

Booklet

4

DEVELOPING YOUR SKILLS

Archdeacon Bob Barrett

People Helping Skills

**For worship leaders, Home Group Leaders, Parish Visitors
and those who want to grow in helping people.**

DEVELOPING YOUR SKILLS Number 4

Archdeacon Bob Barrett

People Helping Skills – An Introduction

We can all help people in need. This booklet summarises the basic knowledge and skills we need. It will be of value to any who do parish visiting; lead small groups or ministry teams; are involved in Prayer Ministry; or who lead worship.

The Lord will give you opportunities to use the perceptions you have gained.

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

SECTION A: BACKGROUND REALITIES

Yes we can

No we can't

Attitudes for People Helpers

SECTION B: BEING A PEOPLE HELPER

Responding to the crisis

Guidelines for People Helpers

Techniques for People Helpers

Listening with ears and eyes

To say or not to say

Suicide

Some warnings

SECTION C: HELPING PEOPLE WORK THROUGH GRIEF

Understanding grief

Facing death

Helping children grieve

The Grief Cycle – 10 stages

CONCLUSION

APPENDIX:

1. Healthy and Unhealthy Ways to Meet a Crisis
2. Guidelines for Listening
3. Some Bible Passages
4. Some books

*"Be sure to use the abilities God has given you.
Keep a close watch on all you do and think.
Stay true to what is right
and God will bless you and use you to help others."
1 Timothy 14:16 Living Bible.*

INTRODUCTION

Over the years many people, books and courses have contributed to my life and assisted me in growing my people helping skills.

Notably I owe a debt of gratitude to Margaret, my wife, whose natural ability in this area has been deepened with special study and years of involvement in the areas of Pastoral Care and Counselling. Some of her abilities have rubbed off on me.

Others, especially the parish staff I have served with and the Ministry Training Teams in the Diocese of Nelson have contributed much from their expertise. Thank you to the staff of St Saviour's Blockhouse Bay (as it was then named) and St George's Epsom – as I served as their Vicar, both groups were training me.

Section A BACKGROUND REALITIES

YES WE CAN . . .

We can all help people in need. Worship leaders, Small Group leaders, staff, vestry members, elders, preachers, up front leaders and people perceived as mature Christians are often seen by parishioners as 'people who can help'. We all need to improve and sharpen our understanding and our skills.

This booklet is designed to summarise the basic knowledge and skills we need. The information will be of special value to any who do parish visiting; lead small groups or ministry teams; and/or lead funerals.

Professionals have special expertise in this area but all of us are involved in helping others almost every day - our partner, children, neighbour, workmate and friends. As Christ's disciples we should respect the techniques of professional counsellors. Our contribution can complement the work that they do.

The booklet is only introductory. You will find the issues explored further in such books as 'How to be a People Helper' by Dr Gary Collins, (Vision 1976; Reprinted 1995).

As you read and learn the Lord will lead you to opportunities where he can use the perceptions you have gained. The Lord blesses us so that we can be a blessing to others. Always be open to the prompting and guidance of the Holy Spirit. He knows what people need and he can convey the best way for them to be helped.

Some will be more gifted than others - yet all of us can develop the skills for 'when the need arises'.

NO WE CAN'T . . .

Limitations and Referrals

Being a people helper, even a very good people helper, does not make us a skilled counsellor.

Our people helping will improve with practice, reading and attending courses. HOWEVER - WE ARE **NOT** fully trained counsellors. Our help will have limits.

Many areas of need will be beyond our capabilities. At times we must refer people to others who have more skill and experience. Such referral is not failure.

Knowing our limitations is a vital skill for every people helper.

If in doubt make sure we seek the advice of other more knowledgeable people.

We need to know who in our district is available to receive referrals. Discuss this with your Vicar and others who are developing their people helping ministry. Some doctors, ministers and lawyers have expertise in this area and are willing to give time.

Find who has expertise and in which areas especially who is good with potential suicide.

Know which counsellors charge and how much their fees are (vital information when making referrals). We should refer a 'helpee' (person seeking help) to someone else when:

- they need help which we do not have the expertise to give.
 - they or we are becoming unduly attached or dependent.
 - the relationship is dragging us down or requires more time than we can give.
 - there are legal, medical, severe financial or drug and alcohol dependency issues.
 - depression or suicidal tendencies are exhibited or the person is becoming severely disturbed.
 - we have wrong feelings for the person or are becoming emotionally attached.
 - they begin 'putting up barriers'.
 - they become aggressive or abusive.
 - they want to be helped by someone else.
-

PEOPLE HELPING ATTITUDES

JESUS - OUR MODEL - *"He is our inspiration and guide"*

Read John 11:1-44 where Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead. Reflect on the 'people helping' situation Jesus found himself in. How did he respond?

