. What did Jesus say? What action did he take? How does His example show us how to focus on the needs of others?

If we focus solely on saving a baby from abortion, a client will rightly perceive we care more about the baby than about them. A baby may be “at risk”, but this does not change the tremendous value of both lives. Serve and care for the person in front of you.

Remember, the client has their felt needs (abortion, material assistance, food, money, etc.), but Jesus met the real need through His life, death, and resurrection. He overcame death so that we may have life. Your client may not yet recognize their real need for salvation. During this critical time with your client, bring peace and assurance that there is hope, for the felt need and the real need.

Note to Facilitator: Paul David Tripp, in his book, “Instruments in the Redeemer’s hand, people in need of change helping people in need of change” (P&R Publishing, New Jersey, 2002), teaches the LOVE, KNOW, SPEAK, DO, model for heart change, and how these can serve as an instrument of change. His model differs from the instinct to “fix it” by telling the person in crisis what to do, which results in a temporary change. In the following sessions, we will discuss LOVE, KNOW, SPEAK, AND DO, along with the counseling terminology of Connect, Understand, and Guide.

4. Be Humble:

What is the definition of humility?

Humility is God’s way. It is neither self-debasement nor self-hatred. Instead, it is three things simultaneously: 1. Delighting in who God is, 2. Delighting in who we are 3. Being willing to set aside our rights for the sake of others. Combined, humility is having a proper view of God and ourselves, recognizing that “I am not God,” that it is beyond our ability to know all things, see all things, and be all things to all people. Humility recognizes the sacredness and dignity of the life of the individual we are speaking with, a person who is an image bearer of God, is worthy of salvation, love, and grace.

Colossians 3:12 and 1 Peter 5:5 both instruct us to “put on” or “clothe ourselves” with humility. When we are truly humble, we see ourselves and others as God sees them. Humility involves empathy, the ability to experience others’ feelings. Empathy employs both thinking and feeling. An effective counselor applies logic while seeking to understand the feelings driving a client toward a decision.

Empathetic thinking means that we have enough objectivity to analyze various aspects of the client’s situation. Your ability to process and provide accurate information is particularly beneficial when there’s no clear path forward. Empathetic feeling means we understand their feelings well enough to connect and help them feel comfortable exploring the situation. Empathy, using know, speak, and do, provides an opportunity to encourage positive outcomes. (We will discover more of this process in the chapter Understanding the Client)

5. Be truthful:

What makes speaking the truth in love effective?

Do not exaggerate or minimize the truth. Speaking only the truth, gently and with love, will show other people that you are trustworthy; the truth of God sets people free (John 8:32)! The plain facts of fetal development are

astounding without embellishment! And the cruelty of abortion also needs no elaboration; the brutality of what takes place during various procedures is testimony to its inherent violence, against both the preborn child and the mother. Although you may not be a physician or medical expert, you can still share facts and reveal truths without exaggeration that empower individuals to make life-changing decisions and choose life.

NOTE: An effective counselor is aware of their feelings during a counseling session as well. A good counselor will be mindful of their body posture, tone, and word choices, avoiding aggression, frustration, and manipulation.

Understand Where Your Responsibility Ends:

A helper has many responsibilities when engaging in a redemptive conversation with a client; one responsibility they do not have is to change someone's mind or persuade them to make a "recommended" decision. As you provide a safe space and speak the truth in love to your client, the Holy Spirit will guide them to His revealed path. Understanding where your responsibilities end is an appropriate and healthy guideline for every redemptive conversation. It will also free you from the burden of being responsible for her and her decisions. Instead, when we offer love and truth, we are demonstrating our responsibility to her.

Read Ephesians 4:11-16. God has called and is equipping the body of Christ for service.

"Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love."

Ephesians 4:15-16

You may feel anxious about the counseling process. Keep in mind your responsibility is to be prayerful, prepared, and present.

Prayerful: Pray without ceasing, employ the Spiritual Foundation of prayer and confession. Prayer will fuel every area of your life and ministry by creating an awareness of the Holy Spirit and His power in your life and the lives of those you serve.

Prepared: Spend time reviewing available resources and materials. Practice counseling methods by role-playing with others in the ministry or your friends and family.

Present: In addition to being fully present in the moment, it is vital to the ministry's life and work that you be present by fulfilling your commitment to the organization. Be encouraged that even on days when you may feel there is not much happening, your obedience to simply be there and available is appreciated.

When we spend time in prayer, practicing His presence and listening for His voice, both in our homes and with other ministry workers, we can participate with Him to experience a richer, more fulfilling counseling experience. When you have prayed, you are prepared and can be fully present.

Submission to Authority in Ministry

Identify and abide by the core values of the life-giving ministry where you will be serving. Examples of core values for staff, board members, and volunteers to agree on may be: Live a life of integrity, agree that abortion is not an option even in the complex situations of rape, incest, or fetal abnormality; a commitment to the word of God, and testimony of salvation by grace. Ministry leadership will provide you with the mission, vision, and purpose

statements for the ministry, along with other essential documents, such as policies and procedures and confidentiality agreements. As followers of Jesus, we must strive to be submissive to the authority of the ministry leadership and Biblical values.

Chapter Conclusion:

Integrity and confidentiality are essential characteristics of a counselor who desires to build trust and lead someone to Christ or guide them to a biblically informed life decision. Develop listening skills that reflect your focus on the client and your effort to understand their perspective. A humble servant waits to speak, gathers information, and earns their trust to talk about the truth in love.

Session 5

Understand Your Client

"O LORD, You have searched me and known me! You know when I sit down and when I rise up; You discern my thought from afar." Psalm 139:1-2

Facilitator Help: "The Learner Will," "Key Points," and "Scripture References" are provided for you to prepare for teaching. You should not read through these points to the participants.

Remember to plan your time well. Encourage the participants to add to the conversation as much as possible. You may also need to limit the time for sharing. It is common for participant groups to have one or two people who want to share their thoughts. Try to balance the group by asking some questions directly to those who have not yet had an opportunity to share, without making anyone feel ashamed.

The Learner Will

1. Will be introduced to "Love and Know" and "Bond and Understand"
2. Learn to identify the six categories of understanding
3. Apply the six categories of understanding, using love and know, bond and understand, to the Biblical story of Mary and Joseph.

Key Points

- Speak truth with love.
- It is essential to know the other person
- Learn to listen for understanding

Recommended Session Time: 90 minutes

Scripture References: Psalm 139:1-2; 1 Corinthians 13:1; John 4:1–42; Romans 5:5,8; Jeremiah 29:11–12; Ephesians 2:10; Colossians 3:12-13; Isaiah 61:3; Galatians 6:2; James 1:19; Proverbs 18:13; John 10:7-9; I Tim. 1:5; Matthew 11:28,29; 3 John 3,4; Proverbs 15:1; Philippians 2:1-3; Deuteronomy 31:8; Joshua 1:5; Hebrews 13:5; Genesis 2:18; John 14:26

Supplies needed: Large paper and markers

Session Introduction

When we encounter someone experiencing personal trials, it can be tempting, in our desire to help or counsel, to try to "fix" them by offering solutions to their problems. We can easily let our personal responses—whether positive or negative—influence our communication with them. Patience is required by the counselor until the client is ready and the counselor understands their situation enough to be guide toward resolving their problems.

Judgment about a person's circumstances or decisions ("I can't believe they did that!") can also affect our ability to engage with and empathize in meaningful, healing ways. It is, therefore, imperative that you invite the Holy Spirit to fill you with God's love for the person you are speaking with.

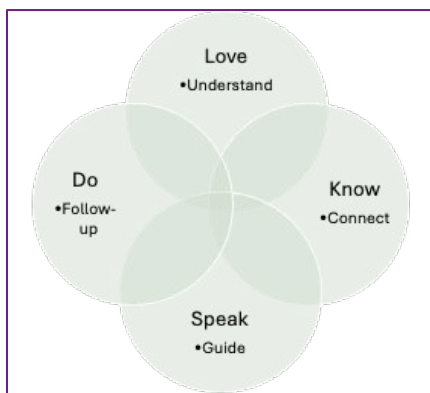
Love, Know, Speak, and Do

As a life-giving counselor who knows the Father's heart for life, you must pursue the client in love. Without love, it is nearly impossible to know them; understanding your client happens when you engage in genuine redemptive conversations. Counselors cannot speak into something they do not understand, understanding comes through discovering their story in active listening. When the counselor understands, they can gently speak and guide their client to positive choices. Caring for someone does not end with speaking, the next step is to "do." Follow-up, walk with them, disciple, equip, encourage, and help them find the resources they need to move forward with their decision.

LOVE: "Is the only context in which the lifelong process of change can take place." (Tripp, p.110).

"If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal."

1 Corinthians 13:1



1 Corinthians 13 continues to emphasize that prophecy, knowledge, and faith are meaningless without love. You can give everything away to the poor, you can sacrifice your body, but if love is not an active part of the motivation, these actions are without power.

Love moves us to care for others and begin real conversations with them. It makes space to understand their story and see life from their point of view. Without this love, we rush past patient understanding and focus more on ourselves than on the person we are helping. Our goal is not to prove how helpful we are or how quickly we can fix things, but to help them well as we point them to Jesus.

KNOW: The patient pursuit of genuine understanding.

If we really know someone, or seek to know them, we are looking for more than the facts and details of their life. A genuine desire to know someone involves looking for their heart; to see them as the Father sees them. It involves listening not so you can speak and be heard, but for gaining their perspective on their situation.

Use this time to connect and bond with them about their life, including whether they are married or single, their interests or hobbies, their faith background, and their families. Build a bond by showing interest in what they share.

Sincere interest communicates to them you are caring and empathetic. We will learn more about bonding and connecting in the next session.

Example: You hear them say that they are married. Use this time to discover more about the relationship. "Tell me about your spouse." "How did you meet?" and "What is her/his name?" "Tell me more about your family life."

Facilitator Help:

Tape a large paper to the wall to create a list of the six categories of understanding. You will keep this list, like the other lists you have made, posted somewhere in the room for them to refer to throughout your time together.

Ask participants: What do you think you need to know or understand about the person you are helping?

You may not need to list their answers on the board. After they have shared, thank them for their answers.

Each question a counselor asks and areas of concern to be addressed can fall into six categories of understanding. Lead the participants through a discussion on the categories using the information provided.

Six Categories of Understanding

1. Know your client's basic needs: What are basic needs?

A woman who has just learned that she is pregnant will be in need. She may need to know that the father of the baby loves her, or that her parents forgive her, or that this small, unborn life has a purpose much greater than her present pain or inconvenience. She will undoubtedly need to know the unconditional love of God the Father during this situation.

When Jesus talked with the Woman at the Well, He knew that she needed more than *physical* water to drink (John 4:1–42). In the same way, your client needs more than just *physical* assistance from you; she needs love and relationships, purpose, and forgiveness.

Love and Relationship

She has a God-given, deep desire to nurture life. Helping her connect to her baby can often bring this to the forefront. She also has a deep need to be loved. Their need for love is sometimes misdirected into a sexual relationship in the hope that the intimacy of *sex* will bring *love*. Because no human can adequately satisfy this craving for love, each of us—including your client—needs something more: God's love.

"...Hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us...God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:5,8)

Purpose

Every person longs for meaning and purpose in life, whether they realize it or not. Each person wants to be useful and to know that their presence on earth has a purpose. People consider abortion because they perceive an unwanted child as a threat to their perceived purpose in life, like finishing school, preserving honor, keeping a job, or making a partner happy. It is a profound and life-changing truth to discover that God gave us life for a purpose. (Jeremiah 29:11–12; Ephesians 2:10). Every person has potential, including her baby. As she chooses life, the counselor helps her see her potential and that of her baby.

Forgiveness and release of shame

Carrying the burden of guilt and shame for our sins is exhausting, and we may try numerous ways to alleviate it on our own. Only Jesus can forgive us our sins and remove all shame. Everyone desperately needs God's forgiveness and forgiveness from people.

Forgiveness of sins may not be part of your conversation until later. Because you have experienced guilt, hurt, and broken relationships in your life, and know the forgiveness of Jesus, He has equipped you to lead others to forgiveness. You can use a redemptive conversation to share these truths with your client. (Colossians 3:12–13)

2. Know your client's circumstances

You might already know the general topic of conversation with someone before you begin, but this does not mean you understand the surrounding circumstances. You must take time to learn about your client's circumstances for two reasons: they are the starting place for deeper conversations, and they will give you a foundation from which to speak truth in a meaningful way later. Remember that the more challenging a person's circumstances, the more overwhelmed they are likely to feel when trying to cope with problems.

Because you may have a limited (or unknown) amount of time to talk with your client, you should spend most of your time understanding what is most important to *them*, saving time discussing those issues. As you gain experience, you will learn how to pace your discussion.

3. Know your client's support system

The people in your client's world are instrumental and will have a powerful influence on their decisions. You will hear about boyfriends, girlfriends, spouses, parents, and grandparents. As you listen, you should be able to build an understanding of the people most affected by this pregnancy. Some of these people may have a positive influence on them and will speak truthfully and in life-giving ways into this situation. Others may pressure them to have an abortion.

You may have an excellent bond with this person and find them receptive to the truth you share, but when your conversation ends, they will return to their family and the people most important to them, and they may influence, or even coerce, your client into thinking the way they do and *doing* what they want. Your interaction will be more effective in the long term if you discuss the peer, parental, and social pressures they may face later.

Additionally, it may be beneficial for you to meet with anyone who could serve as a support or influencer. In collective societies, it is not unusual for decisions to be made by the group, often with an eye to preserving honor and avoiding shame. Hence, her family, church, or other group may be more influential than anticipated. Meeting and sharing with those who influence her may allow you to influence them and build a support network, enabling her to make informed choices for her baby's life.

4. Know your client's feelings

God has created every person with the capacity for feelings, which are often complex and always unique—even when they share common elements such as anger, happiness, or sadness. You can help your client recognize their feelings, accept them, and respond to them responsibly rather than being controlled by their emotions.

Feelings, as natural as they may be, are only a small part of an individual's decision-making toolkit. They can mislead and even immobilize us, particularly when emotions are not understood or examined. The emotions of the moment, such as fear and anxiety, may lead to rash decisions that create more problems.

Facilitator Help: Please do not remove this exercise. It is essential for the remainder of the training.

Exercise of "imagine your emotions in a crisis":

When introducing this topic, ask everyone to close their eyes and recall a time when they experienced a crisis. Ask them to recall the feelings that came with the crisis—not to describe particular details.

Ask participants to share the feelings they had during their crisis or grief. As they share, write one or two words in random order on a large piece of paper on the wall. This paper will remain visible somewhere in the room to assist with the remainder of the training. See the example in this session.

It may take a few moments for people to start sharing; please be patient. It is tempting to start the list, but it is crucial that participants connect to their personal experience and emotions. Do not rush the process; as facilitators, we must often learn to be quiet for several moments before continuing. If someone says "denial," place it in the center. If no one shares "denial," you can write it before continuing.

When they have finished sharing, take the marker or pen and make some scribbles around the words, creating a circle around 'denial' and wrapping around the other words as shown.

During a redemptive conversation, good listening skills can create an opportunity—a safe place—for the client to untangle their feelings and carefully evaluate the outcomes available to them.

People can have a variety of emotions simultaneously; some even seem to contradict each other. A client may express sadness while also feeling relief. They may experience both frustration and excitement over possibilities. Share that denial in the center is a normal response, it is natural for everyone to experience. Denial is an adaptive process that helps to manage distress, but it can be maladaptive in that it is when can keep the individual from facing reality. Our role is to gently help them through their denial, to acceptance, and resolution as shown in the “Crisis Cycle” we will discuss shortly.

It is the counselor's or helper's role to assist the client in untangling the emotions they are experiencing. The counselor must be gentle, affirming what the individual is expressing or conveying through their actions. If we push the client too quickly or too harshly, we can turn a tangled ball of emotions into a giant knot.

How has this exercise and drawing helped you understand your past crisis or grief?

How do you think understanding emotions in this way will help you as you assist others?

How can the mercy and grace of God be applied in these emotions?

Ball of Emotions

hurt

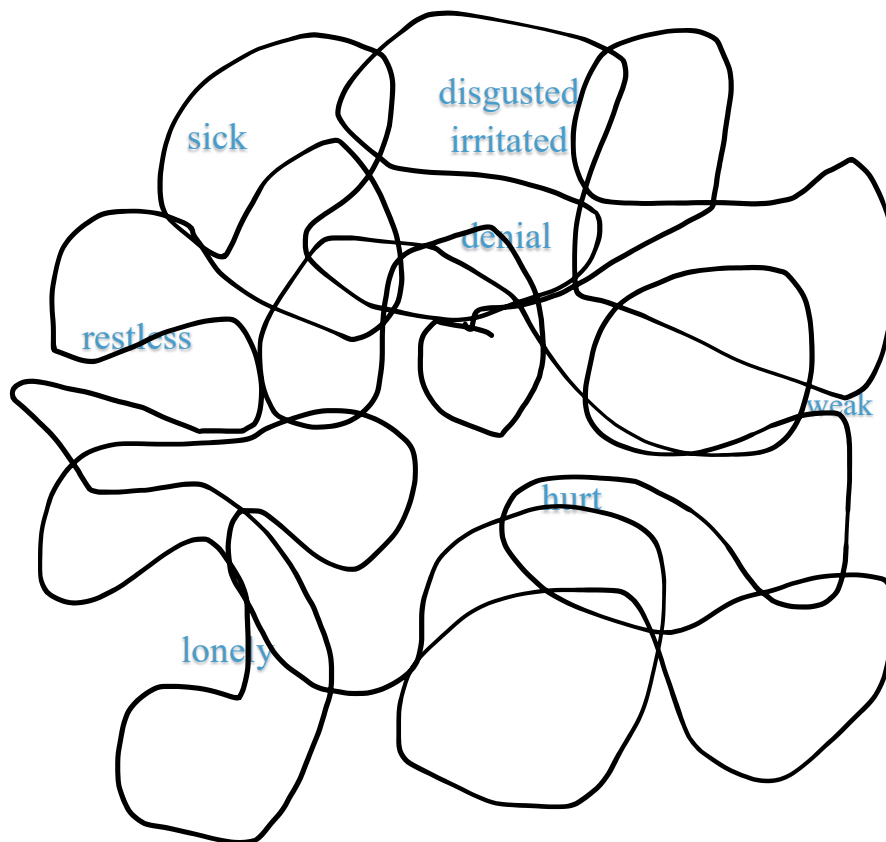
disgusted
irritated

sick

denial

restless

weak



5. Know your client's strengths: What are some "strengths" a counselor should look for in the client's circumstances?

When you talk with your client, they will likely be under tremendous pressure and not at their best. Even still, they are a person with God-given strengths and talents—and you will want to be deliberate about recognizing them. Your client may not be able to articulate their strengths. Or perhaps no one has ever helped her to identify or acknowledge those strengths, but they are there! Reminding an individual of their God-given strengths demonstrates love and acceptance. It creates a stronger foundation from which you can begin rebuilding confidence, problem-solving skills, and hope. Reminding your client of their *strengths* also empowers them to make the right choices.

6. Know your client's beliefs: What beliefs does your client have that you should know?

Take the time to learn about your client's worldview, including practices about sexual intimacy, abortion, and God, which leads to understanding and knowing her. As the client discusses their life, you may even discover their beliefs without asking. Once you understand their beliefs, you'll know what information would be most helpful to share. There are some questions that you can ask on these topics that will help you to learn more about what they believe.

Some possible topics:

- What were the circumstances of becoming pregnant?
- What do you know about fetal development?
- What are your thoughts about abortion?
- What do you know about abortion procedures?

- How do you imagine women feel after an abortion?
- Describe your spiritual journey./ What are your beliefs about God?
- How do you think God looks at your situation? Or, where do you see God in your situation?

Application of the Categories of Understanding

Facilitator's help: The following exercise is essential for learning how to apply the categories of understanding to a real-life situation. Plan your time well; do not eliminate the exercise. It is also effective for the participants to identify the six categories of understanding in the Biblical account of Mary and Joseph. They will learn to apply these methods for counseling by working through the process. The facilitator should spend time preparing to teach by reviewing the Biblical accounts of Jesus' birth in the gospels.

Exercise:

We will examine the story of Jesus' birth through the experiences of Mary and Joseph. Using the group discussions and the papers on the wall, the ball of emotion, qualifications, and attributes of a counselor or helper, answer as many of the six categories as possible with the group. Encourage them to recall the details of the biblical story of Jesus' birth. You may use the questions below, as well as any others that will be helpful.

- Basic needs
 - Who loves this person? (Love and relationship)
 - What are some goals of this person? Do they have any? (Purpose)
 - Does this person feel any guilt, shame, or fear regarding their situation? (Forgiveness)
- Circumstances
 - Are they married or single?
 - Are they in school or working?
 - What religion/church/faith are they?
 - How many times have they been pregnant? With what outcomes?
 - What prompted them to come to you for counsel? (stated reason)
 - If they are pregnant and considering abortion, what are they afraid of?
- Support system and pressure people
 - Who are the people in their lives?
 - Which people would support a pregnancy? Who would pressure to abort?
 - Who do they share their secrets with?
 - Who is the hardest person for them to talk to?
- Feelings & emotions
 - What emotions do you see?
 - What emotions does the client express to you? Anger? Sadness? Guilt?
 - If they are pregnant, how do they feel about it?
- Strengths
 - What have they said that reveals a passion, strength, or area of confidence?
 - Are they hard-working, honest, brave, etc?
- Beliefs
 - What do they believe about God?
 - What do they believe about abortion?
 - Where do they see God in their situation?

Facilitator Help:

Briefly review the six categories of understanding with the participants and ask them to practice using them today with someone in their lives.

Conclusion

As you learn about her life and situation, you will develop an appreciation for your client's struggle and identify the internal and external pressures pushing them to consider or recommend abortion. Learning about these areas will help you determine what your client needs to hear and will guide you to speak God's truth in a loving and personal way. Remember to *listen* more than you *talk*. If you are talking more than your client, you may be talking too much. Learn to become a "safe place" where you practice confidentiality and good listening.

