

GUIDELINES FOR HEALTHY COMMUNICATION

1. Be An Active Listener

- Listen without trying to figure out what someone is going to say (mind reading)
- Do not talk to others (cross-talk) while someone else is sharing
- Proverbs 18:13 *"He who answers before listening – that is his folly and his shame."*

2. Talk About Your Own Issues

- Use "I" statements
- Discuss areas where *you* need to change, not what *other people* are struggling with
- Colossians 4:6 *"Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt."*

3. Accept Where Others are in Their Journey

- Do not try to "fix" people's problems and don't give advice to others unless it is requested
- Accept others where they are and don't take lightly someone else's feelings
- Romans 15:7 *"Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you . . ."*

4. Always Maintain Confidentiality

- Do not allow gossip – what is said in the group . . . stays in the group
- Exercise care with gossip and confidentiality in prayer requests and prayer
- Proverbs 11:13 *"A gossip betrays a confidence, but a trustworthy man keeps a secret."*

5. Be Compassionate and Non-judgmental

- Don't criticize, condemn, or look down on others
- Allow people to cry and avoid practices which communicate that crying is not okay
- John 8:11 *" . . . Then neither do I condemn you."*

6. Let Go of Control and Hidden Agendas

- Be careful with manipulation, controlling or parental attitudes, & dominating the discussion
- Challenge, but do not pressure others to participate
- 2 Corinthians 3:17 *" . . . where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom."*

7. Practice and Encourage Honesty and Openness

- Be as honest and vulnerable as the safety level of the group allows
- Avoid presenting an image of looking "okay" and "together"
- 2 Corinthians 12:9 *" . . . for my power is made perfect in weakness."*

8. Focus on the Present

- Share what is going on in your life right now
- Try to be present with the thoughts you are thinking and the feelings you are feeling
- Psalm 118:24 *"This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it."*

9. Take Ownership of Your Own Life and Growth

- Your journey is your responsibility
- Remember that you cannot change others, but you can change yourself
- Galatians 6:5 *" . . . for each one should carry his own load."*

10. Uphold Group Guidelines

- It is the entire group's responsibility to make sure these guidelines are enforced
- Consider reminding each other of these guidelines at the beginning of every meeting
- Heb. 10:24 *" . . let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love & good deeds."*