Notice how Jesus:

- explained what was happening.
- let Martha express her feelings.
- reassured her in a calm manner.
- pointed her to the person of Christ.
- let Mary express her feelings and anger.
- let people grieve.
- expressed his own sorrow.
- calmly bore the hostility of the saddened mourners.

US - OUR ATTITUDES - *"Helping begins with us"*

We will find it difficult to help others if we have 'hang ups' over the very things others want us to help them with.

To grow in our ability to help others means growing in such issues as:

- our own Christian understanding, lifestyle and growth in the fruit of the Spirit.
- our attitudes to and practice of Christian morality.
- our acceptance of forgiveness and willingness to forgive others.
- our willingness to accept the apologies, suggestions and criticisms of others.

We need to be determined . . .

- to keep 100% confidentiality regarding information given to us, confessions made, inner thoughts and struggles shared. Confidentiality must of course be broken in some life and death situations – where people may harm themselves or others
- not to let things shared affect our love for and relationship with any person concerned.
- to handle in a Christian manner the hurts that come our way.
- about our personal faithfulness to the Lord, the Church, the Vicar and other parish leaders and people helpers.

We will be called to be aware of and work on:

- our motives for wanting to help.
- our love - to see people as Christ sees them and to see the potential of what they can become.
- our fallibility, weakness, inadequacies and imperfections.
- our humble ability to stand back, in the shadows, out of the 'limelight' requiring neither recognition nor praise for what we do.

We can pray that our desire will be to:

- let Christ be the focus - John 3:30, 17:3.
- be open to the spiritual dimension of life so that we can introduce Christ and the help he can bring by his Spirit .
- increase our perceptions - so that we can see the situation from the other person's point of view (although we can never fully understand what another person is going through - even if we have experienced something similar).
- be supported. If we are in a people helping situation we must also be in a support-supervisory situation. Discuss this with your vicar. Work out where your support is coming from - a group? a person? Who are you accountable to?

OTHERS - THEIR ATTITUDES

"Helping others is affected by their concerns, attitudes and willingness to be helped".

- Sometimes we may need to be patient while their willingness to receive help grows.
 - Some people do not want help. "Free will" is a basic human right God has given them which we must not overrule.
 - They may be fearful - e.g. of being condemned, being hurt further, suffering more pain by exploring what has happened.
 - We may be able to find a way to gently motivate them to want help.
 - Some people will want you to solve their problem - be careful, a people helper should aim to help people find their own solutions.
-

Section B BEING A PEOPLE HELPER

RESPONDING TO THE CRISIS

A crisis often hits people. It may be predictable (especially life stage development issues tied in with age, school, adolescence, exams, job, marriage, children, middle age, and retirement). Others are unpredictable. Either type of crisis can "hit" people suddenly, throwing their ability to cope. Their inner resources are not enough. They need the help and support of others.

Just because we would cope does not mean others can. Everybody responds uniquely - depending on such things as personality and experience.

To help we need to understand the effect of the crisis on people. Often they will experience grief (see Section C).

We can help by being available and present:

- allaying anxiety and helping them overcome fear;
- assisting with practical things;
- listening and allowing them to talk;
- discovering the real issue(s);
- helping them accept the situation;
- assisting them to work through issues and make appropriate choices;
- helping people gain a different perspective;
- using prayer and the scriptures sensitively;
- getting information for them;
- allowing anger or frustration to be expressed (including at us);
- gently and eventually inspiring appropriate action.

Above all they must make their own decisions - and not be pushed into following our suggested solutions.

There can be personal growth through a crisis for helper and helpee. We may be drawn closer to Christ and to each other. There can be a renewed commitment. However the road to growth may be rough for a time.

There are many responses to a crisis - some are healthy, some are not. We improve our ability to handle any crisis by being aware of these responses. We may need to help ourselves and others turn unhealthy responses into healthy ones. Gary Collins suggests ten of each. See Appendix 1

SOME GUIDELINES FOR PEOPLE HELPERS

1. BE A CHRISTIAN

People helpers should avoid anything which is contrary to Scripture. We should build on the positive Christian attributes of care, concern and love (desiring the best for the other).