Session 6

The Crisis Cycle

“Hear my cry, O God, listen to my prayer; from the end of the earth, I call to You when my heart is faint. Lead me to the rock that is higher than I. For You have been a refuge, a strong tower against the enemy. Let me dwell in Your tent forever! Let me take refuge in the shelter of Your wings.” Psalm 61:1-4

Facilitator Help: “The Learner Will,” “Key Points,” and “Scripture References” are provided for you to prepare for teaching. You should not read through these points to the participants.

Remember to plan your time well. Encourage the participants to add to the conversation as much as possible. You may also need to limit the time for sharing. It is common for participant groups to have one or two people who want to share their thoughts. Try to balance the group by asking some questions directly to those who have not yet had an opportunity to share, without making anyone feel ashamed.

The Learner Will

1. Understand the Crisis Cycle, including pre-crisis, mid-crisis, and post-crisis phases.
2. Know the role they play in another person’s crisis.

Key Points

- Explore the stages of a crisis: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance.
- Life-giving counselors and helpers will be equipped to identify the stages of grief in others.

Recommended Session Time: 2 hours

Scripture References: Psalm 61:1-4; Isaiah 61:3; Galatians 6:2; James 2:14-18;

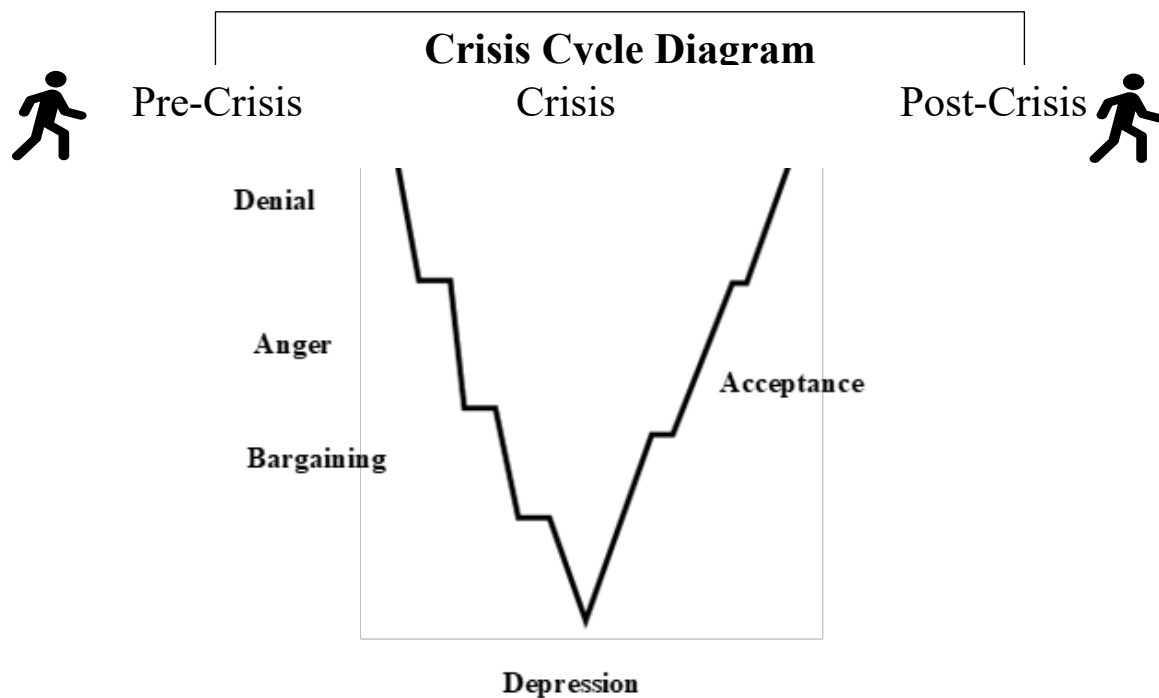
Supplies Needed: Poster Paper and Markers. Additional materials you may need for creative exercise.

Session Introduction

Life is often filled with loss, suffering, and other hard experiences. At any moment, a person may be in one of three stages: Pre-crisis, Crisis, Post-Crisis. Pre-crisis means life feels stable and safe. Crisis is when a person faces real threat or pain, psychological or physical. Post-crisis comes after the danger has passed, as they adjust to a new sense of normal. Until we are with the Lord, seasons of difficulty and crisis will always be part of our lives.

Facilitator Help: Share or draw the top diagram, “Crisis Cycle,” on a large piece of paper taped to the wall. Add each stage of grief as you talk about it. You will add the body of Christ later as you discuss how the church responds.

You will also keep this page posted in the room for participants to refer to during other training sessions.



What are the stages of a Crisis?

Elisabeth Kubler Ross is credited for the “five stages of grief” we will be discussing as the “crisis cycle.” While crisis pregnancy is not often identified as grief, the pregnant woman, boyfriend, and others associated with the situation are facing loss or a threat. Loss of freedom, hope for the future, innocence, any perceived or rear threat can trigger this grief cycle.

Denial > Anger > Bargaining > Depression > Acceptance

Although there is generally a predictable progression through the crisis cycle (as illustrated), every journey is unique. Not everyone goes through each stage in this exact sequence, and certainly not for the same amount of time. People may even experience more than one stage at a time. Some individuals may revisit a stage they have already experienced. In contrast, others may become trapped or caught in a stage and require assistance to move forward. An illustration of your crisis cycle, then, may look more like a wave, or a spiral, or a random scribble. The point is that there’s no “correct” way to experience a crisis. Still, it can be beneficial to understand this familiar pattern.

We want to do our best to understand how *she* is experiencing her crisis and how she is navigating the chaos.

What is a crisis?

A *crisis* can be defined as a time of trouble or great danger. Although we tend to think of it in negative terms, the word “crisis” can also mean “turning point”—a decisive or crucial time or event. This turning point creates an opportunity: What might God do in this challenging situation to bring beauty from ashes (Isaiah 61:3)?

Denial

A typical initial reaction to a crisis is *denial*. Denial is a normal human coping mechanism that can often protect a person from experiencing a devastating load of pain all at once. Under ideal circumstances, your client may have been happy or excited about a pregnancy, but in their current circumstances, may be facing intense loss (of freedom, reputation, financial security, etc.) Your client may feel numb and say things such as, “This isn’t happening to me,” “This isn’t my test,” “This can’t be true,” or “Are you sure?” Using interpretive listening skills, you can help her by acknowledging her feeling of disbelief. As you transition from interpretive listening to asking good questions, you can help her move toward acceptance. It may also be productive to sit quietly as she processes or considers her feelings and what she may do next.

Anger

No one can maintain or remain in a perpetual state of denial. Your client is likely to replace it with *anger*, *envy*, or *resentment*. Anger is a normal human reaction. It is not necessarily unhealthy, as long as the anger does not result in destructive behavior. Your client’s anger will often sound like they are blaming something or someone else, including themselves. These emotions are frequently rooted in guilt, condemnation, shame, fear, or insecurity. They may say things like, “I should have known better,” “I knew I shouldn’t have trusted that person,” “I blew it again,” and “Why does this always happen to me?” As they discuss these feelings, they may begin to justify their decisions. Asking good questions can help them understand and navigate their anger. Help them move toward forgiveness, take responsibility for their actions, or seek healing from the Lord.

Bargaining

Once your client has worked through their anger, they are likely to come to a point of *bargaining*. People often negotiate with God, promising to “be good” or do (or *not do*) a particular behavior, in exchange for a reprieve from the impending event. Your client may say or think: “I promise not to have sex again if you’ll just make this baby go away!”

Depression

Once your client realizes they cannot bargain themselves out of this situation and must face their crisis, they will likely begin to *feel* more of the emotions they were avoiding. They may experience sadness or other physical symptoms. This stage in the crisis cycle is called *depression*.

They may feel a variety of emotions: confusion, desperation, helplessness, guilt, ambivalence, and hopelessness. In this stage, your client may complain about, or show signs of fatigue, insomnia, overeating, undereating, listlessness, crying, isolation, or headaches. Your client may also seek to lessen the pain of depression with alcohol, cigarettes, drugs, sex, food, or other substances and behaviors.

Acceptance

It can be painful to leave the darkness of depression and face the harsh light of reality. It is always challenging and necessary work. In *acceptance*, that your client accepts her situation and makes a decision that leads to resolution. They do not have to be happy about the process or outcome but must accept and face their circumstances. They may say things like, “I’m pregnant, and now I have to deal with this,” or “I think I can make this work after all.”

Remember that they may repeat one of the earlier stages of the crisis cycle—denial, anger, bargaining, or depression. Remember, your role is to communicate love and compassion patiently; you provide the environment for your client to make life-affirming choices.

Helping others honestly process what they are facing and move toward acceptance often rings more relief to them than we expect. When we push down difficult experiences instead of working through them,, the pressure tends to build and is revealed in our emotions and behavior. It is like trying to hold a ball or balloon underwater, it takes effort to keep it down which makes us tired. The more forcefully you hold it down, the more it fights to come back to the surface. You can help others slowly release that pressure as you help them accept their situation.

Facilitator Help: Consider ways to demonstrate how the pressure builds and without intentional gradual release the pressure becomes overwhelming. You could use a ball as described or a carbonated drink in a bottle that is shaken. You must slowly open the bottle to avoid being sprayed. Your role is to help them release the pressure in safe ways and avoid the uncontrolled outburst. Suppressing emotions takes energy, and it is exhausting. Be creative in how you can demonstrate this to participants.

Exercise (60 minutes)

1. Divide large group into smaller groups of no more than five people each. Within each group, have participants share personally about a crisis they have experienced. This personal crisis *does not* have to be a catastrophic one, but it should be significant and memorable. Remind participants that this is not the time to practice counseling. They should be listening to know and understand the person who is sharing.
2. Using the crisis diagram as a guide, have each participant recall what they said, felt, and did during each of the five stages of crisis. For example, if a person’s crisis was the death of their grandmother, they could say about the experience (for **denial**): “I couldn’t believe she died. It didn’t seem real.” Or (for **depression**): “I felt so sad and so alone. She helped to raise me, and now she’s gone.”
3. Groups should be given approximately an hour (10-15 minutes per person; adjust the time accordingly) to share their crisis experiences. - Manage your time well.
4. Encourage group members to pray briefly for one another after a participant shares their crisis experience.

Continue the Exercise “What I said, What I did” Write the phases of the crisis cycle on poster paper or a dry-erase board, with one phase in each section. Post the paper around the room on the wall or tables. Ask the participants to reflect on a time when they faced a personal crisis. Then, without sharing their crisis, have them write what they said or did during this phase on paper.

Example: Denial, I distracted myself by cleaning the house.

Anger: I was short-tempered and yelled because the dishes were not washed.

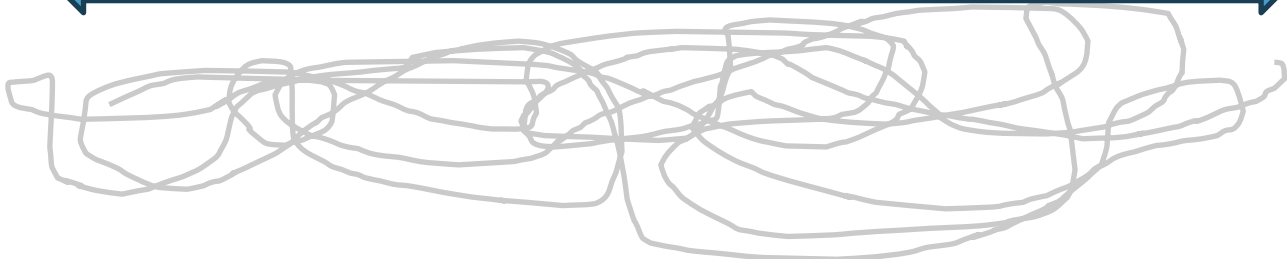
This exercise helps them identify the signs that indicate where their clients or others are in the crisis cycle.

After everyone has completed writing on the paper, discuss what a crisis looks and sounds like. How does this help you relate to a person in a crisis?

Stages of Grief

What I thought my grief would look like:

Denial Anger Depression Bargaining Acceptance



What really happened:

Denial

Anger

Depression

Bargaining

Acceptance

Exploring Needs

As you discuss her situation, pressures, and options, it will also be crucial to help her identify her immediate needs: Housing, Protection, Food, and Medical Care. Unmet needs can cause someone to turn to abortion, only to find afterwards that they have a whole new set of problems or needs.

Your role in another individual's crisis

This unexpected pregnancy has demanded more of your client than they believe they have the resources to handle. It's why they are in crisis and why they are here to meet with you. It would be easy to allow their stress to bleed into your life but remember: *your client's situation is not yours*. It is their own opportunity to grow stronger, make wise decisions, and see good come out of trauma, not your chance to take over and manage someone else's life. It is not your job to solve this crisis or rush them through the cycle. Instead, it is your job to assist in the following ways:

1. Help your client to recognize what they have been thinking and feeling during this crisis.
2. Empathize with them and validate their feelings. You can enhance your ability to empathize by recalling your own experiences during a personal crisis. While this can be helpful, keep the focus on them rather than your own struggle.
3. Encourage your client that this crisis is neither insurmountable nor unending, but that they can survive it.

Growth comes in difficult situations. When we find positive solutions, we can sometimes handle the next crisis or possibly avoid a crisis because of what we have learned and how we have grown.

Although we are instructed to bear each other's burdens (Galatians 6:2), remember that you must ultimately leave your clients in God's hands. It is God—not you—who is with them through the valley.

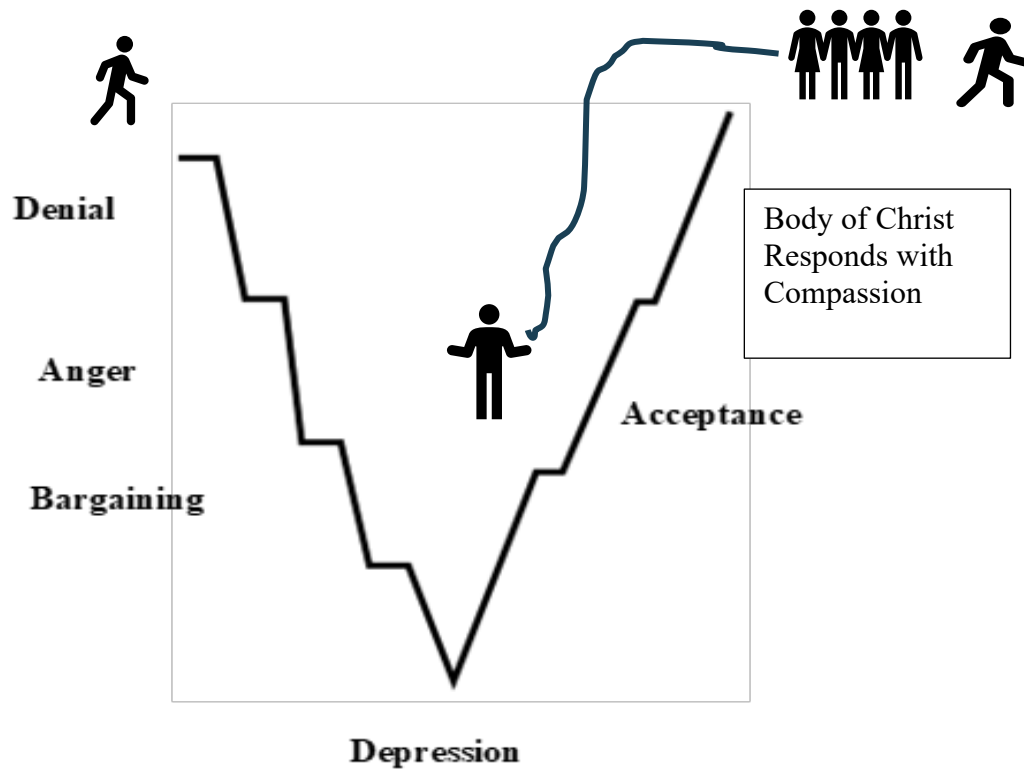
The Church as the Body of Christ and Its Role in Helping Those in Need

The church is often described in Scripture as the body of Christ, a powerful metaphor that emphasizes unity, purpose, and mission. The Apostle Paul writes, "*Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it*" (1 Corinthians 12:27). Just as a physical body is composed of many parts working together for the good of the whole, the church consists of believers who are called to function in harmony, each contributing their unique gifts and abilities (Romans 12:4–5). This image reminds us that the church is not merely a building or an institution; it is a living, active representation of Christ on earth. Through its actions, the church reflects His love, compassion, and commitment to serving others. **The Church as the Body of Christ and Its Role in Helping Those in Need**

One of the most significant roles of the church is to care for those in need. Throughout the Bible, we see Christ's example of reaching out to the marginalized, feeding the hungry, healing the sick, and comforting the brokenhearted. As His body, the church continues this mission by providing practical assistance and spiritual encouragement to individuals and communities. This can take many forms—food pantries, counseling services, financial aid, and programs that support education and employment. These acts of service are not just charitable deeds; they are expressions of God's love and grace, demonstrating that faith is active and transformative.

Moreover, helping those in need strengthens the unity and witness of the church. When believers work together to meet the needs of others, they embody the selfless love that Jesus taught. This unity becomes a testimony to the world, showing that the gospel is not only about words but about action. In times of crisis—whether natural disasters, economic hardship, or personal struggles—the church has the opportunity to shine as a beacon of hope, offering both material support and spiritual guidance.

Ultimately, the church's role in serving others is rooted in its identity as the body of Christ. It is a calling that goes beyond obligation; it is an expression of who the church is meant to be. By caring for the vulnerable and meeting practical needs, the church fulfills its mission to reflect Christ's character and advance His kingdom. In doing so, it not only transforms lives but also strengthens its own witness, reminding the world that God's love is real, active, and available to all.



Conclusion

No two people will have the same experience of how they process emotions in a crisis, nor is the crisis cycle an actual cycle. You should expect your client to move back and forth through the different phases until they have resolved the problem. Those assisting someone through a crisis must exercise patience, love, and kindness toward the person they are counseling. Ideally, the body of Christ will participate in the healing and resolution process.

Session 7

The Communication Process

“Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger.” James 1:19

Facilitator Help: “The Learner Will,” “Key Points,” and “Scripture References” are provided for you to prepare for teaching. You should not read through these points to the participants.

Remember to plan your time well. Allow the group time to share in pairs or threes the ways they have experienced God speaking, or a time when they benefited from a “redemptive conversation.” How much time you allow will depend on the schedule and the number of participants.

Learner Will

1. Understand the basics of communication, sender, receiver, message, and channel.
2. Discuss verbal and nonverbal communication
3. Practice listening in a redemptive conversation
4. Examine how to recognize when connection or bonding with another person occurs, and how this relates to Love, Know, Speak, and Understand to Guide.

Key Points

- Communication involves two or more people who are intentionally sending and receiving information.
- The counselor or helper should be aware of their verbal and nonverbal communication, as well as that of the client.
- An effective counselor is genuine, accepting (not approving of behaviors) of the client as an image bearer of God, truthful, and shows empathy.
- When connecting does not happen, it may be due to the counselor’s anxiety, fear, previous experiences, or wrong perceptions.
- Connecting with a client may not happen for the same reason, but the counselor is responsible for being aware and, if possible, making adjustments.

Recommended Session Time: 90 minutes

Scripture: James 1:19; Proverbs 18:13; 1 Timothy 1:5; Philippians 2:19-22; Matthew 11:28,29; John 4:1-34; Luke 10:30-37; John 8:1-11; Matthew 8:1-13; 3 John:3,4; Proverbs 15:1,4; Titus 3:1-5; Philippians 2:1-3; Matthew 19:16-22; Deuteronomy 31:8, Joshua 1:5, and Hebrews 13:5; Genesis 2:18; John 14:26

Supplies Needed: Poster paper and markers

Session Introduction

Communication is a process that involves active participation by all parties. At a minimum, the communication process involves two people, who typically alternate between the roles of sender and receiver. During a conversation, for example, one person will act as the *sender*. She will send a message—her spoken words—to the other person, known in this moment as the *receiver*. The *receiver can*, at any point, become the *sender* by sending his own message—his spoken words—back to the original sender, who has now become the receiver. In this way, the sender/receiver roles are both shared and alternated.

For communication to be effective, both parties—the sender and the receiver—must actively engage in the process.

Facilitator Help: For the role-play exercise to be effective it is best to use a member of the facilitating team. To prepare, briefly discuss what scenario you will be using. Do not worry about rehearsing what you will do. Be creative, it can be humorous, and exaggerated to help make the point.

Exercise (10 minutes)

Two members of the teaching team should prepare a role-play to show a barrier to effective communication. Role-plays should be brief and, preferably, humorous to provide participants with an example of what can happen when we experience communication difficulties.

Role-play ideas:

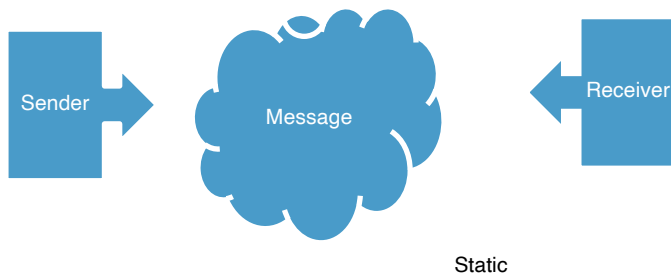
- A. Person 1 can begin a conversation in a shared language, then switch to a foreign language (or speak in gibberish) to Person 2.
- B. Person 1 begins talking to Person 2, but Person 2 abruptly turns their back while Person 1 is speaking.
- C. Person 1 begins talking to Person 2, but Person 2 loudly interrupts them, prompting Person 1 to continue speaking.

These examples are suggestions, not prescriptions. Regardless of the scenario you use, it should simply illustrate a barrier to effective communication (even if the example role-play may be unrealistic).

The facilitator can ask the participants to share their observations about the interaction:

- “What barrier(s) to effective communication did you notice?”
- “How do you think Person 1 felt? How about Person 2?”
- “How effective was the communication?”
- “What are some ways that either person could have improved their own communication?”

Understanding the communication process



Problems often arise when people talk (**send** a message) without considering whether the other person is listening (**receiving** the message). Every person has experienced the frustration of sharing their feelings only to have the “listener” demonstrate—in words or behavior—that they were not listening at all.

