

Module Five Group Process Stress Less Relationships

Opening Prayer

Introduction

The following activities will help you experience how each of us see the world differently and practice deeply listening to one another. These are both essential in having less stress in your relationships.

Activity #1: Fact or Opinion

The leader: Hold up the following picture and ask each person in the group what they see in the picture, what they think the artist was trying to express.



Then after letting everyone express his or her opinion, reflect to the group how each of them saw the same thing but interpreted it differently. Explain we each see things differently depending on whatever we are thinking in the moment. This is called separate realities. We are all different and yet within our differences we can all get along. When you acknowledge that everyone in your life needs to be loved, appreciated, and listened to, you create unity. When you understand that every person is miraculously created in the image and likeness of God, you create peace. The key to creating unity and peace is acknowledging, celebrating, and honoring these differences as gifts, then recognizing the magnificence in each and every person that crosses your path.

These separate ways of seeing things are differences of opinion. Differences of opinion make up most of our conversations. Often, it is how we express these differences, rather than the differences themselves, that creates conflict.

Activity #2: Deep Listening

Partner two group members together, have them sit face to face. Set a timer for three minutes and have them share something that is bothering them. Have the other person just sit and listen with the intention of understanding. Without giving any feedback or advice. Then switch places.

As a group discuss what it felt like to just listen without giving feedback or advice, what did it feel like to just be heard and have someone else be present to listen?

Scriptures on Communication

May these words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer. (Psalm 19:14)

A truly wise person uses few words; a person with understanding is even-tempered. (Proverbs 17:27, NLT)

Some people make cutting remarks, but the words of the wise bring healing. (Proverbs 12:18, NLT)

A gossip tells secrets, so don't hang around with chatterers. (Proverbs 20:19, NLT)

My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry. (James 1:19)

And "don't sin by letting anger control you." Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry. (Ephesians 4:26, NLT)

Finishing is better than starting. Patience is better than pride. Control your temper, for anger labels you a fool. (Ecclesiastes 7:8-9, NLT)

Don't quarrel with anyone. Be at peace with everyone as much as possible. (Romans 12:18, TLB)

So, encourage each other and build each other up, just as you are already doing. (1 Thessalonians 5:11, NLT)

The heartfelt counsel of a friend is as sweet as perfume and incense. (Proverbs 27:9, NLT)

Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise, but the companion of fools suffers harm. (Proverbs 13:20, NRSV)

Wounds from a sincere friend are better than many kisses from an enemy. (Proverbs 27:6, NLT)

Questions for Reflection

1. When you share your thoughts and feelings, do you need to make yourself right?
2. How can you let go of this?
3. Where is conflict appearing in your life?
4. What strategies can you use to resolve these conflicts peacefully?
5. When will you begin?
6. After reading the scriptures, which ones spoke to your heart?

Homework

When you are communicating with others notice separate realities.

Closing Prayer