2. HAVE WHOLENESS GOALS

Aim for people's wholeness in all areas of their life so that they can cope with the activities of daily living. Dr Gary Collins suggests goals for counsellors. As People Helpers we could adopt the same goals.

Dr Gary Collins suggests:

"The goals of counselling are to help people function more effectively in their daily lives; to find freedom from spiritual, psychological, and interpersonal conflicts; to be at peace with themselves and to enjoy growing communion with God; to develop and maintain smooth interpersonal relations with others; to realise their fullest potential in Christ; and to be actively involved in becoming disciples of and disciplers for Jesus Christ."

3. BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

We may need to build a relationship before people will trust us to help. This may take minutes or months.

4. BE AWARE OF DIFFERENCES

People are different - unique. Situations are different. Not all respond in the same way. Not all are helped by the same solutions.

5. FOCUS ON THE PERSON

Let their need, what they are feeling and thinking be at the centre. Ensure we are not just having our needs met, not following our agenda, not helping just for our benefit.

6. GO SLOWLY AND CAREFULLY

Rushing puts people off. It seems (is!) simplistic. Deal with areas at the pace, in the order and at the depth which the Lord wishes to lead people through, and which they are comfortable with.

Do not force the person to explore issues they wish to lay aside for the present.

Watch that we don't jump too quickly to conclusions which may later, with more understanding, prove to be inappropriate.

7. BE ACCEPTING

Accept the person 100%, no matter what they have done or are going through.

8. **PROVIDE INFORMATION** - if and when this is necessary, but be very careful about giving advice.

9. CONFRONT WITH CARE

Jesus confronted - but he knew exactly what was appropriate, when. We need to err on the side of caution and may need to check with supervisors or more experienced people before we confront. Confronting is because we care - not to condemn. We only confront if it will help and is timed to be helpful.

10. BE ALERT TO A WAY FORWARD

Not to impose any particular way - rather, by the end of the 'session' to have the person feeling some or all of the following:

- their worth;
- feeling better because they have talked about it;
- seeing possibilities;
- knowing you both can meet again;
- sense of hope;
- sensing release at having shared their burden;
- and/or (whatever is appropriate as stepping stones towards an eventual wholeness').

11. Help people work towards **THEIR CHOSEN SOLUTION**. Helping people see options is not telling them which option to choose. This also includes the spiritual aspects of ways forward. You may not agree with their choice - but "hang in" as a support person.

12. **GIVE SUPPORT** so the person can implement their decisions and (eventually) stand on their own feet without your ongoing help. Realise some people will be happy to talk about their problem, but may not be prepared to take action in terms of stepping towards a solution.

SOME TECHNIQUES FOR PEOPLE HELPERS

Some simple ideas which may prove helpful (when used at the right time, in the right place, with the right attitude, in the appropriate way).

SILENCE – being there to help does not mean we need to talk at the person being helped

TOUCH - with care to gender issues and the level of comfort a person feels. It is not wise to comfort a person of the opposite gender with touch except maybe briefly in the socially acceptable area of the upper arm. Remember - some people are not "touch types". When and how to touch depends on the occasion, who is present, gender and age differences. Watch - some are helped by touch, some are uncomfortable, some read the wrong message in touch.

Allow them and **ENCOURAGE THEM TO TALK**, or to talk further, (e.g. about what happened, how they feel, the person who has died . . .)

BUILD RAPPORT, showing empathy (empathy means "to feel with"). Be genuine. Exhibit warmth.

Help the person **CLARIFY THEIR VIEW** of their problem and express things from their point of view.

LISTEN with your ears and eyes. An essential skill. (See below for the section on Listening Skills).

Share **THEIR EMOTION** (if this can be done without causing judgement or embarrassment to the person).

Ask open ended **QUESTIONS** (which cannot be answered by a simple yes or no). For example saying: "*And how did the person respond to that?*"; rather than asking "*Did the person respond to that?*"

REFLECTING in our words the feelings the person seems to have. For example "*This seems to make you feel pretty angry*".

SUMMARISING what the person has been saying. For example "*As you look at it now every option seems closed and there seems to be no easy solution.*"

When face to face with a person you are helping, read their body language. Also convey appropriate **BODY LANGUAGE** - looking at the person, nodding, leaning forward. Sit side on (perhaps a 60-120 degree angle); not opposite, as that can imply confrontation.