Speaking different languages can also hinder effective communication. A literal “language barrier,” in which the parties speak other languages, is an obvious obstacle to successful communication. There is a less visible barrier when both speak the same language, and nuanced cultural differences go unrecognized. For example, a speaker may interpret a listener’s head nodding as agreement, while the

listener, who completely disagrees, is nodding as mere acknowledgment or politeness.

Static or distracting elements in the counseling environment can disrupt communication and make bonding with the client more challenging. Examples of “static” include outside noise, cell phones, clutter in the room, and even jewelry. Personal appearances could also be a distraction.

The counselor should be aware of the environment and, if possible, remove or minimize distractions. The client’s appearance and clothing may distract the counselor. Still, the counselor must be conscious of these by focusing on the client’s story and the communication process.

Verbal and nonverbal communication

Communication happens through a variety of methods, including conversations or written messages, to convey a particular message. In either of these forms, words are used. Using forms such as email, video meetings, or texting is more likely to lead to misunderstandings. In contrast, oral communication provides opportunities to utilize non-verbal cues.

Redemptive conversations are most effective when people are physically together. This bodily presence increases the immediate impact and effectiveness of face-to-face communication by acknowledging the contributions—and recognizing the challenges—of another type of communication: nonverbal.

Exercise (10 minutes)

1. Ask a volunteer from the group to come forward.
2. Ask the volunteer **not to communicate anything** to the group. Wait about ten seconds while the volunteer makes this attempt.
3. The volunteer will likely avoid speaking. If the volunteer does speak, prompt them to remain silent and remind them that the goal is to “not communicate.”
4. Ask the audience if the volunteer was successful in their attempt at non-communication.
5. Ask the audience what communication took place even without words.
6. Using the same volunteer, or a different volunteer, ask **them to try to communicate an emotion without using words or making noise.**
7. Ask the audience if the volunteer was successful in communicating with them.
8. What did they communicate?
9. Once again, words are not necessary for communication.

Nonverbal communication is composed of body language and tone of voice—any communication other than the actual *words* of the message. Human beings are sensitive to many different types of nonverbal communication. Gestures of the arms and hands, posture, facial expressions, and head movements are several different types of body language. Pitch, breathing patterns, and volume levels comprise characteristics of a speaker’s tone of voice. All of these examples can profoundly influence the effectiveness and success of communication.

The spoken word comprises only 7% of the communication process, body language accounts for 38%, leaving 55% for Voice tone and inflection.

Exercise (10 minutes)

- Demonstrate how interpretation shifts with the use of tone and inflection in communication by repeating the sentence, emphasizing a different word with each repetition. Ask the audience to interpret the deeper assumed meaning of each repetition. Or, what did you notice about how the meaning changed? **Choose another simple statement that makes the same point and works in your culture.**

Is he taking her to the party?
Is **he** taking her to the party?
Is he **taking** her to the party?
Is he taking **her** to the party?
Is he taking her **to** the party?
Is he taking her to **the** party?
Is he taking her to the **party**?

Nonverbal cues—in both body language and tone of voice—can often lead to *unintentional* or, more problematically, *incongruent* communication, where the sender does not understand that their nonverbal communication does not align with their spoken words. (For example, your spouse is not going to believe you if you say, “I love you” with a scowl on your face. If your shoulders are sagging and your face is downcast, your claim of being “excited” about something will not ring true to others.)

These factors are just a few of the communication dynamics you need to be aware of when engaging in a redemptive conversation with another person. Listen to the words that they are saying, but also pay attention to what else they may be communicating through their body and tone of voice.

To be an effective helper, you must become aware of the impact of your voice tone, inflection, body posture, and gestures on the client. One of the world’s greatest servants, Mother Teresa, instructs:

“Speak tenderly to them. Let there be kindness in your face, in your eyes, in your smile, in the warmth of your greeting. Always have a cheerful smile. Don’t only give your care, but give your heart as well.”

Listening during a redemptive conversation

People in crisis are often unable to translate their feelings into words. Due to this difficulty, people are rarely able to simply sit down and identify or share their feelings with you. You will need to listen carefully to recognize indicators and signs that reveal what your client is thinking or feeling.

The Bible instructs us to be quick to listen and slow to speak (James 1:19; Proverbs 18:13), and this principle lies at the heart of any redemptive conversation. Effective listening will encourage your client to share valuable information, equipping you to tailor God’s message to them. You must always listen *before* speaking, and remember to listen *more* than you talk.

Intentional listening can help her sort through her tangled feelings. As a counselor, you want to help her make good decisions rather than react to emotions she may not even understand or recognize.

Listening involves more than hearing

Hearing is the physiological ability to perceive sound; it is a passive process. *Listening* involves active decoding and interpretation of incoming messages, requiring greater attention and effort. It is essential to *listen* attentively to your client as they share their circumstances and feelings. Don’t just *hear* the words they are speaking, while waiting for your opportunity to speak. An effective counselor needs to practice self-awareness and refrain from mentally rehearsing their response.

Factors that influence a person’s ability to listen

When given a divine appointment to engage in a redemptive conversation with someone, it is your responsibility to be attentive and engaged, offering God’s hope and love to another person in great need. Even so, you enter the

conversation not as a blank slate or empty vessel, but as a complex person with your own thoughts, feelings, memories, experiences, and even crises. Fulfilling your responsibility to minister can be a challenge while balancing these factors. Be mindful of the following considerations as you initiate your redemptive conversation.

Facilitator help: Use a poster paper to note the **helpful** points mentioned during the large-group presentation. Refer to them during the discussion about responsibilities during a redemptive conversation. Even though they have listed harmful things during their small group work, you do not need to list what was harmful. Your goal is to lead them toward the positive behaviors.

Exercise (30 minutes)

1. Divide the large group into small groups of three people each.
2. Once the groups have formed, ask participants to prepare a sheet of paper by drawing a line down the middle, separating the page into two equal columns. The left-hand column can be labeled *Helpful Things*, and the right-hand column can be labeled *Harmful Things*.
3. Ask participants to recall an experience when they received counsel and give them about five minutes to reflect on that experience.
4. Ask participants to identify both the helpful and harmful things said during that time. Record their recollections on the prepared sheet.
5. After a few minutes of reflecting and writing, invite participants to share their individual responses *within* their small groups.
6. After this discussion time, the whole group should reconvene to discuss their answers. The purpose is not for individuals to share their stories, but rather to identify helpful and harmful statements or behaviors of the counselor. Invite participants to discuss their answers to the following questions:
 - a. What were the common things people did and said?
 - b. Why were these things helpful or hurtful?
 - c. What are we often looking for, and what do we need, when we talk with someone about a difficult circumstance in our lives?
 - d. How should we approach others when they come to us for advice or counsel?

(Remember to create a list of the helpful things on a poster paper when the whole group gathers.)

Connecting: That vital joining with the client's heart.

“Love and Know,” the client has been the center of this curriculum, facilitating redemptive conversations with clients. When a counselor has effectively sought to love the person in front of them, they are getting to know and understand them beyond the facts of their daily life. These two elements enable a connection to the client's heart. Connecting is the first and foremost experience that you want to have with anyone we are attempting to minister to. With connection, we engage both emotions and thinking. Connection is most likely to occur with eye-to-eye contact, focused attention, and, if the client gives permission, appropriate touch.

How does connecting happen?

Be Genuine. Be aware of your posture toward the client and the way you interact with them. A counselor's verbal and nonverbal communication should reflect genuine care and a sincere desire to assist. A counselor must set aside their goals and need for success.

“The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.”

1 Timothy 1:5

“I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, so that I too may be cheered by news of you. For I have no one like him, who will be genuinely concerned for your welfare. For they all speak their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. But you know Timothy’s proven worth, how, as a son with a father, he has served with me in the gospel.”

Philippians 2:19-22.

Paul loves and knows the body of Christ in Philippi; he understands their needs, has a connection to their heart, and trusts Timothy to be an effective minister to them. Timothy is a man of genuine faith and a sincere heart. Both men have reputations that make them worthy of respect; a counselor’s reputation speaks to the client as well as their verbal communication. When clients and their families sense the genuineness of our faith and recognize our desire to know them, we have earned the right to speak and guide them toward the Father’s heart for life in their situation.

Accept the client as an image bearer of God without compromising Biblical values. Jesus said,

“Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”

Matthew 11:28-29

Jesus extends the invitation to everyone who needs His love and care. Transformation happens in a client’s life through gentle, loving care. Jesus encountered individuals from diverse backgrounds, experiences, and cultures. He reached out and touched the lives of people who experienced rejection by society. His approach is loving and gentle while maintaining Biblical truth and morals.

Examples include:

- The woman at the well. John 4:1-34
- The parable of the good Samaritan. Luke 10:30-37
- The Adulterous Woman. John 8:1-11 “Sin no more.”
- Jesus heals the leper and the centurion’s servant. Matthew 8:1-13

Speaking the truth is not always comfortable; it often makes us uncomfortable. Sometimes we force our opinions on others, which may cause them to reject not just us, but more importantly, also reject the option of life.

“For I rejoiced greatly when the brothers came and testified to your truth, as indeed you are walking in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.”

3 John:3-4

In John’s third letter to the church, he praises and uses Gaius as an example of a man who speaks the truth in love. Gaius is speaking the truth and walking in truth. The result is that the faithful are learning to follow his example and receive his teaching. The contrast is Diotrephes. Diotrephes rejects the truth, gives bad counsel, and does not walk in a manner worthy of the gospel.

It is necessary to speak the truth with compassion, grace, and full humility. Speaking the truth is not easy under challenging circumstances.

“A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. A gentle tongue is a tree of life, but perverseness in it breaks the spirit.”

Proverbs 15:1,4

“Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work, to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle, and to show perfect courtesy toward all people. For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another. But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit.”

Titus 3:1-5

Empathy takes and encourages action. A strong definition of empathy: *“A being aware of and sharing another person’s feelings, experiences, and emotions. Also: the ability for this”* (Miriam Oxford Dictionary). A counselor must empathize while maintaining the ability to look for strengths in the client, which lead to solutions. When we look at the crisis cycle and imagine the client in the “pit” of their crisis, the compassionate response of offering help comes from the heart of someone with empathy. Healthy empathy leads to life-giving action. A counselor may express empathy through the communication skills presented in the next chapter.

“So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.”

Philippians 2:1-3

Connecting may not always occur.

The lack of connection is not necessarily the result of a failure on your part. Further, despite the connection, your client may not be able to choose what you desire. Accept the fact that even when presented with the truth in the most loving manner, the client may reject it, as did the rich young ruler. (Matthew 19:16-22)

There may be obstacles between you that make connecting more difficult. It is possible to overcome most barriers through self-awareness and openness.

Obstacles Facing Helpers

Be mindful of the following obstacles that can hinder a peer counselor’s effectiveness:

Exercise 5.6 (20 minutes)

- Ask participants this question: “What are some factors that affect how you listen to other people or influence how others listen to you?”
- If participants seem unsure how to respond, suggest “How were you feeling before you started talking?” as a prompt to get the conversation started.
- Ask questions that elicit factors that the participants may have missed.

Feelings

Your emotional state before starting the conversation will affect your ability to listen. You will also naturally have an emotional response to what your client tells you; don’t allow your own emotions to cloud your ability to listen to your client.

Inferences

Your interpretation of what your client means by the words they use can impact your ability to listen effectively. Be cautious about assuming too much. Use clarifying statements (“I heard you say this,” or “Please help me understand”) to understand your client’s message—both for you and for them.

Attitudes

Your worldview, beliefs, and perspective can significantly impact your ability to listen to your client, particularly when there is disagreement or a lack of alignment.

Thoughts

It is easy to let your own thoughts and ideas (your “inner monologue”) distract you from paying attention to and listening well to your client.

Experiences

You bring a complex history of experiences to any conversation or relationship, and you have had your own trials and crises. These experiences may very well be the explicit reason why your client is talking to you in the first place. Even if your client is unaware of your experiences, God certainly knows how they have equipped you for ministry in this redemptive conversation. Just be careful that recollections of these experiences don't hinder your ability to listen well to your client.

Emotional and physical state

Depression, headache, illness, or malady can easily impair your ability to hear with a positive, open attitude, and these factors may intensify your own adverse reactions to challenging things that your client has to say.

Age

We have all experienced challenges when speaking with someone from a different generation, so it is helpful to be aware of and set aside your perceptions of your client's age to listen well to what they have to say. (“He's too young to have anything valuable to say” or “She's too old to really understand young people” are examples of deterrents to good listening.)

Gender

According to the title of a popular American book, “Men are from Mars, and Women are from Venus.” This book title simply illustrates the reality that God has created men and women with different combinations of gifts and abilities. Because men and women respond differently to stimuli, it's important to acknowledge these differences (without casting judgment) before—and during—a redemptive conversation.

Education level

If you have a different educational level from your client, you may be distracted by their language or by their descriptions of events and circumstances. Because God uniquely gifts every person, it is your responsibility to seek to recognize the God-given value, dignity, and abilities of every individual.

The desire to succeed

A peer counselor's goal is to listen and submit to the Holy Spirit, focus on the client, and speak the truth in love. The success of a volunteer is not dependent on the client's choices, but instead on obedience to God's calling. So, then, we are considered “successful” not because she chooses life, but because we were respectful, loving, and obedient to what God asks of us.

A lack of faith in God

Perhaps you are fearful or doubt that God will move in the counseling room. We must examine our beliefs and ask God to strengthen any weakness. God cares for each of us. He cares for you, and He cares for your client. He wants to see her live according to His plan—much more than we do. He loves her—infinately more than we can. God has promised that He will never leave us or forsake us. (see Deuteronomy 31:8, Joshua 1:5, and Hebrews 13:5)

A lack of respect for the autonomy of the client

God has given each of us free will. Your client has the freedom and legal right to choose abortion. If God, being all-powerful, can allow her to choose abortion, then we must show the same respect for her as a person. You have prayed for her to come to the center. People are praying for her while she is there, and you must continue to pray for

her when she leaves, trusting God with the outcome. Telling her what to do, even “giving a little advice” or having an agenda, does not reflect respect for her personhood, nor for her rights.

Focusing on self

Everyone is self-conscious when they first begin peer counseling. A counselor whose primary goal is to have people like them and whose focus is on process rather than ministry will likely experience this as an obstacle to connecting with others. Overcoming this can be achieved by focusing on Jesus and cultivating a servant’s heart, rather than a success mentality.

Helpers interested in connecting with clients must set aside their own need to be heard and listen carefully and compassionately to another person’s problems, circumstances, and needs. In his book *Bold Love*, Dr. Dan Allender puts it this way: “Bold love is courageously setting aside our personal agenda to move humbly into the world of others with their well-being in view, willing to risk further pain in our souls, to be an aroma of life”

Conclusion

God created the second person in recorded human history because it was “not good” for the first one to be alone (Genesis 2:18). Communication has been an integral part of human relationships from the moment of creation; it was God’s idea. It is in God’s nature to communicate *with us*, and he designed us to communicate *with each other*. As our designer and as the creator of communication, God can instruct each of us on how to become better communicators. And with the help of God’s Holy Spirit—whom Jesus Himself called the Counselor/Comforter/Advocate/Helper (John 14:26)—you are empowered and released for ministry through every redemptive conversation.

Session 8

The Counseling Process Skill Building

“Do your best to present yourself to god as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.” 2 Timothy 2:15

Facilitator Help: “The Learner Will,” “Key Points,” and “Scripture References” are provided for you to prepare for teaching. You should not read through these points to the participants.

Remember to plan your time well. Allow the group time to share in pairs or threes the ways they have experienced God speaking, or a time when they benefited from a “redemptive conversation.” How much time you allow will depend on the schedule and the number of participants.

The Learner Will

1. Learn how to ask good questions.
2. Practice listening skills: restate, rephrase, and interpret.

Key Points

- Connection happens through building rapport, or a good relationship with the client.
- When a connection happens, the counselor is actively listening with the intention of understanding the client.
- Understanding the client’s basic needs comes through using listening skills effectively to discover the core issues they are working to overcome.
- Once the counselor understands more about a client’s situation, they can guide them toward good decisions.

Scripture References: 2 Timothy 2:15, James 1:19

Recommended Time: 2 hours and 30 minutes

Supplies Needed: You may choose to use poster paper to write the description of skills, but it is not necessary.

Facilitator Help: During this session participants will be role-playing simple conversations. Emphasize that during the role-plays as the “client” they should not use an overly complicated or traumatic scenario. It is best as they build skills to learn how they apply to everyday conversation.

Watch your time closely and when pairing participants have women and men role-play with same gender.

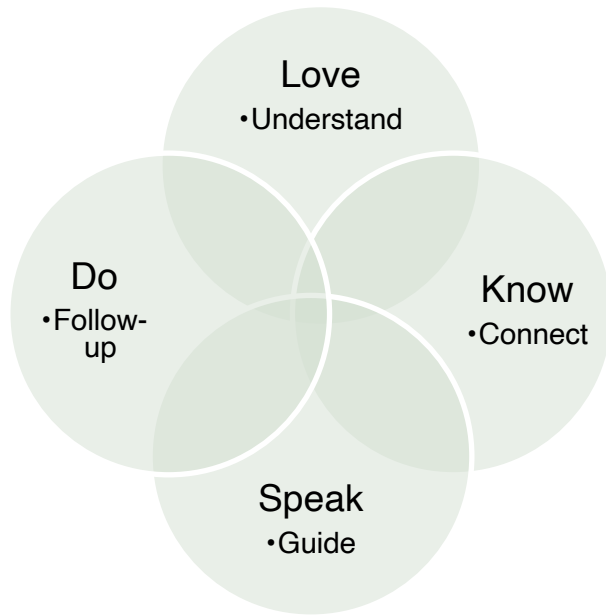
Introduction

Having a reputation as a godly and trustworthy person is a first step as a counselor. Biblical counselors recognize three discrete goals of a redemptive conversation—connect, understand, and guide—that will help you listen better to the other person (and to the Holy Spirit) and speak with more wisdom.

Connecting: *Effective communication and listening skills are essential for connecting with individuals in need. Building rapport with them enables you to speak truth appropriately, respectfully, and compassionately.*

Understanding: Communication and listening skills remain vital to the counseling process. Through the skills you are developing, you will gain a perspective of the individual’s unique needs, strengths, and resources.

Guide: Once rapport is established, the counselor can guide the person in crisis toward positive choices.



COUNSELING PROCESS

As we begin to connect and gather information, we may start a conversation using simple Active Listening Skills. Using restatement and rephrasing, the client will have the opportunity to hear her thoughts and feel validated, and it gives her permission to continue speaking in a safe environment where trust is developing. A client can also correct any misunderstandings and incorrect information.

Develop communication skills through intentional practice and awareness. We have examined the communication model, identifying the sender, receiver, message, channel, and potential for “static.” As the counselor or advisor, it is your responsibility to help the client move forward and identify the key issues that are impacting their decision in this situation.

We will learn and add communication skills that, when used appropriately, will build rapport with the client and guide them to life-affirming choices.

Helpful reminders for communication skills.

The counselor is not responsible for “fixing” the other person. Allow the Holy Spirit to lead you.

Your posture is a vital part of non-verbal communication. Sit facing the client with your shoulders squared off, and avoid crossing your arms and legs.

Maintain an appropriate amount of eye contact. Your client may or may not make eye contact with you; maintain self-awareness to avoid making the client self-conscious or feelings of awkwardness.

Your tone should reflect kindness and compassion. Maintain a neutral tone when restating comments on complex topics to avoid questioning or dismissal. Example: “I must have an abortion.” “ You must have an abortion.” A neutral tone permits her to continue.

Facilitator Help: During the communication exercises, remind participants they are NOT counseling. They are learning and practicing skills during the session, which will increase their effectiveness during counseling practice. Encourage the “client” to tell a positive story or memory during this phase of the training.

RESTATE

You will be restating what was said; change only the pronouns.

Restating what a client has said helps communicate that you are following their thoughts, allows them time to consider their words, demonstrates attentiveness, and can help when the conversation has stalled.

Do not rush the client; it is acceptable and often beneficial to allow a few moments of silence. However, do not allow the silence to become too uncomfortable. In this situation, restating the client’s last statement or identifying a key point can help move the conversation forward.

Facilitator Help: Role play the examples provided, or create new ones with a co-facilitator, you one will play the role of the client and the other the role of the volunteer counselor. After they restate, ask the participants how they think they did and if they have other suggestions for restating. You will repeat this process with each skill.

Example:

Client: I think I would like lunch at noon.

Volunteer: You think you would like lunch at noon.

Client: My mom is angry because I got home late last night.

Volunteer: Your mom is angry because you got home late last night.

Facilitator Help: Begin asking participants to role play simple examples with you. You may choose to use the examples provided or create new ones. Have the participant be the client and you play the volunteer counselor. After one example switch roles. You will repeat this process with each skill.

Client: My dad and I are going shopping after school tomorrow.

Volunteer:

Client: I am afraid that I will not graduate.

Volunteer:

Client: I am having a tough time deciding. I don't know what to do.

Volunteer:

Client: My family has always been supportive of me.

Volunteer:

Facilitator Help: Divide the participants into groups of 2-3; two will role-play, and the third will serve as an observer to provide feedback. Ask them to turn to the person next to you and take turns giving one or two-sentence statements. One of you will be the client, and the other will be the volunteer. You will repeat this process with each skill.

You are practicing RESTATING only. Keep sentences simple; do not focus on a crisis. The purpose is to become comfortable with restating. After three or four examples, switch roles.

REPHRASE

Rephrasing is one step beyond simply restating a client's words. Provide one to two sentences summarizing your understanding of the information the client shared. While you rephrase, the client can process, hear how you perceive the information, correct you if you have misunderstood, and reflect on the situation. Avoid including too much information in your rephrasing by using the client's words.

Example:

Client: My family and I just returned from vacation; we were only gone for a week. We went to visit my grandparents, who are getting older and in poor health. I am worried that something will happen to them before I see them again. My aunt and her family were there, too, and we had fun each day.

Volunteer: You went on vacation to visit your grandparents and other family members.

OR Volunteer: You were able to see your grandparents, who are in poor health.

Client: I am so nervous about my wedding. My parents are excited and have pushed me to marry him. I'm not sure that I want that. They told me it doesn't matter what I want, and they know what's best for our family. I don't know what to do.

Volunteer: You are nervous and do not know what to do as your parents are pushing you to marry.

Client: I would love to go to university after graduation. I have always enjoyed working with small children, which is why I want to be a teacher or run a daycare someday. My aunt lets me stay at her house sometimes, and I help with her three children. Playing games with them is always fun; I have even helped them when they have been sick.

Volunteer:

Client: My dad said that if I get a job, I need to help pay the rent on our house. I live with my dad and my younger brothers and sisters. He seems angry all the time and constantly tells us we need more money. I think he is worried that we will not be able to live there for very long.

Volunteer:

Client: I have been working at the same restaurant for 2 years, and then, without notice, it closed. I could barely pay the rent for my housing when I was working, and now I have no income. I have been trying to find a new job for two weeks, but so far, no one has hired me. My boyfriend said I could move in with him for a few days if I buy the food and clean the house.

Volunteer:

Client: Our family is very excited about the new church we are attending. There are many ways for us to serve the community. The children are making friends and enjoying the service. Pastor Jones and his family are very friendly and welcoming; we are going to have them for dinner after church this week.

Volunteer:

Exercise: Turn to the person next to you and take turns sharing a few statements. Tell a simple story from your life; the story does not need to focus on a difficult decision. The purpose of the exercise is to practice rephrasing, which will help you feel more natural when doing so. One of you will be the client, and the other will be the volunteer. You are practicing REPHRASING only. After three or four examples, switch roles.

REFLECTIVE INTERPRETIVE LISTENING AND RESPONDING

Reflective or Interpretive Listening is the next step, which is crucial for helping both of you understand how her emotions are pushing her towards a decision. Feelings are important and powerful. Learning to control the expression of emotions rather than have feelings control our actions can be challenging.

Many clients come from dysfunctional homes where emotions were used in unhealthy or abusive ways. It is not easy for them to express emotions in a healthy and productive way. Reflective and Interpretive Listening allows you to enter into the process of untangling the Ball of Grief. You will assist in making sense of her experience for both of you, deepening your connection.

As she makes a statement, be aware of any unspoken feelings. There are many possibilities! For instance, if she says, "I love watching movies. It gives me a chance to live in a make-believe world." What feelings might she be expressing? Perhaps she is feeling longing, maybe a need to escape. Or she might feel creative as she shares in the storytelling. She could be overwhelmed with her life and wants to think about something else.

What feeling words come to mind when you hear these statements?

I don't know what my family will do when they learn about him. They have threatened to throw me out of the house. If only they would take the time to get to know him.

(Scared, worried, frustrated, unvalued)

I wonder what God thinks of me. I've heard some people say that He loves me, and others say that he doesn't, especially after what happened.

(Guilty, ashamed, unimportant, confused)

I can never forgive my mother. She won't listen to what I want and acts as if none of it matters. I'm just supposed to do what I am told and not speak.

(Angry, indignant, outraged)

Now that we have practiced identifying feelings, let's look at how to share your perceptions with her.

Some easy lead-in phrases:

It sounds like you feel (Scared, worried, frustrated, unvalued).

I wonder if you are feeling (Guilty, ashamed, unimportant, confused).

Perhaps this makes you feel (Angry, indignant, outraged).

Case Study:

Lena is 18. Her parents forced her to leave her home, leaving her with nowhere to live except on the street. She has no job and struggles to find food. She grew up in a Pentecostal church but does not follow Jesus.

Group Discussion: What would you guess Lena is feeling? How can you confirm your guess? How does this make you feel?

Example:

Client: I tried several times to unlock the door. No matter how many times I tried, the key would not turn. I even tried other keys, but nothing worked. I just gave up and went home.

Volunteer: It sounds like you were frustrated.

(Often, the client will continue.)

Client: Yes, it was so frustrating. I was late for my appointment, so I will have to wait another three weeks for another appointment.

Volunteer: It seems like you were feeling a lot of pressure, and the real problem was not the door.

The client had her emotions affirmed and felt it was safe to continue with more of the story, revealing that the problem was not simply about a door and a key. In this scenario, people often want to jump to details about the door or the key, which are not the real issue.

Facilitator Help: Have the group practice interpretive listening using the statements below, as previously done. (If appropriate, allow participants to imagine how the client may make a follow-up statement from the volunteer response.)

Client: I was so angry. I had spent many hours and a lot of money making the house look nice, but all he could do was complain about the wall color. I was trying to make him happy; he did not help with anything.

Volunteer:

Client: My mom is going to kill me. It was late when I got home, and I had promised to be home before dark. To make things worse, I lost my school bag. The bag had all my books and the money I needed for the week. My dad is not around, so I cannot ask him to help replace the books or money. I do not know how to tell her.

Volunteer:

Client: I have been so sick, my stomach hurts, and I have a bad headache. I wish I knew what is wrong. I am worried that I could be pregnant. It would not be good news.

Volunteer:

Client: My girlfriend is so dramatic about everything. I do not understand why it is such a big deal for us to date other people. It is not like we are married. She needs to realize that I need to worry about what is best for me.

Volunteer:

Facilitator Help: Divide the participants into groups of 2-3; two will role-play, and the third will serve as an observer to provide feedback. Ask them to turn to the person next to them and take turns giving one or two-sentence statements. One will be the client, another will be the volunteer, and the third will be the observer for feedback. Remind participants that they are practicing interpretive listening. Keep sentences simple; they do not need to focus on a crisis. The purpose is to become comfortable with using lead-in phrases and listening for understanding. After three or four examples, they should switch roles.

ASKING GOOD QUESTIONS

Questions can help the volunteer redirect the client to focus on the principal issues. They are essential for keeping the conversation on track, clarifying where “the story” may be confusing, redirecting, or concentrating on the issues that are leading to a bad decision. Clients will wander in their thoughts, making it difficult to keep track of some details. Focus on what is vital to bring her to positive life decisions. Asking good questions can be challenging. Stay focused on the key issues before going into minor details.

Good questions ask Who, What, When, Where, and How.

- Who do you know that can help you?
- What would be a positive outcome of that choice? Or, what did you already try?
- When will you be able to follow up?

- Where did this happen?
- How did that make you feel?

Avoid “Why” questions, as they can often put people on the defensive and seem judgmental. For example, “Why would you do that?” is not a productive question. The client may feel the need to defend themselves or may not connect with you as a counselor.

Asking questions that require a “yes” or “no” often fails to move the conversation forward. There are times when it is necessary to ask a “yes” or “no” question; use discernment in these situations. Example: Did you make it to work on time? Or, can you tell me what you did next? Vs. What did you do next?

Rapid-fire questions asked in rapid succession can make the client feel uncomfortable. It is necessary to ask follow-up questions; use caution so you do not make the client feel pressured or judged. Rapid-fire questions can also feel intrusive, making it seem to the other person that you are only interested in the details for gossip.

Good questions build trust, elicit necessary details for clarification, and help the client stay focused on the issue that has brought her to you. A skilled counselor will identify which questions will guide the client toward positive decision-making and, when appropriate, challenge her toward positive change.

Examples:

Client: I applied for a new job today. My friend Jill works there, and she says it is a great place to work.

Volunteer: What kind of work would you be doing?

(What are some other good questions?)

Client: I just know that my mom is going to make me quit University. She said that if I failed any classes, she would not help me pay tuition.

Volunteer: What other ways do you have to pay for tuition? Or what other options do you have if you do not stay in school? (Remember that your tone can affect what you are trying to communicate.)

Client: How am I supposed to take care of two babies? My daughter’s father left us when she was six months old. I do not know what my current boyfriend will say or if he will even stay with me when he finds out I am pregnant.

Volunteer: Who in your life now would be supportive?

Facilitator Help: Have the group practice asking good questions using the statements below, as previously done. (If appropriate, allow participants to imagine how the client may make a follow-up statement from the volunteer response.)

Client: We had a lot of fun on Friday night. A whole group of us went to dinner and saw a movie. It felt good to laugh again.

Volunteer:

Client: In my faith, we believe that children must always be submissive to their parents. It is not proper to speak unless spoken to first. As a daughter, I must never question my father.

Volunteer:

Client: I do not think that God could ever forgive me for having an abortion.

Volunteer:

Client: My brother and his wife are having a baby girl next month. I am so happy for them, but I do not think anyone will be happy about my pregnancy.

Volunteer:

Facilitator Help: Divide the participants into groups of 2-3; two will role-play, and the third will serve as an observer to provide feedback. Ask them to turn to the person next to them and take turns giving one or two-sentence statements. One will be the client, another will be the volunteer, and the third will be the observer for feedback. Remind participants that they are practicing asking good questions. Keep sentences simple; they do not need to focus on a crisis. The purpose is to become comfortable with asking good questions. After three or four examples, they should switch roles.

CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK

The counselor's motivation must be to speak out of love and concern for the client.

FEEDBACK: Do not confuse feedback with an opportunity to "tell" the client what to do. Feedback is an opportunity to support or challenge a client's perspective on their situation. It also serves as a tool for the volunteer/counselor to express their feelings, whether positive or negative.

Helpful feedback is specific. Think of a time when someone shared feedback with you that was general in nature; for example, statements such as: you always, or you never. How did those comments make you feel?

Keep your feedback specific and free of personal attack directed toward the other person. Many people find using this simple format is helpful: I feel (emotion) when (be specific) because (specific).

Example: I felt frustrated when I came home to a messy kitchen, because I had to clean it before I could go out with friends.

I am so excited about the good grades on your report card. I know how hard you studied.

(Notice that this example did not use I feel, when, because; however, they are still found in the sentence.)

Consider the following situations. How would you make a helpful feedback statement?

A client has decided to marry her live-in boyfriend after three years.

A new mom contacts you because she needs formula and diapers for the baby. She explains that she does not have the money for either. When she comes to the office, you notice she has a new tattoo on her arm.

You have taken your car to the mechanic twice for the same problem, but it is still not running right.

A young man you have known since he was a child is considering quitting school. He thinks he can get a job as a cook at a local restaurant. He has three younger siblings. His parents are unaware that he is considering this decision.

Facilitator: Divide the participants into groups of 2-3; two will role-play, and the third will serve as an observer for feedback. Each person should reflect on a situation in their life; it does not need to be a crisis; it can be positive or negative. They should consider how to create a constructive feedback statement. Stress that they are practicing constructive feedback. Keep sentences simple. The purpose is to become comfortable providing constructive feedback that leads to more conversation. Instruct them to create at least one constructive feedback statement each.

Good Questions help her to think past her situation.

“How would you feel about your baby if your situation were different?”

Help her envision a future for herself and her baby rather than dwelling on what scares her.

As she begins to see another possible perspective, it may be time to confront her with new information. Share the information found in brochures or flip-charts about fetal development and abortion. Continue to ask good questions and explore her feelings while presenting her with information.

Finally, we want to guide her into good decision-making.

Often, when even a simple decision is in front of us, we go through a series of questions. For instance, I have to decide what to prepare for dinner. Some of the questions might be

- What time will we eat?
- What did I buy for this meal?
- What is in the refrigerator?
- What is in the cupboard?
- How many people will be sharing the meal?

If I have a guest, we might talk this through, each guiding the other toward a good decision that makes everyone happy.

Conclusion

James 1:19 says, “Let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak.” This principle should guide us as we join the Holy Spirit in offering hope and healing to people in difficult circumstances. Always remember that every person is a unique individual with distinctive gifts, traits, strengths, weaknesses, fears, hopes, and concerns.

Do not presume to know a person before you actually come to know them. You will develop the ability to recognize recurring responses in different people over time. Your ability to balance an awareness of these differences and similarities will equip you to respond with care and compassion to bring hope.

Never forget the three people that are present during any redemptive conversation: your client, you, and the Holy Spirit. He will guide your words and your actions, but you are responsible for being prepared. As you familiarize yourself with the content from *The Journey of a Life-Giver*, you can move forward in confidence that God will send to you only the appointments that you can manage. Be in prayer about the people that God will bring to you, and wait expectantly for a divine appointment for a redemptive conversation.

Session 9

Human Reproduction and Human Development

*“For You formed my inward parts; You knitted me together in my mother’s womb.”
Psalm 139:13*

Facilitator Help: “The Learner Will,” “Key Points,” and “Scripture References” are provided for you to prepare for teaching. You should not read through these points to the participants.

Remember to plan your time well. Allow the group time to share in pairs or threes the ways they have experienced God speaking, or a time when they benefited from a “redemptive conversation.” How much time you allow will depend on the schedule and the number of participants.

The Learner Will

1. Develop a Biblical perspective on human reproduction and fetal development
2. See the sacredness of human life from fertilization.
3. Be introduced to family planning methods and the moral implications.
4. Practice counseling strategies for engagement with women and men considering abortion.

Key Points

- Engage participants in discussions to broaden or introduce knowledge of the sacredness of human life.
- Prepare participants to engage in redemptive conversations about human reproduction, family planning, and human development.

Scripture References: Psalm 139:13-16; Deuteronomy 28:4, 11; Psalm 127:3-5; Isaiah 40:11; Genesis 1:27-28; Matthew 1:20; Isaiah 49:1; Psalm 127:3-5; Mark 10:13-14, 16; Psalm 82:3-4

Supplies Needed: If available: fetal models, Human Reproduction/Human Development Power Point slides, LIFE International Life in the Womb Brochures (Or other fetal development literature).

Recommended Time: 90 minutes

TRAINING HELPS

Discussion questions:

- How does a couple in your culture typically react when they find out they are pregnant, after planning to have a child?
- Is the mother's reaction different from the father's?
- What kinds of celebrations, traditions, or rituals are associated with pregnancy?
- Are these traditions the same for a girl as they are for a boy?
- How are baby boys treated differently from baby girls?
- If the reaction for a desired pregnancy is excitement ("We're having a baby!"), how do people react if the baby is unexpected or unintended?

Part One: The Theology of Human Life and The World's View of Pregnancy

In the world's view, pregnancy is a positive or a negative thing, depending on whether a child is wanted. If a child is *unwanted*, then a pregnancy is seen as a problem or a crisis, and the child's life may end by abortion. But if the child is *wanted*, then the pregnancy is seen as a cause for rejoicing. In both cases, the child is a human being; only our perspective on the child differs.

A secular worldview sees abortion as a quick and easy solution to the problem of unwanted pregnancy.

Secular worldview believes a woman could choose to abort her *unwanted* preborn child at 25 weeks into her pregnancy, while in the same facility, a skilled team of doctors work frantically to save the life of a premature *wanted* child born at the same stage of life, 25 weeks. In one case, a child's life ends intentionally, and in the other case, no expense or resource is spared to save a child's life.

In some countries, a person can even be charged with *two* counts of homicide for killing a pregnant woman and her preborn child, even though that same woman could have been on her way to have a *legal* abortion.

TRAINING HELPS

Discussion questions:

- How do you think God feels about a pregnancy?
 - How do you think God feels about a baby girl versus a baby boy?
 - At what point in the pregnancy does God begin to value human life?
- (Review from the *Sacredness of Human Life* chapter)

The Biblical View of Pregnancy

The biblical view of pregnancy stands in sharp contrast to the world's view. God is in control of the timing and continuation of pregnancy, whether or not it is planned or "wanted" by the parents.

The Biblical view of pregnancy says that all children are valuable, planned or unplanned by their parents. For parents to "choose" the death of a child through abortion is simply not morally permissible, because they are placing themselves in the role of God.

Unlike the world's view of an unwanted child as a burden upon the parents, the Bible clearly calls children a blessing from the Lord (Deuteronomy 28:4, 11; Psalm 127:3-5; Isaiah 40:11). Of course, parents face very real and significant challenges in both planned and unplanned or unwanted preborn children. As members of the body of Christ, we must help address these challenges with compassion and empathy. Regardless of the circumstances of pregnancy, no one should devalue the innocent preborn child; their life has value and is sacred.

TRAINING HELPS

Instead of just reading the included material for each of the following points, it can be helpful to have participants read the included passages and discuss their impressions of what each verse is saying about the Bible's teaching on pregnancy and children.

What the Bible Teaches about Pregnancy and Children

God uses pregnancy to create human life in His image.

Pregnancy is a gift to humankind and the only way for us to fulfill God's plans for humans to fill the Earth and care for it on His behalf. From the moment a person is created at fertilization (also known as conception), they are created in the image of God. Though sin has distorted humankind, we still bear God's image.

"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them, And God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.'"

Genesis 1:27-28

The preborn child is fully human.

In Matthew 1:20 (NASB), an angel refers to the preborn Jesus as a child: "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit." The prophet Isaiah stated about himself: "The Lord called Me from the womb; From the body of my mother He named Me" (Isaiah 49:1 NASB). Furthermore, God has a plan for each preborn child's life, including knowing the length of their life and their specific purpose.

"Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them." Psalm 139:16

God is sovereign over conception and oversees fetal development.

God creates every human life. He supervises every preborn child's development, and He knows each preborn child intimately.

"For You formed my inward parts; You knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed substance."

Psalm 139:13-16a

Children are a blessing.

While children may require a lot of time and energy and bring challenges to a family, they are a blessing from the Lord. In fact, in Bible days, Hebrew women who were childless were thought to have done something wrong or were considered to be cursed.

"Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one's youth. Blessed is the man who fills his quiver with them! He shall not be put to shame when he speaks with his enemies in the gate."

Psalm 127:3-5

God values all children, in and out of the womb.

God loves and values people at all stages of life, including the preborn and infants. Jesus Himself was a preborn child in Mary's womb, He experienced natural birth, and grew from infancy to adulthood.

During His ministry on Earth, Jesus intentionally interacted with children, even when His disciples thought it was best to send them away. He used one child's lunch to feed a crowd of thousands. He went out of His way to heal children, free them from demons, and even raise them from the dead. Jesus did not treat children as a distraction but used them as an example of faith and welcomed their God-given affection and enthusiasm.

Christ died for the sins of all the people, including children and adults of every nation. God's one and only Son, Jesus, paid the price with His blood on the cross, a ransom for the redemption of sinners. John 3:16 reveals the love and value the Heavenly Father has for people, that He gave His only begotten Son, whoever believes in Him will not perish but have everlasting life. There is power in the gospel of Jesus Christ, and as His followers, we must speak up and become active in the war against the preborn.

“And they were bringing children to him that he might touch them, and the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw it, He was indignant and said to them, “Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. And He took them in His arms and blessed them, laying His hands on them.””

Mark 10:13-14, 16

We are to protect and value children, both in and out of the womb.

We protect and value all people, including born and preborn children, because they are image-bearers of God. As imitators of God, who is a defender of the defenseless, we must do the same.

All children are weak and defenseless, but the preborn are the most vulnerable and defenseless. An attack against these tiny humans should sound an alarm for us to run to their defense.

“Give justice to the weak and the fatherless; maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute. Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.”

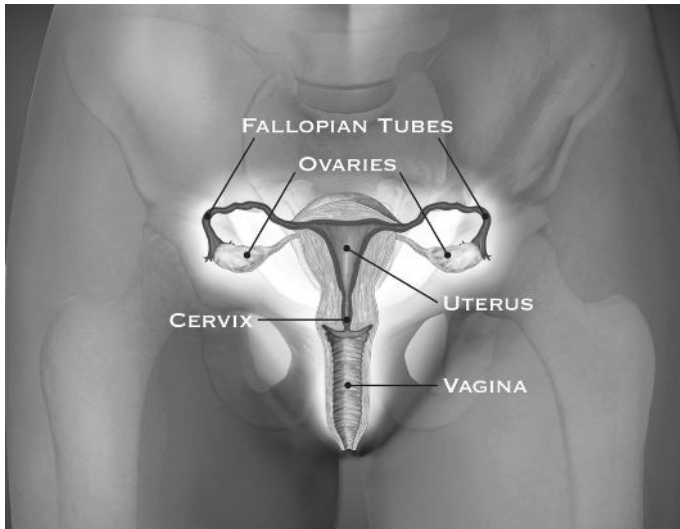
Psalms 82:3-4

Part Two: The Miraculous Process of Human Procreation

The act of sexual intercourse results in the physical, emotional, and spiritual union of a husband and wife. That union has the capacity to become flesh through the creation of a new child—a tangible symbol of the bond between husband and wife. For a man and woman to partner with God in the creation of a new life through sexual intercourse is a monumental gift. At the moment of conception, a unique human being—body, soul, and spirit—comes into existence. Never before has one existed like this person, and never again will another exist exactly like this person. Human beings are the pinnacle of God's earthly creations because we are made in His image.

It is critical to understand the process of procreation that God designed, including the names and functions of our body parts that have a role in procreation. We'll begin with the sexual anatomy of a woman.

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| <p>Facilitator Help: Use the LIFE International PowerPoint for Human Reproduction, The Life in the Womb brochures, or both.</p> |
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Female Reproductive Anatomy

The Vagina

The vagina is the elastic muscular canal in a human female that extends from the vulva (the external genital organs) to the cervix, the lower, narrow portion of the uterus.

The Uterus

A woman's uterus, also referred to as the womb, is hollow and shaped like an upside-down pear. An average adult uterus is about 7.6 cm (3 in.) long, 5.1 cm (2 in.) wide, and 2.5 cm (1 in.) thick. It is located in the lower pelvic region between a woman's hips. At the bottom, the cervix opens into the vagina, which leads

into the exterior of the female body. At the top, the uterus is connected to the fallopian tubes, which lead to the ovaries. The uterus is the home of a preborn child. Uterine walls are composed of muscles and are capable of expanding with the growth of the child. These muscles also contract and push the baby downward during labor and delivery.

The Ovaries

Ovaries are positioned in the pelvis on each side of the uterus. Each ovary is about the size and shape of an almond, about 4 cm (1½ inches) long. Ovaries have two functions: producing eggs and producing hormones (natural chemicals). These hormones control female body characteristics (breasts, body hair, body shape, etc.) and help to regulate the menstrual cycle and pregnancy.

The Egg (or Ovum)

The ovaries produce eggs (ova) in a female before birth. At birth, a female has all of the eggs she will ever possess; her body will not produce more of them. Each egg is a single cell, and each egg possesses 23 chromosomes—one-half of the woman's DNA, or genetic code. These chromosomes contain all of the mother's genetic information, which combines with the father's genetic information when a sperm fertilizes the egg at conception.