When on the **TELEPHONE** remember our words, tone, mood, pauses, hesitations, responses and acknowledgements are critical. No longer can they read our body movements. We need to work hard at interpreting their need, words and meaning without

the assistance of observing them. Listen to feelings - not just words. Be sensitive to what they are thinking and doing.

Be alert to anything the **HOLY SPIRIT** may prompt you to do or say - but watch for when it will be appropriate to "do and say".

There may be appropriate **BIBLE PASSAGES**, especially some Psalms, to read from or leave with the person.

LISTENING WITH EARS AND EYES *"An Essential Ingredient"*

Listening means listening with all we have got and seeking to show we are listening and interested. It means not showing disagreement or upset because of what they are saying (at least for the present).

Reflect on the Guidelines in Appendix 2 - taken from "How to be a People Helper" by Dr Gary Collins page 46-47).

TO SAY OR NOT TO SAY

SOME IMPORTANT THINGS TO SAY - carefully, in love and where appropriate.

1. "Nothing" - often our presence is more important than our words.
2. "*Would you like me to . . . pray . . . notify/contact . . . call back . . . sit with you . . . find out . . .*"
3. "*That must be . . . difficult . . . confusing . . . upsetting . . . hurting . . . encouraging . . .*"
4. "*I think I see what you mean*"; "*I hear what you are saying.*" However take care not to be glib.
5. Use simple responses that give the person permission to keep talking (when they are ready to). For example "yes", "good", "go on", "and then . . ."

Some things to AVOID saying. DO NOT SAY:

1. "*Time will heal*" - in the midst of a problem, it doesn't seem like time will heal!
2. "*I understand*" - we never fully know what another feels!
3. "*It will be all right*" - it's not at the moment!
4. "*It's not too serious*" – right at the moment it seems serious to me
5. "*That happened to me*" - but I'm not you
6. ". . . *was much more important/serious . . .*" - this is bad enough
7. "*At least it wasn't . . .*" - but it is . . .
8. ". . . *don't worry about it . . .*" - but I am and I can't stop!

9. "*All things work together for good . . .*" - this one isn't!

AVOID SHOWING SHOCK

Be careful not to show shock, horror, disagreement or displeasure.

Never condemn people for what they have done, have failed to do or are doing.

When the time is ripe the Spirit of God will do any convicting necessary.

DO NOT try to **avoid** the problem. Allow the conversation to explore the issues, persons involved, feelings, events – and whatever is the basis of what they are facing.

Avoid using **SCRIPTURE** as a simplistic solution finder. Bible passages can be good, bringing comfort but in the people helping area avoid using them for giving reasons, justifying action or winning argument.

NEVER PRY for information we do not need to know, nor to satisfy our curiosity.

SUICIDE - IT DOES HAPPEN

Helping the Potential Suicide Victim

The mistaken idea is *"if they talk about it then they won't do it."* They still might!

Be alert and take seriously any indication of impending suicide. Watch for:

- direct statements;
- indirect statements e.g. *"I won't be here again."*
- actions e.g. tidying up affairs;
- people who may avoid crisis or consequences by suicide.

Avoid challenging, threatening or goading the person to action.

Sometimes you may be able to help by directly asking their intentions and then encouraging them to see the consequences of their actions.

Provide a listening ear - trying to release their immediate stress.

Encourage them to seek additional help and, if necessary, contact an experienced person, involving them in the situation.

Don't be afraid to refer on. Where a person may harm themselves (e.g. threatening suicide or some damaging action) or imply they intend harming someone else, then we have the type of life and death situations where confidentiality needs to be broken and additional help brought into the situation – both to guide you and probably to work with the person concerned.

Remember if they do go on to commit suicide, it is not your fault - people are ultimately responsible for their own lives and choices.

SOME WARNINGS FOR PEOPLE HELPERS

Helping people of **the opposite gender** has some potential dangers. If we are called to help a person of the opposite gender we need to be alert to the dangers and avoid these by refusing to have more than one or two sessions with the person and/or by having someone else with us. It is also important to meet in a location where others are around (perhaps public church premises).

Burn out or neglect of the things we should be doing can happen - by helping too many people or spending too much time with a few. We therefore do not fulfil our other responsibilities to family, work and God.

Pushing People to Christian Commitment. It would be great if the person we have been helping becomes a disciple of Christ with us. But we don't help for that reason alone. We do not attach strings to our care. We will help because we care - we care because we love - we love because Jesus loves them and us!

Elsewhere **other dangers** have been mentioned, including:

- Lack of confidentiality
 - Personal curiosity
 - Helping others for the benefit of meeting our needs
 - Criticising, condemning and judging
 - Going beyond the limits of our skills
 - Getting too involved or wrongly involved
 - Giving advice
 - Only seeing things from our perspective
 - Losing our love for people
 - Inappropriately confronting
-

Section C

HELPING PEOPLE WORK THROUGH GRIEF

"Jesus wept" John 11:35

Experiences of grief occur in many situations. If we understand the causes of grief and the grief cycle we will be ready to help others.

UNDERSTANDING GRIEF

Grief can occur in a variety of "loss situations: death of friend or family member, sickness, job loss, relationship break, failure, end of something, retirement, loss of a child (leaving home for marriage etc.), redundancy, losing friends, shifting home, divorce, not being promoted, rebellious behaviour of children, . . .

Grief can be expressed after an event or in anticipation of it.

People may express their grief in different ways - but usually show aspects of the "grief cycle" - see below.

People need to be encouraged to face grief

- some will try to avoid expressing grief
- some will panic about their feelings - "*I shouldn't feel angry . . .*"
- some will hide their feelings - "*I shouldn't cry . . .*"
- some will worry about their feelings - "*Why do I feel like this? . . .*"

Denying grief leads to great inner turmoil and potential serious problems.

We need to help people see that their grief is:

- natural - it happens to all of us;
- to be expected;
- sometimes painful;
- often reoccurring;
- faced by non Christians and Christians;
- full of different emotions;
- not to be feared;
- to be talked about with trusted friends (or sometimes with experienced counsellors);
- often difficult – especially when it comes unexpectedly and/or painfully, or to the young or to those very precious to us;
- occasionally lying dormant - waiting to emerge at a later time.

Facing grief means facing the reality of living. It can make us stronger, more mature people who are better able to help others with their grieving.

Grief can be worked through and resolved by everyone - even by those who, when they are in the midst of grief, feel as if there is no way through the pain they are experiencing.

FACING DEATH - in ourselves or others

This can be especially difficult. We may need help. Others may look to us for help. As we help people we will find it useful to keep the following in mind:

For some people the fear of death is greater because it is the fear of the unknown. An unknown process. Unknown anticipated pain.

We may need to help people say farewell to family, friends, possessions, career, hopes and dreams.

We may be the only ones who will be honest enough to talk about impending death. Some family members and friends may pretend avoiding mention of death.

A terminally ill person may wish us to help them:

- tell family or friends
- sort out job, family, housing situations
- organise the funeral
- link them to a clergy person, lawyer and/or funeral director
- provide information about local hospitals or hospices

We may be asked to take the funeral. Lay people can assist in and, with training, can lead a funeral.

We may need to clarify our own thoughts about our death, terminal illness, euthanasia, burial, cremation, talking about death.

We may need to know helpful resources such as suitable Psalms, Bible passages, prayers, booklets with special focuses on such areas as death of a baby, child, spouse..... Booklets are available to help children cope with death

Some people will avoid mention of the person who has died, but as people helpers we will need to be ready to talk about the deceased.

HELPING CHILDREN GRIEVE

Children grieve just as much as adults. Children must not be protected from death. They will find the uncertainty and the upsets they sense much more difficult if we are not honest and they are not included. They must be allowed to grieve - which includes giving them the opportunity (at any age!) to attend funerals.

Young children find death difficult to comprehend. Their understanding increases with age.

- Three to five year olds may see it as a sleep or a journey from which one can return.
- Five to nine year olds understand the reality of death.
- Nine to ten year olds realise the irreversible nature of death.
- Adolescents like adults search for the meaning of death.

Children can be prepared for death by:

- observing it in nature;
- family discussions which acknowledge the reality of death and talk about people who have died;
- seeing the deceased in an open casket (when a suitable opportunity arises);
- adults not pretending they will never die;
- giving advance warning when terminal illness is diagnosed in a friend or family member;
- allowing them to relate to a dying person.