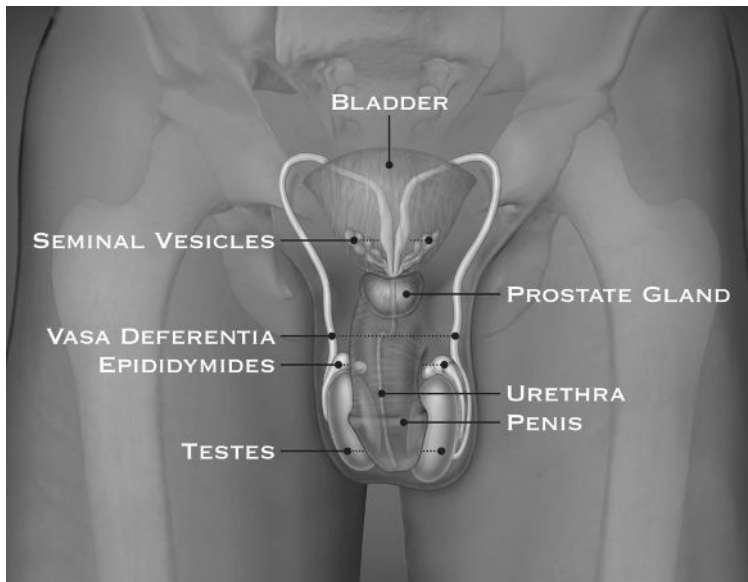
The Fallopian Tubes

Two fallopian tubes are attached at the top of the uterus and have finger-like projections that reach out toward the ovaries from both sides. They serve as passageways through which eggs travel from the ovary to the uterus.

The Menstrual Cycle

Each month, the pituitary gland—an organ in a woman's brain—sends out a series of hormones to start, balance, and coordinate her entire reproductive system. These hormones stimulate the ovaries to release one of the 40,000+ eggs that have been present since birth—far more than will be needed during her childbearing years. Hormones also thicken and prepare the lining of the uterus (endometrium) for a potential pregnancy.

Pregnancy triggers additional hormones, which tell the uterus to maintain its ready state and prepare it to nourish a new life. If pregnancy does not occur, the uterus will shed its blood-filled lining and pass it out of the body during menstruation. This discharge of blood through the vagina continues for an average of three to seven days. This cycle typically repeats once a month. It varies from woman to woman, with an average cycle spanning 26 to 32 days, depending on her body and other influences.



Male Reproductive Anatomy

The Penis

The penis is the external male sexual organ. In addition to functioning as the primary reproductive organ in a sexually mature male, the penis also acts as a conduit for urine to leave the body.

The Testes

The testicle (plural *testes*) is the male sex organ in humans. Testes produce *sperm*, the male reproductive cell that joins with the female ovum to form a zygote, the earliest form of human life. In a healthy male who has reached sexual maturity, the two testes produce and store millions of microscopic sperm cells. The testes are oval-shaped and grow to about 2

inches (5.1 cm) long and 1 inch (2.5 cm) in diameter. His scrotum, an external pouch of skin lying below the penis, contains the testes, and responds to extreme temperatures to protect developing sperm.

The Epididymis

The epididymis is a single, narrow, tightly coiled tube that connects each testicle to its vas deferens. After being produced in the testes, sperm then mature in the epididymis until release during ejaculation.

The Vas Deferens

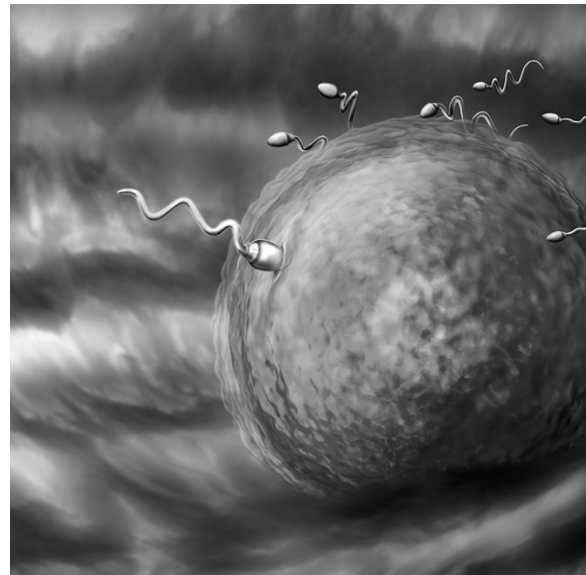
The vas deferens is a tube that connects each epididymis to the urethra and transfers sperm from the testes during ejaculation.

How Human Life Begins

About two weeks after a woman's menstruation begins, an ovary releases an egg; this process is called ovulation. The egg travels into the fallopian tube, where it waits to be fertilized by a sperm.

In anticipation of sexual intercourse, the man's penis swells with blood and becomes firm and erect. Intercourse begins when the man inserts his penis into the vagina. At the point of sexual climax, called orgasm, muscles in the penis contract and powerfully eject sperm into the woman's vagina in a process called ejaculation. Millions of sperm are released from the man's penis into the woman's vagina and swim through the cervix and uterus into the fallopian tubes, aided by cervical fluid (mucus).

Out of the initial millions of sperm cells released, only hundreds will reach the egg. These sperm cells surround the egg and try to penetrate its outer layer to fertilize it, but only one will succeed. Once a sperm penetrates the egg's



outer layer, the egg undergoes a chemical change that prevents further penetration by additional sperm. This process is called fertilization, or conception. The woman is now pregnant.

When a sperm penetrates an egg, the genetic material (deoxyribonucleic acid, or DNA) from each parent combines to form a unique human being, called a zygote. At this moment, a distinct living organism (a preborn child), wholly unique and separate from its parents, is created. (Even the child's blood type is often different from its mother's.) Twenty-three chromosomes from each parent have united and created a 46-chromosome human being. Every detail of the child's development—sex, eye color, hair color, fingerprints, and more—is determined at this point.

This single cell divides into two cells after 24-30 hours and then divides again 15 hours later into four cells. Cell division and growth continue at a fast rate. As the zygote grows, it travels through the fallopian tube and makes its way to the uterus over a period of two to five days. On day five or six, it may attach to the uterine lining and continue to develop into an embryo. The lining of the uterus will nourish the new life until the later development of the placenta, which will support the life of the fetus until birth.

Ectopic Pregnancy

An ectopic pregnancy—also known as a tubal pregnancy—is a condition in which a developing embryo implants in the fallopian tubes rather than in the uterus. Ectopic pregnancies occur in 2% of all pregnancies.

An ectopic pregnancy is an extremely dangerous situation. As the embryo grows, it will eventually cause the rupture of the fallopian tube which was not designed to expand as the uterus does. A ruptured fallopian tube results in serious pain and severe bleeding that endangers the mother's life. Without emergency medical intervention, the mother is at serious risk of dying due to loss of blood.

A ruptured fallopian tube always results in the death of the embryo and may result in the death of the mother. Even if an ectopic pregnancy is identified early and there is medical intervention prior to rupture, the embryo cannot be saved. Although treatment for an ectopic pregnancy does result in the loss of a human life (the embryo), it is only the timing of that loss that is changed.

No treatment exists to preserve the life of the embryo that has implanted in the fallopian tube.

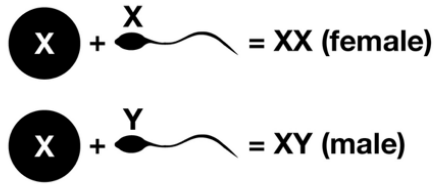
There are two types of treatment for an ectopic pregnancy, *neither are an abortion* because the purpose of both treatments is to save the life of the mother. Prior to rupture, a woman is treated with a medication that arrests the development of the embryo, causing its demise and therefore prevents later rupture.

If the fallopian tube has already ruptured, emergency surgery is required to remove the fallopian tube (with the embryo) and stop the bleeding.

It is important to understand that medical intervention to save the life of the mother with an ectopic pregnancy is NOT an abortion. The purpose of an abortion is to end the life of a viable preborn child developing in the womb. The purpose of treatment for an ectopic pregnancy is to save the life of the mother and hopefully preserve her ability to have future children.

How the Baby's Sex Is Determined During Fertilization

Within a human being's 46 chromosomes, two are sex chromosomes, each designated as X or Y. For a female, these two chromosomes are X + X. For a male, these two chromosomes are X + Y. Before conception, each reproductive cell (the ovum in a female and the sperm in a male) carries a *single* sex chromosome, which then combines with the other to create the XX or XY pairing.



Every ovum carries a single *female* X chromosome; every egg is therefore “female.” Each sperm cell carries *either* a single female X chromosome *or* a single male Y chromosome. Therefore, each sperm is either “female” or “male.” ***The sex of the new human being formed at fertilization is determined solely by the sperm.*** If the sperm that fertilizes the ovum carries an X chromosome, the resulting person will be *female* (X + X). If the sperm that fertilizes the ovum carries a Y chromosome, the resulting person will be *male* (X + Y).

As many people do not understand these biological facts, women are often held responsible for the sex of the baby that is conceived, because they are the ones who bear the children. Men who are displeased that a girl-child was conceived instead of a boy-child, for example, should not hold the woman responsible. And even though it is the sperm that determines the sex of the child, it would be a mistake to believe that men have control over the determination of the baby’s sex. They do not. Remember: *millions* of sperm cells are released in a single ejaculation, and every sperm cell carries *either* a single female chromosome or a single male chromosome—***not both.***

We must all remember that God is involved in the creation of each human life, whether male or female. Every person is made in the image of God: male and female. God is the divine Creator of every human being, male and female, and He values and loves every person equally.

Part Three: Family Planning and Contraceptives

TRAINING HELPS

It is important to begin this session with prayer. This is a topic which is still controversial in many cultures, and controversy can lead to disunity and can hinder the work God wants to accomplish in lives during this workshop. Pray for peace, for clarity of thought and sensitivity to God’s Spirit during this discussion. Always remember and remind participants if you lack wisdom on any topic – including family planning – God is very willing to give you His wisdom and guidance.

For Christian married couples, the decision to limit the number of children or space out their births must be seen not only as a practical matter but also as a moral and spiritual decision, as they prayerfully seek to do God’s will in their lives.

A human being in the image of God is formed at fertilization/conception at the moment when a sperm unites with an egg. God joins the genetic material from the mother and the father to create a unique, new human being at the moment of conception. By the time of implantation (when the embryo implants into the wall of the uterus), the human has been alive for over a week.

Therefore, if a family-planning method prevents implantation of this unique human being, an early abortion has been caused; it is called an abortifacient, or abortion-causing, effect. Several of the contraception methods listed below have the potential to cause early abortion.

Facilitator Help: The following information is for training and educational purposes only. Each life-giving ministry should consider the policy and procedures it will follow regarding referrals for contraceptive use for married couples.

Ask participants what forms of birth control or family planning methods they have heard of. Which are being used in their nation?

Five Primary Forms of Contraception (Birth Control or Family Planning)

Non-Abortive

Barrier Contraceptives—Before sex, the male or female erects a physical barrier to block sperm from reaching the egg. Condoms and diaphragms are two examples of barrier contraceptives.

Natural Family Planning and Fertility Awareness—The husband and wife work together to keep sperm from entering her body during the fertile days of her cycle, generally by avoiding sexual intercourse on those days. The Symptothermal Method and the Standard Days Method (CycleBeads) are two examples of natural family planning methods.

The Standard Day Method (SDM) is a simple, modern, fertility-awareness-based method of family planning developed and tested by the Institute for Reproductive Health in 2001. Based on reproductive physiology, SDM identifies a fixed set of days in each menstrual cycle when a woman can get pregnant if she has unprotected intercourse.

If the woman does not want to get pregnant, she and her husband avoid unprotected intercourse on days 8 through 19 of her cycle. A woman can use CycleBeads®, a color-coded string of beads, to help track her menstrual cycle and identify the days when she is most likely to get pregnant.

SDM/CycleBeads are easy to use and have no side effects, so the method appeals to those who are concerned about side effects or concerned about the possible abortifacient mechanism of other methods of contraception.

Technology offers menstrual tracking apps for phones and computers that many have found helpful.

Potentially Abortive

Intra-Uterine Device (IUD) or Spiral—A small, often T-shaped device, containing either copper or hormones, is placed inside the uterus by a medical professional. The IUD releases chemicals that can either decrease sperm mobility, which may prevent conception, or they can thin the uterine lining, which may prevent implantation of the embryo.

Hormonal Contraceptives—At regular intervals, the female takes a chemical hormone to inhibit ovulation, which prevents pregnancy. It is possible, though believed to be rare, for “breakthrough ovulation” to occur while a woman is taking hormonal contraceptives.

Breakthrough ovulation means that even while the woman is taking hormonal contraceptives, an egg can be released and fertilized. If this happens, there are two possible outcomes. The embryo may fail to implant in the uterus because the artificial hormones have interfered with the normal biological process required for implantation.

Another potential outcome is that the embryo may implant into the uterus and the pregnancy may continue normally. Birth control pills (“the Pill”) and Depo-Provera, an injection, are two examples of hormonal contraception.

Emergency Contraceptives

Emergency contraceptives (EC), commonly called “morning after pills,” contain hormones (biologically active chemicals) that may prevent pregnancy after unprotected sexual intercourse. The effectiveness of EC is primarily related to when in a woman’s menstrual cycle the pills are taken: before or after ovulation.

When taken after intercourse and before ovulation, EC will usually prevent the release of an egg from the ovary. In this scenario, without the presence of an egg to be fertilized, there is no chance of pregnancy.

Many emergency contraceptives contain levonorgestrel (trade names such as Plan B or Next Choice are examples of these pills). These EC pills may be taken up to three days after intercourse. However, if a woman takes any of these EC pills after she has ovulated, she may become pregnant.

Ella is a brand of emergency contraceptive that contains ulipristal acetate and can be taken up to five days after intercourse. Ella acts in the same way as the ECs previously described; that is, it is most effective when taken before ovulation.

For both types of emergency contraceptives—those with levonorgestrel or ulipristal acetate, bleeding similar to a period occurs in some women about a week after having taken the EC pills. This bleeding is more common when taking Ella. If a woman becomes pregnant after taking EC following ovulation, this subsequent shedding of the endometrial lining may disrupt embryo implantation, potentially resulting in an early abortion.

In addition, Ella has been observed to alter the concentrations of other biological chemicals, such as glyodin, which are involved in the development and implantation of the embryo in the endometrium of the uterus. Therefore, if Ella is taken after ovulation, fertilization may occur, and some research suggests that Ella may disrupt implantation, potentially leading to an early abortion.

Other side effects of taking either type of EC include headache, nausea, abdominal pain, fatigue, and a delayed or painful period in the next cycle. Levonorgestrel-based EC is available in some places as an over-the-counter drug, while ulipristal acetate may require a prescription.

1. Plan B (Levonorgestrel)

- **Bleeding/spotting is common:** About 15–30% of women report unscheduled bleeding or spotting within the week after taking it.
Bleeding can look like:
Light spotting
A heavier bleed that resembles a short period
- The **next menstrual period may come earlier or later** than expected, and the flow can be lighter or heavier than usual.
- These changes are generally due to the **hormonal surge and disruption of the normal cycle timing.**

2. Ella (Ulipristal Acetate)

- Also associated with changes in bleeding patterns.
- Around 20–25% of women experience spotting or bleeding within a week.
- The next menstrual period may be delayed by a few days more often than with Plan B.
- Like levonorgestrel, this bleeding is not harmful and doesn't mean the pill "failed."

TRAINING HELPS

If you are asked directly whether or not a particular birth control method is *right/wrong, moral/immoral, or biblical/umbiblical*, ask participants if a fertilized egg or embryo is being destroyed. Let them discuss the ramifications of the answer.

Facilitator Help: STOP here. Have participants break into groups of 2-3 people to practice teaching Human Reproduction using communication skills. Rotate roles after 2 minutes.

A counselor must be able to present the basics of human reproduction to a woman and a man who are making a pregnancy decision. There are occasions where the client does not have an understanding of how they could have become pregnant. Understanding human reproduction shows the value of the human body; our bodies and reproductive systems are beautiful gifts from God.

After each person has had an opportunity to share, bring the group together to continue teaching on Human Fetal Development.

Part Four: Human Fetal Development

To say that a baby in the womb is a "part" of the mother is incorrect. It is a distinct, living human being who is developing within the mother. It is not "potential" life—it *is* life—and it possesses exciting potential.

Understanding the biological processes of human fetal development helps us appreciate the miraculous nature of life's creation and encourages worship of God, the Creator of all life.

In many cultures, pregnancy is generally dated by "gestational age," in which day one of pregnancy is the first day of the woman's last menstrual period (LMP). Ovulation and fertilization generally occur around day 14, or two weeks, of pregnancy. By the time the woman's period is late, and she suspects she may be pregnant, the newly

formed child is considered to be about “five weeks” old, even though fertilization actually took place only three weeks ago. Pregnancy is measured in three trimesters: first, weeks 1–13; second, weeks 14–26; and third, weeks 27–40.

Four Weeks (One Month):

Most organs and body structures have begun to form, including the brain and spinal cord, the heart, the stomach and intestines, bone tissues, eyes, and ears. Often, a woman does not yet suspect that she is pregnant, yet she is already a mother. Her child’s heart will begin to beat in just a few days.



Eight Weeks (Two Months)

The embryo’s heartbeat can now be heard on a sonogram, and blood cells are circulating throughout the body. All of the major organ systems are now forming. Basic facial features appear, and arms and legs continue to grow. Though unfelt by the mother, the embryo’s body and limbs begin to move.

- The embryo now possesses over 90 percent of the structures found in adults.
- The umbilical cord is now visible.
- There is a reflexive response to touch, and primitive brain activity can be measured.
- Ovaries and testicles begin to form.
- Lungs are present.
- Taste buds, tooth buds, and eyelids appear.
- The forehead is large, and the external genital organs differentiate into female or male.
- The outer ears have begun to take shape.



Twelve Weeks (Three Months)

The embryo is now known as a fetus, and she may soon start sucking her thumb. All essential internal organs are formed and functioning. One of the functions of the placenta, which is now completely developed, is to provide nutrient-rich, oxygenated blood to the child’s body. This nourishing blood circulates through the veins and arteries in the umbilical cord connecting the child to the placenta.

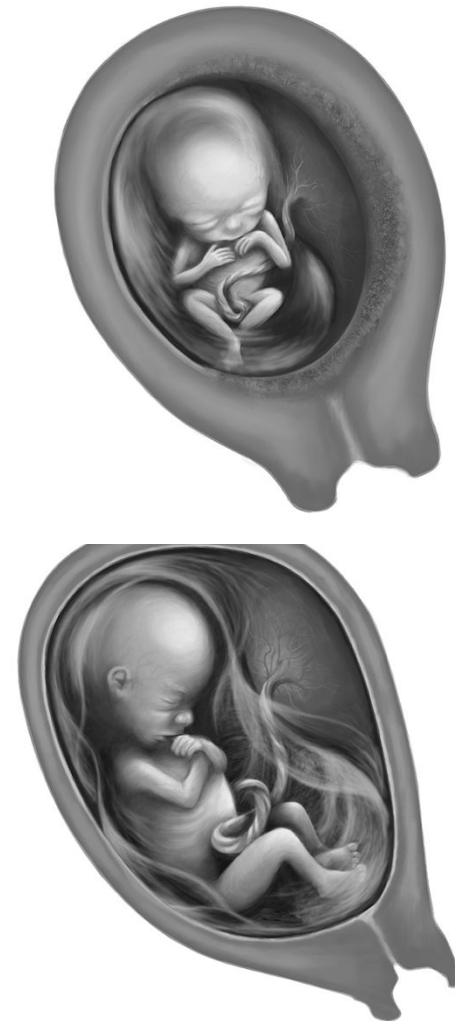
- The kidneys are producing urine.
- The head rounds out and comprises half the size of the fetus.
- Bone formation is now underway in most bones.
- Eyelids close to protect the eyes.
- The genitals are differentiated.
- The brain now controls muscle movement, as seen by yawning and sucking.

Facilitator Help: If available, stop here to distribute fetal models. Allow participants time to hold them in their hands, ask them what they are thinking, how do they feel?

Sixteen Weeks (Four Months)

The mother can now feel the child's movements as the child's physical activity grows increasingly vigorous. By late in the pregnancy, not only can the child's movements be felt externally, but they can be seen as the growing child twists and turns in an increasingly confined space. Instead of being curled inward, the child's head is now more erect than it has been. Her eyes have moved closer to the front of her face, and her ears are close to their final position. Millions of eggs are now growing in the fetal ovaries, and a uterus is present. When this little girl is born, her body will contain all of the eggs that she will ever produce, five months before she is even born!

- The child's mouth makes sucking motions, and she has begun to swallow amniotic fluid.
- Tooth development is now underway.
- The skin is still mostly transparent.
- Swallowing and chest movements are present.
- The liver and pancreas have begun to function.
- The child's head and body take their proper proportions.



- The heart is now beating 110–180 beats per minute and pumping 23.7 liters (25 quarts) of blood every day.

Twenty Weeks (Five Months)

Even though this fetus has been a unique human being since the moment of her conception, a significant outward sign of that distinction is now visible in her fingerprints and toeprints. Downy hair, known as lanugo, covers her, and vernix, a waxy cream, coats and moisturizes the baby's skin. The child will likely have established a waking and sleeping cycle by this point, and she may even have found a favorite position for sleeping. Now that the baby's genitals are nearer to complete formation, an ultrasound can reveal the baby's sex. And since all body structures and systems are now in place, most of the baby's energy will go toward gaining weight.

- Some studies have concluded that the fetus is capable of feeling pain at this stage.
- The skin becomes less transparent as fat begins to deposit.
- The child begins punching and kicking more vigorously, and the mother feels it!
- Eyebrows and eyelashes have appeared.
- Blinking and frowning reflexes have developed.
- The child can now suck her thumb.
- While the lungs have not developed enough to permit survival outside of the womb, breathing-like movements become regular.
- Buffered in amniotic fluid, the child can fully turn from side to side and front to back.



Twenty-Four Weeks (Six Months)

The child's ears can now perceive sounds from outside of the womb, and loud noises may even startle her! And though the mother can't hear her, the child's vocal cords are now active. If you were to peek into the womb through an ultrasound, you'd be able to see her squinting, smiling, and frowning. The child has now reached a point where she could survive outside of the womb if given intensive care. The youngest child known to survive preterm birth was not even 22 weeks old; she was born barely halfway through pregnancy!