Children can be helped work through their grief by:

- not punishing them if they revert in behaviour (e.g. bedwetting, tantrums, thumb sucking, clinging to adults);
 - helping them to see it is not their fault (they can feel guilty);
 - giving them love, support, time, companionship, understanding, information, permission to express feelings;
 - explaining what grieving parents are working through;
 - being honest
 - being permitted (not forced) to join in, or not join in, family grief activities;
 - explaining in appropriate ways, the aspects of the grief cycle they are experiencing or may experience in the future.
-

THE GRIEF CYCLE

There are about ten stages in the grief cycle.

The edges between the stages are blurred and the order can be varied.

Some people experience some stages more intensely than others.

The cycle can be repeated with different intensity and at different speeds.

If someone gets "stuck" on any stage they may need professional help.

When people do not understand the grief cycle they worry that they are abnormal.

Consequently they may panic unnecessarily.

Being open to the presence of the Lord and the work of the Holy Spirit will help people work through their grief but will not mean they avoid grief.

People in grief need the presence of others - but they also need time alone.

STAGES IN THE GRIEF CYCLE

Stage 1 - We are in a State of Shock - stunned, numbed.

A temporary anaesthetic, an escape from reality lasting from a few minutes to a few days. People then slowly become aware and emotionally face the situation.

They may cope with the ordinary things of life but they may initially express no emotion.

Be near the person and available to help but normally do not take them away from the therapeutic value of staying in their own home situation and doing things for themselves. This will help a person with their grief.

The person sometimes appears serene but the strong exterior may eventually break allowing them to express strong emotions.

Stage 2 - We Express Emotion

Emotional release comes as they realise how dreadful the loss is. The uncontrollable urge can well up and they need to express grief.

We can encourage people to express these feelings - including crying (at whatever level of intensity they feel). Kiwi culture men may find it difficult to cry thinking this is a sign of weakness

We cannot live fully and deeply without expressing some emotion in our religious experience and our grief.

A person can withstand great sorrow and loss provided they do not have to bottle up their emotions.

Some find it too embarrassing to show their emotion openly and must be allowed to be alone.

Stage 3 - We Feel Depressed and Very Lonely

People may find themselves having thoughts they never had before.

They may feel there is a barrier between them and God. They may say God does not care. They may even doubt that there is a God.

Depression can come to all people when something they treasure is taken from them.

They may feel there is no reason to continue and begin withdrawing from life, from family and from the people seeking to help.

Suicide may be contemplated.

For some people the clouds roll away suddenly. For others it takes longer. They require our loving presence, care and concern. We can help by 'being there' and maybe helping them see that any depression is natural and will eventually pass.

Stage 4 - We May Experience Physical Symptoms

It is unusual to eat and sleep normally. Some may dream more - a way of reliving the past and resolving the problems of the present.

The grief and resulting tension may cause physical symptoms of illness, headaches, dizziness, etc. Medication may give little relief.

Stage 5 - We May Have an Inability to Concentrate

People can be preoccupied with loss and not able to concentrate on anything they try to do. They may not wish to, or may find it impossible to, face other issues. Others may worry about the person's mental health.

There may be a focus on the past - maybe an idealising of it.

It will be difficult to make decisions - yet some need to be made. However we should not push people into making decisions which need to be and can be delayed. Some may try to run away from life. They may prefer to stay at home. They may not want to be forced to be nice to people.

Stage 6 - We Feel a Sense of Guilt About the Loss

When losing a loved one people naturally feel guilty about the hurts and unhappy experiences they have caused that person. People may feel guilty because they still live, or they were not present, or . . .

There is a distinction between normal real guilt and neurotic guilt. Normal guilt is felt when we have done, or neglected to do, something which we should or shouldn't have. Neurotic guilt is out of proportion to our own real involvement in a problem. Neurotic guilt is often intertwined with real guilt.

The person who understands God's gift of forgiveness has an advantage in that they do not fear admitting guilt. They can make an honest confession to God.

Unresolved guilt can make people miserable for years. We can help people confess and find forgiveness and relief. Some may be helped by formal confession to a priest.

Stage 7 - We are Filled with Hostility and Resentment

People often go through a stage of being very critical of everything and everyone related to the loss. It is people's attempt to understand why this thing happened and who is to blame. For example there can be anger towards doctors, nurses, family, God.

People often express hostility to anyone who had anything to do with not helping the person in the way the grieving one thinks they should have. *"If only they had done something sooner. . . ."*

Stage 8 - We are Unable to Return to Usual Activities

People may think they should not participate in former activities because it would be disloyal to enjoy life. They have the impression that grief is out of place in society and so they carry all the grief within themselves.

Other people (not the grieving ones) take up life again. This implies to the grieving person that these people 'don't care'. The person protests by lack of involvement to remind others of the loss they have faced. Friends and helpers often offer sympathy to the grieving person immediately after the loss and then imply 'let's get back to business/normality.'

It is a part of the helper's task to keep the memory of the loved one alive. The quality of our personal interest in a grieving person can show that we do want to share their burdens with them.

It is important for the helper to talk naturally about the loss and the deceased and to show that people have not really forgotten.

Stage 9 - Gradually Hope Comes Through

We will observe people working through the stages and becoming less intense about stages they once had greater difficulty with.

As we wait for this we must usually avoid the 'time will heal' type of statement.

People may be in grief for weeks or months. We are never sure how long it is going to last. No two people or two grief situations are the same.

Some people need more help and presence than others. You will realise who needs to work through the grief on their own and give them space to do so while still being available if needed.

Stage 10 - We Begin to Readjust to Reality

Any significant grief experience changes people. The loss will have left its scars and gaps.

Even though readjustments have been made the grief cycle may be gone through again.

Those who never work through their grief may, years later, still be struggling.

Christians with a mature faith are preparing for whatever may come to them. They wrestle with grief creatively in Christ. They will grieve but understand that their relationship with God can never be taken away.

Even with faith and preparation we are seldom prepared for the changes a loss makes in our everyday lives.

Section D CONCLUSION

You as a Church family and an individual Christian can be a great help - both to Church members and others.

Recognise your limitations and do not be afraid to seek help or refer people to others.

Learn more - by reading, taking up learning opportunities and through experience (by analysing what happens, building on 'successes' and growing through mistakes).

Be available - you may be surprised by the opportunities the Lord brings and the enabling work of the Spirit in your life. You will see others helped as a result of your ministry.

Rejoice in anticipation.

APPENDIX 1:

HEALTHY AND UNHEALTHY WAYS TO MEET A CRISIS

from Gary Collins 'How to be a People Helper' (p 116 2nd Ed; wording 1st edition).

Unhealthy Ways to Meet a Crisis

1. Deny that a problem exists.
2. Evade the problem (via alcohol, for example).
3. Refuse to seek help or to accept it.
4. Hide the fact that you have feelings of sorrow, anger, guilt, etc.
5. Don't think through the nature of the crisis situation.
6. Give no thought to practical ways in which you might deal with the crisis.
7. Blame others for causing the crisis and expect that somebody else is totally responsible for curing it.
8. Turn away from friends or family.
9. Refuse to pray about the crisis.
10. Convince yourself that a crisis is evidence of God's punishment or disfavour.

Healthy Ways to Meet a Crisis

1. Face the fact that there is a problem.
 2. Attempt to understand the situation more fully.
 3. Open channels of communications with friends, relatives, pastors, or others who might be able to help you.
 4. Face up to your negative feelings of guilt, anxiety, or resentment, and consider actions and alternative ways of viewing the situation so that you can deal with these feelings.
 5. Separate the changeable from the unchangeable in the situation and accept that which cannot be changed.
 6. Explore practical ways of coping with the problem, and take steps (however small) in handling the problem in a practical way.
 7. Accept responsibility for coping with problems, even problems which seem to have arisen from situations beyond your control.
 8. Draw closer to friends and family, especially those who are helpful.
 9. Pray about the matter, honestly sharing your concerns with God.
 10. Do not forget the sovereignty of God, who loves mankind and is both aware of our crises and concerned about us.
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APPENDIX 2:

SOME GUIDELINES FOR LISTENING

from Gary Collins 'How to be a People Helper'
(wording 1st edition, p 41-43 2nd edition)