- Eyes are fully functional.
- Eyebrows and eyelashes are almost fully formed.
- Rapid brain growth continues.
- Lungs are developing rapidly.
- Rapid eye movement, which is associated with dreaming, can be measured.



Twenty-Eight Weeks (Seven Months)

If you put your ear to a pregnant woman's abdomen, you may be able to hear the baby's heartbeat. And even though the child's lungs are not yet fully developed, she would have a good chance of survival if she were born at this stage. Many babies are in the breech position at this stage of pregnancy, meaning they are positioned feet- or bottom-first instead of the typical head-down birth position. There is still plenty of time for the baby to change position, however, and most babies will rotate within the next few weeks.

- Brain-wave patterns are similar to those of a full-term baby.
- Though she won't cry until she's born, her eyes can now produce tears.
- The child's brain now controls her "breathing" movements and body temperature.
- Eyelids are opening and closing, and the child's eyes can perceive light.
- The child is getting her exercise through acrobatic kicks and stretches.
- As fat increases, the child's skin smooths out, losing its wrinkles.



Thirty-Two Weeks (Eight Months)

The baby's movements will soon grow less acrobatic as she settles into a head-down birth position. Most of the skin wrinkles on her face will have disappeared. By the time she is born eight weeks from now, her present weight will have more than doubled!

- Though the lungs are not yet mature, rhythmic "breathing" is occurring.
- Even though the bones are fully developed, they are still pliable and soft.
- The baby's skin has thickened.
- Fingernails and toenails have grown to the fingertips.
- Their head may be covered with hair.



Thirty-Six Weeks (Nine Months)

At this stage, the baby rotates into birth position with her head pointed downward in the mother's pelvis, where she'll stay until she's born. This shift will likely allow the mother to breathe more easily, but because the baby has settled lower on her bladder, she may need to urinate more often. The extra fat that the baby is putting on—about half a pound a week—will help her to regulate her body temperature after she is born. Her body weight at birth will be about 15 percent fat.

- The eyes are open during alert times and closed during sleep.
- The child will notice light and turn toward a light source.
- The child's outer ears are now fully formed.
- The child can now grasp firmly.



Exercise: Estimated time: 10 minutes. Break the group into sets of three to practice presenting human development in a counseling context. If available, distribute *Life in the Womb* Brochures, or use the *Redemptive Conversations* manual to help participants practice counseling.

One person will be the counselor, one the client, and one the observer. Rotate roles every 3 minutes. The first counselor will present information on the first trimester, the second person on the second trimester, and the third person on the third trimester. Present the information the way you would to a person considering abortion.

When counseling someone who is facing a pregnancy decision, the pregnant woman or a person who is directly involved in her life, using brochures like “*Life in the Womb*” can be a helpful counseling tool.

Example: An 18-year-old woman says that she is 8 weeks pregnant and may be considering or receiving pressure to choose abortion

Counselor: “What do you know about the development of your unborn baby?”

Client: “I don’t think it is a baby, and it is better for me to make this choice now before it grows too big.”

Counselor: “May I share with you some information about your developing baby, and show you some pictures in this brochure?”

Client: “Yes” --Counselor shares information and answers questions.

Client: “No” – Counselor: “I understand this is a challenging time for you and you have a lot of decisions to make. I would like to give you this brochure with information about your developing baby to take home and read. Would that be acceptable?”

Strive always to be respectful and ask permission before sharing information. It is equally important to ask the client what they already know about the baby’s development. Asking about their knowledge provides an opportunity to educate or correct misconceptions or misinformation.

Conclusion

Pregnancy and the process of fetal development remind us that we are “fearfully and wonderfully made” (Psalm 139:14). God is the one who has fashioned each preborn child. His remarkable creativity and attention to every detail give us a glimpse of His heart toward us as His creation. We can see in his consideration of us—and through his formation of us in His image—that He values us more highly than any other living being on the Earth.

“For You formed my inward parts; You knitted me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well.”

Psalm 139:13-14

Session 10

Abortion and Effects of Abortion

*“Give justice to the weak and the fatherless;
maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute.
Rescue the weak and the needy;
deliver them from the hand of the wicked.’
They have neither knowledge nor understanding,
they walk about in darkness;
all the foundations of the earth are shaken.” Psalm 82: 3-4*

Facilitator Help: “The Learner Will,” “Key Points,” and “Scripture References” are provided for you to prepare for teaching. You should not read through these points to the participants.

Remember to plan your time well. Allow the group time to share in pairs or threes the ways they have experienced God speaking, or a time when they benefited from a “redemptive conversation.” How much time you allow will depend on the schedule and the number of participants.

The Learner Will

1. Understand and communicate alternative, surgical, and medical abortion procedures.
2. Use group activity to discuss physical, emotional, relational, and spiritual effects of abortion.
3. Discover common reasons women choose abortion.
4. Learn how to effectively communicate the risks and potential complications of each abortion method.

Key Points

- Alternative methods are often used when surgical and medical abortion is illegal or unavailable.
- Surgical abortion is on the decline since the introduction of medical/chemical abortion.
- Medical or Chemical abortions, involving abortion pills, are often thought to be safe and easy, but it has serious physical, emotional, relational, and spiritual effects.

Scripture References: Psalm 139:13–14a; Psalm 103:8-11; Matthew 6:6; 1 John 3:20; Psalm 34:18; Psalm 10:17-18; Exodus 15:26; Psalm 103:3; John 10:10; Psalm 103:2-5, 12-14; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Ezekiel 36:26; 1 John 1:9; James 5:16; Matthew 6:14-15; Colossians 3:13; Ezekiel 18:32; Lamentations 3:32-33; 2 Peter 3:9; Acts 17:30; 2 Chronicles 7:14

Supplies Needed: If available, LIFE International Abortion Procedures Power Point slides, or Abortion Flip Charts. If unavailable use other materials. Avoid using graphic materials of actual aborted babies or procedures. Graphic content does not assist a client in the counseling process and may cause emotional harm. If you choose to use the client case studies for role-play during this session you may make copies as hand outs or create your own client scenarios.

Recommended Time: 2 hours

Facilitator Help:

Ask participants to give some thought to any experience or exposure to abortion that they have had in the past.

How do these experiences affect your opinion about abortion in general?

How might these experiences affect your discussion about abortion with a client at the pregnancy center, while speaking to someone in your church, or in the community?

Session Introduction:

Conversations about abortion can be emotional. Regardless of your past experiences, as a member of the body of Christ, a pregnancy center helper, pastor, or medical professional, you must learn about abortion. You must learn to talk about abortion without expressing any unresolved emotional issues, such as disappointments, wrongs, and trauma. You should strive to communicate the facts about abortion to others, especially those considering abortion, in a calm, compassionate, and professional manner.

When Jesus talked with the woman at the well (John 4), He was direct and truthful but not condemning. If needed, take time alone with God and/or with someone you know to work through any emotional response that you have towards abortion. You do not want to communicate judgment or condemnation to your client because she may be considering abortion as her best or only option. Doing so will likely make her defensive and cause her to reject anything you have to say.

You are not a computer, telling one fact after another. Your heart is as important as your mind in this conversation about abortion. If the person you are speaking with has an abortion in their past, your respectful treatment of their trauma, and empathy as you listen, care, and converse, will encourage them to relax and listen. A combination of grace and truth can open the door to the right choices.

You must present yourself as an objective and informed advocate for both mother and child. Please remember that the mother is your client. She may not have any maternal instincts or recognize that her pregnancy is more than a “problem”. While you do not have to recite a long list of information, the more comfortable you are with the facts of abortion, the more you can concentrate on caring for her and helping her make a wise decision.

Facilitator Help: Be prepared to answer questions. The focus is on how this information will help a woman facing a pregnancy decision choose life. If possible, use the LIFE International PowerPoint slides for Understanding Abortion to teach through this section. Avoid using graphic images of aborted babies. Graphic pictures create or increase trauma, creating an atmosphere of violence.

What Is Abortion?

Abortion is the intentional destruction of a preborn human life through alternative, surgical, or chemical methods and remove a growing embryo or fetus from the womb. It ends a child’s life. It is not a benign procedure. It is the violent and unnatural destruction of a living human being.

Abortion, commonly portrayed as a secret, quick, and affordable procedure, in reality, an unplanned pregnancy is traumatic; an opportunity to quickly and privately be “unpregnant” can be very appealing. However, even if a mother keeps her abortion secret, it silently but powerfully affects the lives of everyone around her: her parents, her partner, her other children.

The ongoing price she pays in long-term side effects can be devastating. Despite difficult circumstances and intense stress that may be leading someone to believe that abortion is their only option, they should be encouraged to weigh alternatives and carefully consider the options based on facts and not just on emotion. Giving birth to a child and aborting a child both carry consequences that last a lifetime. It is far better to know and consider all the implications of that decision beforehand rather than after.

Estimates for the number of abortions worldwide vary substantially, but the Guttmacher Institute reported in 2022 that an estimated 73 million abortions occur each year worldwide.

Approximately 90% of abortions worldwide occur during the first trimester of pregnancy. Before the early 1970s, first-trimester abortions commonly used a procedure called Dilation and Curettage (D&C).

Who is Vulnerable to Abortion

For most Christians, it may be hard to imagine how anyone could choose an abortion. Many people would not normally consider ending the life of a child, either. However, life circumstances and other people's opinions can create such overwhelming pressure that they feel personal survival is more important than protecting life, which makes them vulnerable to abortion advocates. They may not understand that there is a living person, an image bearer of God, already in the womb. There may be a desire to have an abortion before it becomes a child.

The thief—who seeks to steal, kill, and destroy—(John 10:10) has an uncanny ability to deceive and cause confusion. He will twist anything and everything to capture someone's mind and heart. You must recognize the spiritual battle you are engaging in and acknowledge God's presence in your conversations with your client, as discussed in our previous discussion on Spiritual Warfare.

Facilitator Help: Ask participants what reasons they have heard for someone choosing to have an abortion.

Answers will vary; below is a list for discussion.

A client especially vulnerable to abortion is the woman who:

- Wants to postpone pregnancy due to her age.
- Does not want to have children, or does not want more children.
- Is not financially stable or lacks other supportive relationships.
- Has health concerns or other unusual circumstances, or is the victim of rape or incest.
- Has incorrect or limited information.

Abortion procedures

As an advocate for the sacredness of human life, you do not need to memorize all the details about each abortion procedure. You will want to become familiar with the basic methods so you are comfortable speaking compassionately while describing the procedures, the risks, and potential complications of an abortion.

Prayer is essential as you engage in life-giving ministry. You need to hear from the Lord about how to share this information, inviting this woman to see that God loves her and her child. There is no avoiding the fact that abortion results in the death of a child and often leads to a traumatic response from the woman.

If you are not a medical professional, you will present only general information. Never mislead anyone you are ministering to through deceptive practices, such as pretending to be a medical professional or exaggerating certain facts about abortion. Strive to have a solid understanding and ability to share the appropriate level of details about abortion accurately.

Most people have a difficult time hearing about abortion procedures. Women who have already experienced an abortion and who did not know what the abortionist was doing, as well as men who have participated in abortion, can be particularly affected. Remember, you will be offering this information not to condemn, but motivated by

knowing that she may benefit from this new awareness, reject abortion, and begin to learn about God's forgiveness and healing.

Facilitator Help: Take the time to research abortion rates and procedures for the nation you are training in.

Before proceeding with an abortion procedure of any type, the following standard protocol should be followed by the Abortion Provider: (NOTE: This is for educational and ministry training purposes only. As a life-giving ministry, we do not provide nor refer for abortion.)

1. Pregnancy must be confirmed, usually by a urine pregnancy test that measures hCG (human chorionic gonadotropin), the hormone that is produced almost exclusively as a result of pregnancy.
2. A blood test to determine blood type should be done. Knowing whether a woman is Rh-positive or Rh-negative is important for avoiding future health complications.
3. The gestational age, or how far along the woman is in her pregnancy, must be determined before an abortion method is selected. Gestational age may be confirmed by a manual pelvic examination, including confirmatory measurements consistent with the woman's reported last menstrual period. The most accurate method is to perform a pelvic ultrasound. An ultrasound is the only method that can confirm the existence of a viable intrauterine pregnancy. Confirmation of an intrauterine pregnancy also rules out the possibility of an ectopic pregnancy, a condition that can be life-threatening (presented in the section on Human Reproduction).

Introduction to Abortion Methods:

Abortion is a topic that is difficult to approach. Still, it is necessary to understand each method and discern how to have a compassionate approach to the abortion minded or abortion vulnerable woman. Historically, alternative methods are used in developing nations and in nations where abortion is illegal, but women worldwide have used alternative abortion methods.

The decrease in surgical abortions and increase in medical abortions seem to indicate a greater need for education about current practices. Our discussion will include how this shift has created new emotional and spiritual trauma, as the mother of the unborn baby has now become the abortionist for her own abortion. Whereas previously, the abortion was performed in a medical setting, it was performed on her or to her, in an unfamiliar location. Now, with the abortion pill delivered through the mail, pharmacy, or doctor's office, and administered at home, she must deal with the outcome- delivery and cleanup. Her home, once a safe place, is now a do-it-yourself abortion facility.

There are three categories of induced abortion: Alternative or traditional, surgical, and medication or chemical abortion.

1. **Alternative methods of abortion** are those performed outside of the recognized medical establishment for various reasons: availability, cost, legality, cultural and familial views of abortion, etc. Another common terminology for an alternative method is the *traditional method*.
2. **Surgical abortions** are a type of abortion in which the embryo or fetus is removed from the uterus using invasive surgical methods. *In-clinic abortion* or *procedural abortion* often now replaces the term *surgical abortion*.
3. **Medication abortions** use drugs to bring about the end of life for the growing embryo or fetus. Alternative names for this type of abortion are *medical abortion* or *chemical abortion*. **Vacuum aspiration** or **medication abortion** are the two options in a pregnancy up to 10-14 weeks, depending on the recommending authority, such as the World Health Organization (WHO). One of these two options is available to a woman who resides where abortion is legal during that period of her pregnancy.

Alternative Methods

There are three primary categories of alternative abortion methods: oral abortifacients, foreign bodies inserted into the uterus, and application of external force. Due to the widespread access to legal abortion in many nations, alternative methods are used most frequently in developing or impoverished nations or where abortion is illegal.

Oral abortifacients

The pregnant woman ingests herbal or chemical preparations to induce labor. They work by stimulating uterine contractions and/or softening the cervix, leading to menstruation and the expulsion of the developing embryo. Herbal preparations include dong quai (*Angelica sinensis*), pennyroyal, cotton root bark, tansy (*Mugwort*), black cohosh, juniper, rue (*Ruta*), ginger, celery seed, birthwort, and vitamin C in high doses. Chemical preparations include bleach, turpentine, and acid.

Foreign-body abortion

There are two primary results of inserting a foreign body—such as a wire, stick, knitting needle, cassava root, thorn, or chicken bone—into the uterus. When the membranes that surround and protect the developing embryo are punctured, the embryo will likely die, and the woman’s body will expel the dead embryo. There is a possibility that a foreign body may pierce the embryo itself and cause its death directly, which will also result in the woman’s body expelling the dead embryo.

Application of external force

Some cultures will use intense physical exertion to bring about a miscarriage. More direct actions, such as punches, blows, or kicks to the abdomen of the pregnant woman, have also been used, even to the point of the pregnant woman throwing herself down a flight of stairs to induce labor. Abdominal massage of the pregnant woman is a method in which an individual compresses, constricts, and kneads the abdomen of the pregnant woman to kill the developing embryo and start uterine contractions.

REMINDER: Abortion is the intentional destruction of the preborn child. Cultures may view external force as miscarriage, but by definition, it is abortion.

Physical effects of alternative methods: See Physical Effects of Surgical Abortion.

Surgical Methods

The current practice is that virtually all early surgical abortions use vacuum aspiration rather than scraping the lining of the uterus with a sharp metal curette. The procedure is still sometimes called a D&C, though the “curettage” is accomplished using suction. As a result, in addition to the other alternative names for a surgical abortion, the procedure may also be called aspiration curettage or suction curettage.

The World Health Organization has increasingly called upon the global medical community to abandon the use of curettage that uses sharp metal curettes to scrape the lining of the uterus in favor of curettage using vacuum aspiration.

While the historical dilation and curettage is still used, perhaps even commonly, in some, if not many, countries, the current World Health Organization protocols for abortion explicitly recommend against using a sharp curettage except in rare situations.

Vacuum Aspiration is the second common form of termination for the first trimester.

Vacuum Aspiration, also referred to as a surgical abortion, in-clinic abortion, procedural abortion, aspiration curettage, or suction curettage. Before the rapid increase in medication abortions, vacuum aspiration was the most common procedure for first-trimester abortions.

Vacuum Aspiration is an abortion procedure that results in the removal of the embryo/fetus and placenta from the mother’s uterus. As the procedure begins, the developing baby is alive. The critical process of vacuum aspiration requires creating suction with either a handheld syringe (an aspirator) or an electric pump.

Abortions using a handheld syringe are known more specifically as *manual* vacuum aspiration or MVA; abortions using an electric pump are known as *electric* vacuum aspiration or EVA.

Lesser-resourced regions or locations without stable electricity may opt for manual over electric. Another reason for choosing the manual option is due to the disturbing noise/sounds made by the electric pump that lead to long-term trauma in women when they hear similar sounds after their abortion procedure.

For vacuum aspiration, a woman is positioned on an obstetrical examination table with her feet in the stirrups as for a pelvic exam. Vacuum aspiration typically uses only local anesthesia injected into the cervix for the procedure. In addition, the patient may have been given anti-anxiety medication before the procedure.

A speculum, a steel or plastic medical instrument commonly used by gynecologists and obstetricians for pelvic exams, will be inserted into the vagina, creating visual and physical access to the cervix.

To prepare a woman's uterus for vacuum aspiration, the cervix is dilated using a series of tapered, graduated **metal dilation rods** (some countries may use **laminaria**, dried seaweed that expands when exposed to the moisture of the cervix and vaginal area) or by applying a medication to the cervix. A **tenaculum clamp**, a long metal instrument resembling long tweezers or pliers, will assist the abortion provider to stabilize the cervix to allow access to the uterus for insertion of the vacuum tubing. Discomfort and bleeding are common concerns for the patient.

After achieving the appropriate level of dilation, a sterile disposable **vacuum aspiration curette** attached to a flexible tube is inserted into the uterus through the opening of the dilated cervix.

Tubing connects to the other end of the equipment to create a vacuum, either the manual vacuum aspirator (syringe-like apparatus) or an electric pump. The embryo/fetus and the placenta are then removed from the uterus—causing the demise of the developing baby—into a collection receptacle. A vacuum aspiration procedure takes approximately 10-15 minutes to complete, with recovery room time of about 30-60 minutes.

**Additional information for the Facilitator: Before the 1970s, the procedure for a first-trimester abortion in the U.S. was a true Dilation and Curettage (D&C), a procedure that used a sharp metal curette to scrape the lining of the uterus. Beginning in the early 1970s, the vast majority of first-trimester abortions used a new technology of vacuum aspiration, as described in this section, even though the procedure continued to be called a D&C. The idea of "curettage" became known as the ill-named aspiration and curettage. Although the World Health Organization has long recommended against sharp curettage in favor of vacuum aspiration, except in very limited circumstances, credible studies show that sharp curettage remains widely used worldwide. Continued sharp curettage over vacuum aspiration leads to increased complications, such as infection from retained tissue, as well as higher rates of uterine perforation.*

Dilation and curettage (D & C)

Dilation and Curettage (D&C) was also the very same procedure used to remove any tissue not expelled naturally following a miscarriage. Dilation and Curettage, or D&C, is the same procedure used for the management of a natural miscarriage—the primary difference being, of course, that in the case of a miscarriage, the embryo or fetus has previously died of natural causes and is not alive at the commencement of the procedure.

D&C as an abortion procedure, however, has as its purpose first to end the life of the developing baby, then remove the deceased baby and remaining pregnancy tissues. As an abortion procedure, it was very common until the late 1980s and early 1990s.

The difference between a simple vacuum aspiration and a D&C is that in the latter case, a curette is used to scrape the uterine lining to ensure complete emptying of the uterus.

In the last few decades, obstetricians and abortionists have gradually ceased using curettes. Researchers found the curette did not increase the success of removing all the pregnancy tissue. The use of the curette was, however, found to increase the likelihood of cervical damage or uterine perforations.

Early abortions, up through 14 weeks, are now generally performed exclusively using vacuum aspiration.

Dilation and Evacuation (D & E) is the third, or least common, form of abortion and is performed in the second trimester.

For pregnancies that have advanced into the second semester—the 14th week—vacuum aspiration alone becomes less effective at resulting in a complete abortion. Dilation & Evacuation require additional surgical instruments.

By this and later developmental stages, the size of the fetus and early formation of bone make it impossible to perform an abortion with vacuum aspiration alone. Forceps, a tool used to grasp and hold objects, must be introduced into the uterus to dismember the deceased fetus and remove the bodily remains piece by piece.

Vacuum aspiration is still used as the final step of these procedures to ensure that the uterus is entirely free of all remaining traces of the fetus and placenta.

Late-Term Abortions: Educational Overview

Late-term abortions, though increasingly rare, may still occur and are presented here for educational and awareness purposes. These procedures are typically performed at or beyond 24 weeks of gestation and, in some jurisdictions, may be legally permitted up to birth. In the United States, approximately 1.2% of abortions occur after 21 weeks of gestation.

Legal and Procedural Considerations

The protocols for late-term abortions often resemble those used in dilation and evacuation (D&E) procedures. However, they may also incorporate elements of medical abortion. Legal regulations vary by region and country, influencing the allowable gestational age and procedural methods.

Medical vs. Surgical Methods

A medical method may be chosen based on patient preference, physician expertise, or the need for fetal autopsy following the procedure. Both medical and surgical approaches involve the administration of medication—typically injected into the fetal heart, umbilical cord, or amniotic fluid—to induce fetal demise.

Regardless of the method, cervical preparation is essential. General anesthesia is recommended, although sedation or local anesthesia may also be used depending on the patient's condition and preferences.

Surgical Procedure Details

The goal of the surgical procedure is to remove the fetus intact to minimize complications. Ultrasound guidance is used to locate the fetus, and forceps are employed to grasp and deliver the body through the cervix. In some cases, cranial decompression is necessary to facilitate passage. A suction device and cannula are used to clear the uterus of the placenta and remaining tissue.

Medical/Chemical Procedure Details

Medical abortions at this stage use similar medications to those administered in early medical abortions. These procedures are typically performed in a hospital setting and may take 10–24 hours for delivery. In some cases, patients may be discharged from the medical facility to complete the process at home. Pain management may include oral or intravenous medications, and uterine evacuation using suction may still be required.

Physical Complications with Surgical Abortion and Effects

Serious complications may occur with second-trimester surgical abortion:

- An incomplete abortion, which can lead to fetal tissue remaining in the uterus and cause infection
- Heavy bleeding or hemorrhaging could result in hospitalization and blood transfusion. Some bleeding is normal with any surgical procedure.
- Infection caused by the insertion of medical instruments and retained tissue.
- Allergic reaction to medication and anesthetics.
- Puncture of the uterus that could lead to permanent damage.
- Death, in extreme cases.

- Risk of breast cancer.
- Cervical damage.
- Infertility.

The later in the pregnancy, the greater the risk.

- 1 in 11,000 women have serious complications, including death
- Hemorrhaging, requiring a blood transfusion
- Infection
- Additional surgery
- Embolism,
- Organ damage
- Torn uterus
- Damage to the bladder or bowels can happen.
- The placenta is not expelled, causing bleeding and the need for surgery.

The level of severity of the side effects and potential complications varies widely, some requiring follow-up by a medical professional at the abortion clinic, while others require admission to a hospital following a visit to the emergency room.

FACILITATOR HELP: Do not enter into the discussion on emotional effects until after you have completed all abortion methods. A presentation of the emotional side effects of abortion appears in the last section of this chapter.

While the physical side effects of abortion may be short-lived for the woman, a successful abortion procedure always results in the death of the developing baby.

An abortion performed on a first pregnancy before age 30 removes the natural protection from breast cancer. The pregnancy hormones cause the breasts to grow rapidly, and by week 32, a woman’s breasts are ready to produce milk and become more resistant to breast cancer.

Chemical Abortion is one of the two most common forms of abortion for first-trimester termination.

In the past decade in the U.S. and globally, the rate of medication abortions has soared, increasing from just under 20% of abortions reported to the Centers for Disease Control in 2011 to an estimated 63% of reported abortions in 2023. Some countries, especially those in Scandinavia, have reported the use of medication abortion at greater than 90% of all abortions for years.

These data do not include any of the unreported self-managed abortions that have taken place using abortion pills acquired from local sources or international online vendors—a phenomenon brought about during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Aid Access, just one of many international online sources for abortion pills, reported approximately 80,000 requests for abortion pills from just the U.S. in the 12 months following the overturn of Roe v. Wade, which limited access to abortion in some states.

Mifepristone/Misoprostol regimen

Mifepristone is the generic name of the first drug taken during a medication abortion. Mifepristone blocks the effects of progesterone, a hormone that is required to maintain pregnancy.

Misoprostol is the second drug that causes uterine contractions that will expel the deceased embryo or fetus and the placenta. This two-drug combination is approved for use in the U.S. by the Federal Drug Administration (FDA) to terminate a pregnancy up to ten weeks (70 days) after the first day of the last menstrual period.

The brand name of Mifepristone is Mifeprex. The brand name of misoprostol is Cytotec.

Additional information for Facilitators: Mifepristone was developed as an abortifacient and approved for the sole purpose of causing an abortion in France in the 1980s. The drug was initially known simply as RU-486; the RU

stands for Rousel-Uclaf, the name of the French pharmaceutical company. Although the FDA initially banned its import into the U.S. in 1989, Mifepristone was eventually approved in 2000 for use in the U.S.. Today, it is manufactured by Danco Laboratories. This single, privately held pharmaceutical company does not publicly disclose the names of its chief executive, board members, or the address of the company.

Misoprostol was developed in the late 1970s and approved by the FDA with the tradename Cytotec in 1988 as a drug to prevent gastric ulcers resulting from long-term use of NSAIDs in individuals with arthritis. An adverse side effect of misoprostol is that it causes uterine contractions; therefore, it should not be prescribed to women who are pregnant or seeking to become pregnant. Before FDA approval, while being tested in Brazil for widespread use, researchers discovered that it could be used off-label as an abortifacient. Brazilian women were taking up to four times the daily dose to cause a self-induced abortion.

The Food and Drug Administrations (USA)-approved dosing regimen is as follows:

1. To start the medication abortion procedure, 200 mg of Mifepristone is taken orally and swallowed.
2. After 24 to 48 hours, 800 mcg of misoprostol is taken (usually four pills of 200 mcg each). There are different ways to take misoprostol.
3. Women are urged to follow up with their healthcare provider within 7 to 14 days after taking Mifepristone.

Misoprostol pills may be allowed to dissolve in one of three ways:

1. positioned between the cheek and gums (buccally)
2. placed under the tongue
3. inserted into the vagina

Allowing the pills to dissolve buccally is currently the most common method. As the pills dissolve, they are absorbed through the skin in the mouth or vagina.

Physical effects of medical/chemical abortion in the first trimester:

- Diarrhea
- Abdominal pain and cramping
- Dizziness
- Fever and chills
- Nausea and vomiting
- Headaches.
- Additional effects of incomplete abortion include: death caused by a full-body infection
- 9-16 days of bleeding, may need curettage (scraping) of the uterus to end bleeding.
- Incomplete abortion, although rare, adds physical complications, including sepsis, a full-body infection, and death.
- May cause fetal abnormalities, though very rare, 1 in 1,000, is not greater than the risk of having a child with Down Syndrome.

Additional factors of abortion:

- Neither Mifepristone nor misoprostol is 100% effective in causing abortion. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC6309472/#R2> (National Library of Medicine, National Center for Biotechnology Information, Retrieved November 2025).
- The failure rate is higher over nine weeks LMP, which usually results in repeating the abortion pill regimen or requires a surgical abortion.
- Does not end an ectopic pregnancy.

Abortion Procedure Conclusion

Abortion is the violent and unnatural destruction of a living human being, and it harms the woman who ends her pregnancy with it. Yet women continue to choose abortion, for it seems to be a quick and affordable solution to their problem. As counselors, we have the opportunity to help our clients realize that their pregnancy is not the problem, but rather to provide them with the information they need to make wise choices. Even when our clients seem determined to go ahead with an abortion, we can help them by encouraging them to ask questions at the abortion clinic to protect their safety.

The Effects of Abortion

Learning about the long-term effects of an abortion may be the first step in a woman's or a man's road to healing. A woman who desires to have children may not know that a past abortion caused her infertility. A man may not understand that the distance he feels between himself and God is directly related to his participation in abortion. A mother who has aborted her child may not have made the connection that some of the emotional and relationship difficulties she is presently experiencing have their roots in her abortion.

When women and men hear about the post-abortion problems that others have experienced, they often recognize the same struggles in their own lives.

Physical Effects

In addition to the immediate side effects of abortion, some effects appear long after the abortion has taken place. Trauma to the uterus during an abortion can lead to future fertility problems, including miscarriage, difficulty in conceiving a child, and increased complications for future pregnancies. Understand, however, that miscarriages do occur for other reasons that are entirely unrelated to induced abortion. So, while an induced abortion may contribute to the future risk of miscarriage, not all miscarriages are caused by a past abortion.

Some international studies have suggested an association between induced abortion and a higher rate of breast cancer later in life. Scientists have proposed a biological explanation for how this might occur: during a full-term pregnancy, breast tissue naturally matures in ways that offer some protection against later cancer. When that process is abruptly interrupted—as it is due to an abortion—this protective effect may be reduced.

It is important to note, however, that the research on this topic is not conclusive. Other studies have not found evidence of a link between induced abortion and breast cancer risk. Because of this, the idea of a connection should be discussed with care and not presented as uncontested fact while we await the results of more research on this important topic.

Facilitator Help: Remind the participants that a person could be living with a sexually transmitted infection for years without symptoms or a diagnosis. Similarly, Spiritual, Emotional, and Relational Effects may not be evident for many years.

Exercise: Divide participants into three groups for 15 minutes to discuss the effects of abortion (you may shorten the amount of time if necessary). Assign each group one of the following: Spiritual, Emotional (for the woman or man directly), or Relational effects of abortion. Physical effects were addressed in abortion procedures. Bring the groups back together and have one person from each group present their lists. Ask the Spiritual Effects group to present last so you can naturally lead the discussion into repentance and forgiveness.

Emotional Effects

An abortion decision has the potential to damage a person's emotional health and well-being. Adverse effects on a person's emotions may initially be subtle and less evident than the immediate physical effects. Emotional effects, however, can become overwhelming and leave lasting wounds if they are not recognized and addressed. The intensity of the emotional reaction after an abortion is often a shock to the individual as well as to the people around them.

There is a broad range of potential emotional issues, and most are rooted in fear, shame, and guilt. Feelings after an abortion can exhibit in one of two opposite ways: either they are repressed and unexpressed or indiscriminately expressed through emotional outbursts. Both extremes create problems because it takes a tremendous amount of energy to control or hide these undesirable emotions, leaving little energy for other things.

Some of the common emotional effects of an abortion decision include:

- Drug and alcohol abuse
- Suicidal thoughts
- Anger
- Shame
- Depression
- Sadness
- Denial
- Anxiety
- Guilt and regret
- Unresolved, persistent grief
- Mood swings
- Increased emotional complications for future pregnancies

There is little research on the psychological or emotional effects of medical abortion. Many are ordering online, which is not FDA-approved in the United States. Each nation has legal requirements that should be followed.

A combination of these emotional effects can sometimes cause an individual's emotional well-being to deteriorate so significantly that suicide is considered or attempted.

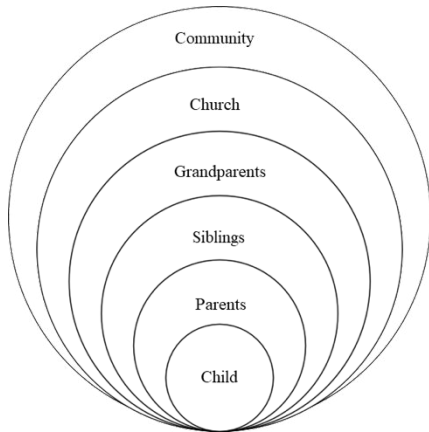
Relational Effects

The most profound relational harm caused by a man or woman's decision to abort their child is the violation and subsequent loss of trust. For a woman, she has violated her God-given role to protect and nurture her child, and her failure to fulfill this role damages her confidence in herself. For a man, abortion is a betrayal of his innermost self.

By participating in an abortion, a man's choice to neglect the role of protector and provider impairs his trust in himself. Lack of trust then, for both the woman and the man, undermines every relationship and can create significant relational damage, such as: (Ask for these: "What kind of damage to relationships could result?")

- Sexual dysfunction: aversion to sex, sexual promiscuity, extramarital affairs, homosexuality
- Difficulty maintaining close relationships
- Loneliness

- Lack of bonding with children, child abuse, and child neglect



This lack of trust can extend beyond a woman’s or man’s immediate relationships, such as marriage and family, to include the church and its broader community. It is not uncommon for post-abortive individuals (women especially) to experience diminished trust in every relationship, in particular with those in leadership or in positions of authority. Tension and lack of trust can infiltrate churches and communities, all the while being unseen, unacknowledged, or misunderstood. Leaders within the church must recognize the far-reaching effects of abortion within their congregations to effectively and appropriately respond to the spiritual needs of the people.

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While the effects of disobeying the truth revealed in God’s Word about the life of the preborn child in the womb bring lasting and sometimes irreversible human consequences, those who repent from their sins receive forgiveness and, over time, can experience substantial healing of their whole person—body, soul, and spirit.

Facilitator Help: Draw the circle diagram to aid in the discussion of relational effects. Add one layer of the circle at a time so each relationship can be discussed fully to help draw the participants to a greater understanding of the relational effects of abortion. Insert the category one at a time, asking how abortion affected each group.

Spiritual Effects

Discussing Spiritual Effects at the end allows you to lead the discussion directly into a time for repentance, forgiveness, and healing.

Abortion also includes a willful disobedience of God’s word, specifically His command against the taking of innocent life. Taking innocent life—as occurs in abortion—is murder, and it is sin. There are many spiritual consequences for murder, and only God can remove the guilt of having taken a life through abortion.

In the decision to abort a child, the mother and father demonstrate a lack of trust in the sovereignty of God and His decision to give life to an individual in the womb. They also do not trust His capacity for goodness, provision, and protection. After an abortion, the person intuitively understands that they have violated this trust, and they begin to view God as untrustworthy.

They make an unspoken alliance with Satan, who is seeking to kill their child (John 10:10a). He also seeks to destroy the mother and father, disrupt their relationships with one another and their loved ones, devastate their immediate and extended family, and undermine their relationship with God. After he has deceived them into believing that abortion is the right choice, and they have aborted their child, he will use their actions to condemn them. The outcome is often separation from God, severe identity damage, and extreme suffering.

Women may at times also be unwilling to abort their children. Yet, they are coerced (or even forced) into abortion by others: the father of the child, their own parents, the community, or governmental authorities, etc.

Moral culpability for abortion in these cases may not be as clearly defined, but the spiritual effects may still be equally and profoundly devastating.

Facilitator Helps: It is highly likely that some of the participants in your training are post-abortive. Please take the time to offer hope and healing through Jesus Christ.

The Path to Restoration from Abortion

Genuine and lasting healing from sin, including abortion, is possible. Psalm 139:13–14a

To receive healing from the sin of abortion, we must turn to God for His help. Abortion is first a sin against God before it is a sin against others, including the preborn child whose life was ended. Those involved in an abortion decision must renounce their prior agreement with the enemy, who persuaded them that abortion was the only solution for the challenges presented by an unwanted child. The mother and father must choose to believe God's truth and align themselves with it.

The Bible clearly lays out redemptive principles that offer hope and help to the woman who has aborted her child, and to the man who may or may not have participated in the decision.

God knows and hears the post-abortive man and woman.

Jesus refers to God the Father as “your Father, who sees what is done in secret” (Matthew 6:6). Likewise, the Bible says, “God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything” (1 John 3:20). He knows precisely what happened. He knows about the woman's abortion and the man's participation, but that is not all He knows. He knows who was encouraging or pressuring the woman to abort. He knows how the abortionist treated her. He knows why the father did not stand up in defense of his preborn child. He knows the aborted child intimately. God, and God alone, knows everything about this abortion.

God is close to the brokenhearted (Psalm 34:18). If the mother and father of the aborted child call upon God, He will hear them.

You, Lord, hear the desire of the afflicted; you encourage them, and you listen to their cry, defending the fatherless and the oppressed, so that mere earthly mortals will never again strike terror.

Psalm 10:17-18 God wants to forgive and heal the post-abortive man and woman.

God calls Himself the Lord who heals us (Exodus 15:26), forgives all our sins, and heals all our diseases (Psalm 103:3). He desires us to live life to the full (John 10:10); surely that means a life of wholeness, hope, and joy. No confessed sin has the power to ruin your life. Abortion—both the mother's decision to abort, and the father's sin to coerce, encourage, or support it—is a sin that God will forgive because of the blood Jesus shed for them. He desires to forgive them, and He desires for them to forgive themselves and others. He also desires to heal them wherever they are wounded. Listen to the Father's heart for anyone suffering from the consequences of sin, including the sin of abortion.

*Bless the LORD, O my soul,
and forget not all His benefits— who forgives all your iniquity,
who heals all your diseases,
who redeems your life from the pit,
who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy, who satisfies you with good
so that your youth is renewed like eagles... as far as the east is from the west,
so far does He remove our transgressions from us. As a father shows compassion to his children,
so the LORD shows compassion to those who fear him. For He knows our frame;
He remembers that we are dust.*

Psalm 103:2-5, 12-14

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come!

2 Corinthians 5:17

I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

Ezekiel 36:26

Confession and Forgiveness

Confessing our sin (including the sin of abortion) and forgiving others who were involved are the only necessary steps to be forgiven by God and restored to a right relationship with Him. Once they choose to believe God's Word—that He knows about their sin and is ready to forgive them—post-abortive men and women must follow God's instructions.

Confess Your Sin to God

1 John 1:9 tells us that “if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” Although the enemy will continue to remind us of our sin, we must learn to live in the freedom of God's forgiveness. We must reject the ongoing attempts of the devil to condemn us for past sins that God has already forgiven.

Confess Your Sin to One Another and Be Healed

James 5:16 says, “Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.” This passage is not merely a suggestion but a mandate. We are all to confess our sins to each other, pray for each other, and receive healing for our sins. Confession does not need to be publicized (in front of a large group, for example), but when spoken aloud to at least one other person, freedom through obedience occurs. According to this passage from James, healing itself is the purpose and goal of confession.

Forgive Others Who Were Involved

Matthew 6:14-15 says, “For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.” Post-abortive men and women will likely struggle to forgive if they have not first accepted God’s forgiveness for their own sin. But just as He commands us to confess our sins to each other, we are commanded to “bearing with one another and if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.” Colossians 3:13

Conclusion

Although there are always consequences to our sins, there is also hope. God says, “I take no pleasure in the death of anyone...Repent and live!” (Ezekiel 18:32). The Bible teaches us that though “God brings grief, he will show compassion, so great is his unending love. For he does not willingly bring affliction or grief to anyone.” (Lamentations 3:32-33). His ultimate goal for us is summarized in 2 Peter 3:9 He “is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.” Thus, “now he commands all people everywhere to repent,” (Acts 17:30) to bring restoration, healing, and wholeness.

Abortion kills babies and affects everyone it touches. And the loss of fatherhood and motherhood is real and profound. However, God is greater than abortion. God says to us today what He said to his people long ago:

“If my people, who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.” 2 Chronicles 7:14

Our responsibility is to humble ourselves, pray, seek God’s face, and turn from our wickedness, including the sin of abortion. In response, God says He will hear, forgive, and heal. God earnestly desires that we turn our hearts toward Him. There is no wound He cannot heal and no sin He will not forgive, if we turn to Him and ask. By His grace, women and men can find substantial healing in this life and complete healing in the age to come.

Allow time for participants to pray. You may choose to have music playing or offer to have them pray for one another. Do not rush this healing time. It may be helpful to have the participants gather in groups of two to three (same gender) to pray for one another and the issue of abortion in their community.

How Do You Talk to a Client About Abortion?

With her permission

Ask your client for permission before discussing the procedure. Acknowledge that the information can be disturbing and give her permission to stop you if she is uncomfortable. Do not force her to hear any information. Continue to ask for permission as you continue through the educational process.

B. With respect

Most women would not consider this procedure unless they were experiencing fear and pressure. Your kindness will go a long way.

C. Accurately and with details

Be factual in what you say about the process. Reading aloud, in a calm voice, through a brochure with your client will ensure that the details are correct.

D. To empower the client

1. “YOU have time to get enough information to make a wise choice.”

Your client may be overwhelmed with an urgent desire to take care of her problem now. Appeal to her heart and head to slow down, so she can get the whole truth and make a decision she will not regret.

2. “YOU can parent this child.”

She needs to know that circumstances and people change. Help is available. People who push a client for an abortion often change their minds after they have processed their own shock, anger, and denial.

Exercise: Divide into groups of three. Each group will role-play one or more of the Hard Cases on the last page of this session. Allow 5 minutes for each person to role-play as the counselor. You may need to adjust the time.

Use the communication process to identify needs, apply communication skills, and incorporate information from Human Reproduction and Abortion as appropriate.

Your group of 3 will practice using each example and will choose one to share with the whole group. Each group of three will take turns as the counselor, client, and observer. Allow 5 minutes for each person to be the counselor.

OPTIONAL: When the groups have had sufficient time to work through a scenario together, they will role-play in front of the group. It may be best to assign a case study for them. Time does not allow each group member to serve as the counselor.

Time may not allow for each group to role-play for all the participants. If necessary, group them into sets so that each team facilitator observes the role-play with the other participants.

After each person has practiced as the counselor, the observer should facilitate a conversation before they rotate roles. Consider using the following questions:

- What did the counselor do well?
- What did we learn about the client?
- What are some examples of good questions?
- What other approach could they use?
- How did the client respond to the counselor?

Ask the person who role-played the client:

- How did you feel as the client?
- What do you wish they had asked you about?
- How could they have helped you in your situation?
- What opportunities did you see where the Gospel could have been shared?
- Add any other appropriate follow-up questions.

Session Conclusion:

As Christ followers, we must respond to people in caring, compassionate ways, as Jesus modeled when He spoke to the lost and hurting. Remember that in a redemptive conversation, the goal is not to be right or to prove the other person is wrong; it is to restore hope and salvation to the lost. Your tone and posture as a counselor should reflect the heart of the Father.

Scenarios for Role-Play (Suggested).

LIFE International would like to thank the Life-giving ministry leaders who contributed the following client stories. Each of these client cases represent real men, women, and families from the global community who found help and hope through a local pregnancy center or family ministry center.

Print copies of this page for use in training.

- A local couple from a minority group has four daughters. When they discovered they were pregnant with a fifth child, the wife said she would get an abortion because they could not financially afford another child. Her husband pressured her to give him a son. Additional marital issues are increasing her desire to pursue an abortion.
- A woman, in her twenties, was sold into the red-light district (sex) as a young teenager and experienced many awful things, including eight abortions. She just found out that she is pregnant again.
- A single woman in her early twenties recently discovered she is pregnant. She doesn't want to get married and is hesitant to take time off, which could potentially lead to losing her job. She doesn't want to marry her boyfriend because of the difference in their social and economic classes. He wants to keep the baby and marry, but she is still wavering. Her parents want her to have an abortion.
- A mother with a 12-year-old special needs daughter learned she is pregnant again, and this mom does not want to risk having another child with disabilities. She immediately wanted to choose abortion.
- Mrs. M sold her gold because they did not have the money needed for an abortion. After selling her gold, she went to 3 clinics and hospitals, but Mr. M was reluctant to abort the baby. He is calling you for more information.
- Mrs. R does not have sufficient blood in her body because of her heart condition. The doctor has warned her that it may be hard to have a baby. She thinks she might have to abort.
- A couple got married, and the next month, the wife became pregnant. Both are working low-paying jobs and need the money. They did not want to have the baby so early in their marriage; hence, she wants to abort the child. Her husband called and explained the situation; now you have the opportunity to share it with both of them.