1. Prepare to listen.

- 1) Intellectually: Reading about the issue being discussed can help you to listen both intelligently and critically. To know what to listen for is to listen better. Don't avoid difficult subjects.
- 2) Physically: Since listening is hard work, take enough rest before you face it. Don't take an over relaxed position that induces fatigue or grogginess.
- 3) Mentally:
 - a. Realise that if you really want to listen to another person, this will do a great deal to increase your listening effectiveness.
 - b. Decide that you are going to learn by listening. Daniel Webster once said that by listening to intelligent men he had learned more than from reading books. Listening is not only one of the best ways of learning new information and ideas, but it is also one of the best ways of learning about people.
 - c. Be aware that concentration is not easy and that listening requires discipline.
 - d. Recognise that not listening equals indifference, and this doesn't help anyone.
 - e. Realise that learning to listen to one another helps us learn how to listen to God.
 - f. Get rid of the idea that listening is less important than speaking. A poor listener is likely to be a poor speaker as well.
 - g. Don't assume that you already know the full implications of the idea you are listening to.
2. *Judge content as well as delivery*. We look at the speaker and often concentrate on what we see rather than on what we hear. We can better understand content by paying attention to both non verbal and verbal cues from the speaker.
3. *Control your emotions*. You might feel overpowered by your own emotional problems and be tempted to stop listening intently. Don't stop listening because you dislike the other person. Be patient with what he says.
4. *Resist distractions*. We are distracted not only by what we hear, but by what we see and are thinking. A good listener instinctively fights such distractions.
5. *Pay attention*. Attention is necessary for listening. Try to be interested in what is being said. Look at the person who is talking. Lean toward the person as he or she talks.

6. *Capitalise on the fact that you can think faster than another person can talk.*
 - 1). Think ahead.
 - 2). Weigh what you hear.
 - 3). Review what you have heard.
 - 4). Listen between the lines.
 7. *Ask questions sparingly. Especially try to avoid asking "why?"*
 8. *Try not to interrupt.*
 9. Stick to the speaker's subject.
 10. *Use the speaker's words to get your own point across.*
 11. *Don't preach.*
 12. *Go slow on giving advice. Most people don't want advice and promptly ignore it when they hear it.*
 13. *Don't argue. Don't try to persuade your helpee by becoming more argumentative, for this confirms his original beliefs and leaves him deaf to any kind of reasoning about the subject. If you win the argument you may lose a friend. If you lose, you may forfeit the respect of your helpee. Either way you have nothing to gain, and neither does your helpee.*
 14. *Don't probe for additional facts for your own curiosity. Your purpose is not that of obtaining information for yourself.*
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APPENDIX 3:

SOME USEFUL BIBLE PASSAGES

Think carefully about when and how you would use these passages and which verses are appropriate.

Psalms 23, 37, 46, 91, 103, 121, 139.

Matthew 6: 25-34; 11: 28-30

John 14: 1-7, 27

Romans 8: 9, 39

1 Cor 10: 12-13; 15: 12-20, 42-44, 53-58

2 Cor 4: 7-12; 5: 17-21; 12: 7-10

Phil 4: 4-7, 13-19

Col 3: 12-17

Heb 2: 14-18; 4: 15-16

1 Peter 5: 6-7

1 John 1: 9

APPENDIX 4:

BOOKS

There are many books available to assist people become more effective people helpers. Look at those available in your local Christian bookshop, your local Christian Library, your Vicar's study.

Three authors worth looking for – their books have been positively reviewed and used and republished:

Gary Collins

- '*How to be a People Helper*' (Vision or Regal, 1976 reprinted 1995)
- '*Christian Counselling*' Gary Collins (Word Books)

Lawrence Crabb

- '*Understanding People*' (Marshall Pickering)
- '*Finding God*' (Scripture Press)
- '*Effective Biblical Counselling*' (Marshall Pickering)

Granger Westburg '*Good Grief*' (JBCE. 1966 & other publishers)

This is an old but very useful booklet – frequently reprinted and very useful for giving to others.

TITLES IN THE SERIES:

Number 1 "Visitor Friendly Worship"

Number 2 "Worship - Who is it for?" – 2001 edition.

Number 3 "Leading Worship - The Prayers"

Number 4 "People Helping Skills"

Number 5 "Preaching and Teaching"

Number 6 "Stewardship - The Financial Area"

Number 8 "Healing - Prayer Ministry"

Number 9 "Informal Worship - Designing and Leading"

Number 10 "Incorporation - Helping Newcomers Into Membership"

Number 11 "Change - Introduce New Things Successfully"

Number 12 "Youth Ministry For the 21st Century"

Number 13 "Handling Hurts in the Church"

Number 14 "Managing Conflict in the Church"

Number 15 "Every Member Ministry – Making It Work"

Number 16 "Criticism – How Do We Respond?"

Please note that Number 7 on Planning is not available in the Electronic Series.