Session 11

Next Steps for Life-Giving Ministry

*“Thus says the Lord: ‘Keep your voice from weeping,
And your eyes from tears,
For there is a reward for your work, declares the LORD,
And they shall come back from the land of the enemy.
There is hope for your future, declares the LORD,
And your children shall come back to their own country.’” Jeremiah 31:16,17*

Facilitator Help: “The Learner Will,” “Key Points,” and “Scripture References” are provided for you to prepare for teaching. You should not read through these points to the participants.

Remember to plan your time well. Allow the group time to share in pairs or threes the ways they have experienced God speaking, or a time when they benefited from a “redemptive conversation.” How much time you allow will depend on the schedule and the number of participants.

The Learner Will

1. Reflect on how the Lord has been speaking to them throughout the training.
2. Begin developing a Vision and Mission statement for ministry.
3. Be introduced to strategic planning with eternity in mind.

Key Points

- God calls and equips leaders
- True vision shifts from human plans to God’s purpose.
- Visionary leaders like Moses, Elisha, and Paul understand the reality of the Gospel for eternity.
- God’s vision often moves us from comfort to challenge.

Scripture References: Jeremiah 31:16,17; Philippians 3; Acts 9; Romans 1:5; Romans 15:17-32; Proverbs 19:21; Ephesians 2:10

Supplies Needed: Paper and pencil for participants.

Recommended Time: 2 hours

Facilitator Help: Begin this final session with a brief review of what it means to have a Redemptive Conversation. Ask the participants what they have learned and how they have experienced God speaking to them during your time together.

Introduction

The Apostle Paul has a powerful personal testimony of redemption. Considered by traditional Jewish traditions a righteous person (Philippians 3), he considered it all rubbish after an encounter with Jesus on the road to Emmaus (Acts 9). Later, in Paul's second letter to the Corinthians, he tells the story of a man who went to the third heaven and received an eternal perspective that would impact his ministry as an evangelist to the nations.

Paul's life illustrates a radical shift from self-righteousness to Christ-centered living. His letters reveal a clear calling to spread the Gospel and a strategic approach to ministry. Despite hardships, Paul pursued God's purpose with unwavering faith, modeling resilience and obedience.

Paul knew with clarity he was to take the Gospel to the nations (Romans 1:5), and he had a vision for where and when he would move forward with the call. In Romans 15:17-32, he shares his plan with the church, to glorify Christ in all he does, presenting the Gospel to the Gentiles from Jerusalem, and around Illyricum. He would go to Rome and to Spain, and he was pleased to share what he had received from Macedonia and Achaia with the saints in Jerusalem. He had a strong desire, a vision, to return to Corinth to minister to the saints. As we read of Paul's missionary journeys in Acts, we see that he was discouraged from returning to Jerusalem on multiple occasions. Yet Paul felt a leading of the Holy Spirit to return, despite knowing the impending imprisonment and suffering. He clearly understood his purpose and was pursuing the vision he received from the Lord.

Paul opens his letter to the Colossians with prayer, asking the Father to fill them with the knowledge of His will, for spiritual wisdom and understanding. Paul prays with great purpose for their edification and empowerment to "walk in a manner worthy of the Lord." (Colossians 1:3-14) A key aspect of this verse is that Paul wanted them to seek and understand God's will, not their will, but the plan God had for them. Knowledge of God's will comes through Spiritual wisdom and understanding the Word of God.

Do not be jealous or try to compete with Paul's vision or that of any other ministry or leader. It is our responsibility to seek the Lord through His word and prayer, asking Him to reveal His plan for you. You can ask the Father for a clear message or vision.

"Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the LORD that will stand."

Proverbs 19:21

"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."

Ephesians 2:10

God the Father has a plan for eternity, a vision He cast from the fall of man, a plan for redemption (Genesis 3:15). Jesus came to be the Redeemer for all who would believe (John 19, 20). There is also a plan to redeem the earth and make all things new (Revelation 21:1-7).

Stewardship Leaders

Stewardship leadership focuses on managing resources faithfully for God's glory. Rooted in 1 Peter 4:10, which instructs believers to use their gifts to serve others, stewardship requires accountability, integrity, and a servant-hearted approach. Leaders such as Joseph and Daniel illustrate these principles, showing how faithful resource management and unwavering integrity can influence nations and preserve God's people.

Moses was a man who experienced many journeys in his lifetime. Exodus reveals the glory of the Lord in Moses' life. Hidden as an infant during a time of slaughter, raised by royalty, committed murder and fled, worked in the field as a shepherd, and returned to Egypt after an encounter with the Living God, the Great I AM, to fulfill his purpose as the deliverer of the Hebrew people. Hebrews 11 tells us that all these things happened by faith; he fulfilled the call to rescue God's people with eternity in mind. Moses, a man of faith, did not live to see all of the promises of God fulfilled, but by faith, he fulfilled his calling.

Moses lived his adult life in service to God, the I AM. He served God by serving others and by pursuing the plans God presented. Moses' ministry life was not perfect; he, like us, was flawed. There were times he and those around him moved away from the Holiness of God, but God still chose to use them, and He will use us.

Visionary Leadership

Visionary leadership is characterized by the ability to see beyond present circumstances and discern God's purpose for the future. Proverbs 29:18b states, 'Where there is no vision, the people perish,' emphasizing the necessity of divine guidance in leadership. Visionary leaders exhibit spiritual discernment, courage to pursue God-given direction, and the capacity to inspire and mobilize others toward Kingdom objectives. Biblical figures such as Paul and Elisha exemplify these qualities, demonstrating how vision transforms communities and advances God's mission.

Elisha was a visionary leader. Visionary leaders can see beyond the visible reality into the eternal, spiritual reality. In 2 Kings 6:15-17, Elisha bids his servant to open his eyes and see the spiritual battle and chariots of fire. Elisha understood what others did not.

Seek to be a visionary leader through prayer and study of the word of God, invest time pursuing the will and the heart of the Father for impact in ministry. Practicing the pursuit of the Father's heart and His unique calling in your life will result in new visions, opportunities, and growth.

Good leaders steward what the Lord has already provided. Stewardship leaders view their resources as eternal investments. How we use our resources will reflect what we believe about the sovereignty of God.

God's call to identify and cultivate personal vision.

"And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again. And He said this plainly. And Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him. But turning and seeing His disciples, He rebuked Peter and said, 'Get behind Me, Satan! For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.'"

Mark 8:31-33

Jesus had counted the cost, He knew and understood His mission, and He was willing. Peter had his eyes set on the reality he could see rather than the eternal vision of the Father. Peter had an earthly perspective of purpose and was following after the plans of his mind. Often, God's vision and purpose move you from the comfortable places to the uncomfortable.

Visionary leaders receive ministry calls that move from what is possible to what is only possible with God. Reliance on the Father is essential, and it is equally crucial that you develop the skills and talents you possess and invite other members of the body of Christ to join you who have gifts and talents you are lacking. (Ephesians 4)

Jesus stayed on course despite knowing He would suffer, but Peter was dedicated to an agenda that was contrary to God's plan. Peter is another example of a follower of Jesus who, once he saw the eternal perspective, had a significant mission impact. Following the resurrection of Jesus and His instruction to wait for the Holy Spirit, Peter became a powerful voice for the Gospel. He became like Jesus; Peter was willing to lay down his life for the redemption of people through the Gospel message of salvation.

Facilitator Help: allow 20 minutes (depending on time available) Reflection Questions for Listening Prayer

What is the focus of your life?

Are your pursuits aligned with God's redemptive plan?

Do you consistently follow Christ's passions or drift toward personal impulses?

Is your ministry gospel-centered and leading people to the cross?

What life-giving vision is the Lord revealing to you?

Exercise: Provide participants with a blank sheet of paper. Ask them to write a vision and/or a mission statement.

Key Characteristics of a Vision Statement

1. **Future-Oriented:** Focuses on what the organization seeks to become or achieve.
2. **Inspirational:** Motivates and unites people around a common goal.
3. **Clear and Concise:** Easy to understand and remember.
4. **Values-Based:** Reflects core beliefs and principles.
5. **Directional:** Provides a sense of purpose and sets priorities.

For a Christian ministry, a vision statement should:

1. Be rooted in Scripture and God's eternal purpose.
2. Emphasize Kingdom impact rather than temporary success.
3. Inspire faith and obedience to God's calling.

Example Definition: A vision statement is a forward-looking declaration that articulates the ultimate goal and desired impact of a ministry, aligning its efforts with God's eternal plan and inspiring people to pursue His purpose with clarity and passion.

Key Characteristics of a Mission Statement

1. **Purpose-Driven:** Defines why the organization exists.

2. **Action-Oriented:** Describes what the organization does and for whom.
3. **Clear and Practical:** Easy to understand and implement.
4. **Values-Based:** Reflects the core beliefs and principles that guide the work.

For a Christian ministry, a mission statement should:

1. Be rooted in Scripture and God's redemptive plan.
2. Express commitment to spreading the Gospel and serving others.
3. Highlight discipleship, stewardship, and Kingdom impact.

Example Definition: A mission statement is a clear, present-focused declaration that communicates the ministry's purpose, core activities, and commitment to fulfilling God's calling through service, discipleship, and Gospel-centered action.

Practical Applications

To cultivate visionary leadership: dedicate time to prayer and Scripture study, seek God's unique calling, and develop strategic plans rooted in eternal values. Collaborate with others in the body of Christ to complement your gifts and expand ministry impact.

These objectives guide participants to internalize the lessons learned, articulate their ministry purpose, and align their plans with God's eternal vision. Reflection fosters spiritual growth, while drafting a vision and mission provides clarity and direction. Strategic planning ensures that ministry efforts remain focused on eternal outcomes rather than temporary gains.

Strategic planning in ministry is a spiritual commitment to God's vision and stewardship. It requires ongoing prayer, dependence on the Holy Spirit, and a dedication to Biblical principles. By embracing visionary and stewardship leadership, ministries can inspire transformation, foster accountability, and advance the Kingdom of God with integrity and purpose.

Strategic planning within ministry contexts serves as a vital process for aligning organizational and personal goals with Biblical principles. It is not merely a managerial tool but a spiritual discipline that ensures leadership reflects Christ-centered values and fosters a life-giving culture. The purpose of strategic planning is twofold: to align ministry objectives with God's Word and to cultivate leadership that embodies humility, vision, and integrity. We will explore foundational leadership principles, a strategic planning framework, and approaches to leadership development, all rooted in Scripture.

Effective strategic planning begins with vision casting and goal setting. Vision casting involves seeking God's direction through prayer and Scripture, defining mission and vision statements aligned with Biblical values, and communicating these clearly to stakeholders. Goal setting answers critical questions—Who? What? When? Where? How?—and ensures objectives reflect stewardship and visionary principles. This framework provides ministries with a roadmap for sustainable growth and spiritual impact.

Leadership development is essential for maintaining a life-giving ministry culture. Mentorship and discipleship programs nurture emerging leaders, while continuous spiritual and professional growth equips them to serve with excellence. By investing in leadership development, ministries create a pipeline of Christ-centered leaders prepared to meet future challenges.

Conclusion

Leadership in ministry is not self-appointed; it is a divine calling. God equips those He calls with spiritual gifts and wisdom. Visionary leaders maintain an eternal perspective, ensuring that their decisions and actions glorify God and advance His kingdom.

Scenarios for Role-Play

Print copies of this page for use in training.

- A local couple from a minority group has four daughters. When they discovered they were pregnant with a fifth child, the wife said she would get an abortion because they could not financially afford another child. Her husband pressured her to give him a son. Additional marital issues are increasing her desire to pursue an abortion.
- A woman, in her twenties, was sold into the red-light district (sex) as a young teenager and experienced many awful things, including eight abortions. She just found out that she is pregnant again.
- A single woman in her early twenties recently discovered she is pregnant. She doesn't want to get married and is hesitant to take time off, which could potentially lead to losing her job. She doesn't want to marry her boyfriend because of the different social and economic class levels. He wants to keep the baby and marry, but she is still wavering. Her parents want her to have an abortion.
- A mother with a 12-year-old special needs daughter learned she is pregnant again, and this mom does not want to risk having another child with disabilities. She immediately wanted to choose abortion.
- Mrs. M sold her gold because they did not have the money needed for an abortion. After selling her gold, she went to 3 clinics and hospitals, but Mr. M was reluctant to abort the baby. He is calling you for more information.
- Mrs. R does not have sufficient blood in her body because of her heart condition. The doctor has warned her that it may be hard to have a baby. She thinks she might have to abort.
- A couple got married, and the next month, the wife became pregnant. Both are working low-paying jobs and need the money. They did not want to have the baby so early in their marriage; hence, she wants to abort the child. Her husband called and explained the situation; now you have the opportunity to share with both of them together.

Appendix: Training Supplies

Optional: IBI tile prints for use in Spiritual Foundations for introduction.

Poster Paper

Permanent Markers (multiple colors)

If a dry-erase board is available: Dry erase markers

Life in the Womb brochures

Abortion procedures brochures/flipchart if available.

Human Reproduction PowerPoint

Abortion Explained PowerPoint

Crisis Cycle and Emotions PowerPoint

Power Point Projector with all necessary cords and adapters

Fetal Models

Certificates of Completion

Name tags for participants

In advance of training, ask host to:

- Distribute the JOL pre-session pages one week before training. (Email is acceptable.)
- Have copies of Spiritual Foundations session with worksheets copied and ready for use in small groups for the first training day. (Do Not Distribute before training begins)
- Session 10 case studies, copied for handouts (used multiple sessions, Do Not Distribute before training begins)

Appendix: Additional Scriptures About Pregnancy and Children

“This is the written account of Adam’s family line. When God created mankind, he made them in the likeness of God.” *Genesis 5:1*

“With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God’s likeness.” *James 3:9*

“When the LORD saw that Leah was not loved, he enabled her to conceive, but Rachel remained childless. *Genesis 29:31*

So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife. When he made love to her, the LORD enabled her to conceive, and she gave birth to a son.” *Ruth 4:13*

“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.” *Jeremiah 1:5*

“When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. In a loud voice she exclaimed: ‘Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy.’” *Luke 1:41-44*

“Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.” *Psalms 51:5*

“Isaac prayed to the LORD on behalf of his wife, because she was childless. The LORD answered his prayer, and his wife Rebekah became pregnant.” *Genesis 25:21*

“God...set me apart from my mother’s womb and called me by his grace...” *Galatians 1:15a*

“After this his wife Elizabeth became pregnant and for five months remained in seclusion. ‘The Lord has done this for me,’ she said. ‘In these days he has shown his favor and taken away my disgrace among the people.’”

Luke 1:24-25

“I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore.” *Genesis 22:17*

“Then God blessed Noah and his sons, saying to them, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth.’”

Genesis 9:1

“If anyone causes one of these little ones—those who believe in me—to stumble, it would be better for them if a large millstone were hung around their neck and they were thrown into the sea.” *Mark 9:42*

“He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the foreigner residing among you, giving him food and clothing.” *Deuteronomy 10:18*

Appendix: The Bible and Abortion

Taken from *Intimacy Before Impact*, Chapter 12, Abortion.

Although the word *abortion* never occurs in its text, the Bible expresses many guiding principles, giving us God’s heart on the issue. This is not an exhaustive study on abortion. Instead, it provides biblical guidelines for the love and care that we extend to people in a crisis pregnancy.

1. *Children are a gift from God.* (Review “The Bible and Pregnancy” in Chapter 11.)

Sons are a heritage from the Lord, children a reward from him. Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are sons born in one’s youth. Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them. They will not be put to shame when they contend with their enemies in the gate.—Psalm 127:3–5

2. *Personhood begins in the womb upon conception.*

A fetus is a child that is not yet born; as such, a fetus enjoys all the innate qualities of personhood, including a spirit and a purpose. Remember that neither the Old nor the New Testaments use a separate word for the preborn. In the Bible, an preborn child is referred to as a *baby* or *child* and to be pregnant means to be *with child*. (Review “The Bible and Pregnancy” in Chapter 11.)

Your hands shaped me and made me. Will you now turn and destroy me? Remember that you molded me like clay. Will you now turn me to dust again? Did you not pour me out like milk and curdle me like cheese, clothe me with skin and flesh and knit me together with bones and sinews? You gave me life and showed me kindness, and in your providence watched over my spirit.—Job 10:8–12

Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.—Jeremiah 1:5

3. *God prohibits the killing of innocent people.*

You shall not murder.—Exodus 20:13

Do this so that innocent blood will not be shed in your land, which the Lord your God is giving you as your inheritance, and so that you will not be guilty of bloodshed.—Deuteronomy 19:10

There are six things the Lord hates, seven that are detestable to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood,—Proverbs 6:16–17 (See also Isaiah 1:15; Jeremiah 22:17.)

4. *The killing of children is especially detestable to God and has devastating consequences for those who sacrifice them.*

The people of Judah have done evil in my eyes, declares the Lord. They have set up their detestable idols in the house that bears my Name and have defiled it. They have built the high places of Topheth in the Valley of Ben Hinnom to burn their sons and daughters in the fire—something I did not command, nor did it enter my mind. So beware, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when people will no longer call it Topheth or the Valley of Ben Hinnom, but the Valley of Slaughter, for they will bury the dead in Topheth until there is no more room. Then the carcasses of these people will become food for the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth, and there will be no one to frighten them away. I will bring an end to the sounds of joy and gladness and to the voices of bride and bridegroom in the towns of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem, for the land will become desolate. —Jeremiah 7:30–34

And you took your sons and daughters whom you bore to me and sacrificed them as food to the idols. Was your prostitution not enough? You slaughtered my children and sacrificed them to the idols. ... This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Because you poured out your wealth and exposed your nakedness in your promiscuity with your lovers, and because of all your detestable idols, and because you gave them your children's blood, therefore I am going to gather all your lovers, with whom you found pleasure, those you loved as well as those you hated. I will gather them against you from all around and will strip you in front of them, and they will see all your nakedness. I will sentence you to the punishment of women who commit adultery and who shed blood; I will bring upon you the blood vengeance of my wrath and jealous anger.—Ezekiel 16:20–21, 36–38 (See also Leviticus 18:21, 29–30; 20:1–5; Deuteronomy 12:31.)

5. *God calls us to be rescuers and defenders of the weak and defenseless.*

When we obey, we are imitating Him who is our Rescuer and Defender.

Rescue those being led away to death; hold back those staggering toward slaughter.—Proverbs 24:11

Defend the cause of the weak and fatherless; maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed.—Psalm 82:3

6. *God also calls us to imitate Him in our response toward the abortionist.*

Jesus did not come to condemn sinners but to save them. It is a sin to perform abortions, just as it is a sin to have an abortion, but both of these sins are pardonable by the blood of Christ. God requires us to simultaneously hate the sins and love the sinners, leading them to repentance through His kindness.

[Jesus said,] “But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil

and the good and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that?”—Matthew 5:44–46

For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son. This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God. —John 3:17–21

... God’s kindness leads you toward repentance—Romans 2:4b

Appendix: Continued Education for Counseling

Appendix: Abortion Citations

For short discussion of The Future of Abortion Worldwide:

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<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK234199/> (The Political History of RU0486) accessed 5/20/24

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<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/7625622/> Misoprostol dosage in the prevention of nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug-induced gastric and duodenal ulcers: a comparison of three regimens accessed 5/20/24

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Cooper DB, Menefee GW. Dilation and Curettage. [Updated 2023 May 7]. In: StatPearls [Internet]. Treasure Island (FL): StatPearls Publishing; 2024 Jan-. Available from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK568791/>

Zaidi, S., Yasmin, H., Hassan, L., Khakwani, M., Sami, S. and Abbas, T. (2014), Replacement of dilation and curettage/evacuation by manual vacuum aspiration and medical abortion, and the introduction of postabortion contraception in Pakistan. *International Journal of Gynecology & Obstetrics*, 126: S40-S44. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijgo.2014.03.016>

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<https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2024/03/25/what-the-data-says-about-abortion-in-the-us/> (accessed 5/22/24)

<https://www.fda.gov/drugs/postmarket-drug-safety-information-patients-and-providers/questions-and-answers-mifepristone-medical-termination-pregnancy-through-ten-weeks-gestation> (accessed 5/22/24)

<https://www.guttmacher.org/2024/03/medication-abortion-accounted-63-all-us-abortions-2023-increase-53-2020> (accessed 5/22/24)

<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240075207> Clinical practice handbook for quality abortion care; 15 June 2023

<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2797883> Requests for Self-managed Medication Abortion Provided Using Online Telemedicine in 30 US States Before and After the Dobbs v Jackson Women’s Health Organization Decision (accessed 5/22/24)

https://scielo.isciii.es/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0211-95362008000100015 Designs of devices: The vacuum aspirator and American abortion technology, Tanfer Emin Tunc, 2008

<https://www.guttmacher.org/fact-sheet/induced-abortion-worldwide>

<https://www.ucsfhealth.org/education/aspiration-versus-medication-abortion>

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Contraception, Volume 99, Issue 1, 2019, Pages 10-15, ISSN 0010-7824, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.contraception.2018.08.011>. (<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0010782418304049>)

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<https://www.bmj.com/company/newsroom/nine-out-of-10-abortions-done-before-12-weeks-in-many-high-income-countries/>

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Safety and efficacy of manual vacuum suction compared with conventional dilatation and sharp curettage and electric vacuum aspiration in surgical treatment of miscarriage: a randomized controlled trial Toshiyuki Kakinuma^{1,2*}, Kaoru Kakinuma^{1,2}, Yuuka Sakamoto^{1,2}, Yoshimasa Kawarai¹, Koyomi Saito¹, Motomasa Ihara¹, Yoshio Matsuda¹, Ikuo Sato¹, Michitaka Ohwada¹, Kaoru Yanagida² and Hirokazu Tanaka¹

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CHAPTER 10 First-trimester aspiration abortion Karen Meckstroth MD, MPH, and Maureen Paul MD, MPH—citation from Abortion Text Book