

Redemptive Conversations: Sharing God's Comfort with Others

“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
Logo**



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Introduction

One of the toughest situations for any individual to face is an unwanted pregnancy. The choice facing these individuals—including parenting, adoption, or abortion—often seems like making the “least bad” choice among a range of bleak alternatives. Isolation is often 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.

Very few people feel comfortable talking about these subjects, and even fewer feel equipped to actually give counsel to an individual facing these challenging circumstances. 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—“wanted” or “unwanted”—is a unique and valuable person. 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 unwanted pregnancy are in desperate need of a person to confide in, someone to speak truth and give them hope. As followers of Christ we are called to bring comfort to the hurting, in the same way that we have been given comfort.

The purpose of this material is to equip people to engage in *redemptive conversations* with those men and women involved in unwanted pregnancy who are considering abortion. Through activities, interactions, and exercises, participants will learn how to have these conversations by actually *having* them. They will increase their confidence to engage in conversations about sensitive and difficult subjects, and discover for themselves that God has equipped all of us uniquely to respond to the people He places on our path.

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

Participatory learning

This training is intended to be facilitated using “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 for themselves, drawing on existing knowledge and personal experience. This is contrasted with lecture-based teaching, in which learners *receive* information from an instructor. Facilitators are encouraged to ask open-ended questions from participants whenever possible

Session 1

The Journey of a Life-Giver: Review

Recommended Session Time: 2 hours

This training will assume that the participants have attended LIFE International's training on the sanctity of human life, called *The Journey of a Life-Giver*.

In order for the participants to be prepared to provide counsel to a person facing an unwanted pregnancy, they need to have received training and be knowledgeable in the following topic areas, as represented by chapters from *The Journey of a Life-Giver*. (The questions included with each topic are examples of the types of inquiries each participant should be prepared to answer.)

1. **Biblical Worldview.** *How can I be sure that what I am telling another person is true?*
2. **Sacredness of Human Life.** *Why are human-life violations—such as abortion, infanticide, abandonment, racism, and discrimination—wrong?*
3. **Becoming a Life-Giver.** *If God gives value to every life, how does this truth affect how I treat others in my life: my spouse, my children, even those in whom my culture places no value?*
4. **Spiritual Foundations.** *How do spiritual practices and disciplines—such as worship, prayer, evangelism, and spiritual warfare—relate to the value God places on each human life?*
5. **God's Design for the Family.** *Acknowledging that God has given value to each person, what changes must I make in my relationships and treatment of my own family: spouse, children, parents, etc.?*
6. **Biblical Sexuality.** *Since God created me and gifted me with my sexuality, how do I then live in a way that honors Him with my sexuality?*
7. **Human Reproduction.** *How and when does human life begin, and what happens in the nine months before the child is born? How do some birth control methods prevent pregnancy, while others actually end a newly created life?*
8. **Abortion.** *Why is abortion the taking of human life? What happens during an abortion procedure?*
9. **After Abortion.** *What are the physical effects of abortion in a person's life? Emotional effects? Spiritual effects? Relational effects?*
10. **Repentance and Forgiveness.** *Have I confessed my sexual sin to God? To another person? How do confession and repentance lead to healing and restoration in a person's life?*

Exercise 1.1 (120 minutes)

1. Divide participants into ten groups. *Note: If there are not enough participants to form ten groups, you can form fewer groups and assign a second session to one or more groups, as necessary.*
2. Assign each group a single chapter of *The Journey of a Life-Giver* from the above list. (Chapter 1, *The Church Leader's Journey*, and Chapter 12, *Next Steps*, will not be used for this exercise.)
3. Each group should answer the questions (included above) that correspond to their assigned chapter. Next, using their answers, each group will prepare and perform a brief

role-play in which an abortion-minded person interacts with someone on the assigned topic. (The “abortion-minded” actor can be either a man or a woman.) The role-play should demonstrate how the content from each chapter is important and useful for such conversations.

4. Groups will have 15 minutes to prepare their role-play, five minutes to enact the role-play in front of the large group, and five minutes for discussion.
5. Upon the conclusion of each role play, the presenting group can be invited to discuss their answers to the following questions:
 - What did you find challenging about this exercise?
 - What was easy?
 - If you were given the opportunity to reenact your role, what additional information would you add? What might you change about what you said?
 - What information did you consider most important for the “abortion-minded” person in your role-play to know?

Redemptive Conversations

Recommended Session Time: 90 minutes

Exercise 2.1 (30 minutes)

1. Divide 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 went (or were sent) to someone for counsel, and give them about five minutes to reflect on that experience.
4. Ask participants to identify the things that were said during that time that were helpful, and the things that were said that were harmful, and to record their recollections on the prepared sheet.
5. After a few minutes of reflecting and writing, participants can be invited to share their individual responses *within* their small groups.
6. After this discussion time, the full group should come back together to discuss their answers. Participants can be invited to discuss their answers to the following questions:
 - What were the common things people did and said?
 - Why were these things helpful or hurtful?
 - What are we often looking for, and what do we need, when we talk with someone about a difficult circumstance in our lives?
 - How should we approach others when they come to us for advice or counsel?

Note for Facilitator:

Take note of the **helpful** things and refer to them during the following discussion about responsibilities during a redemptive conversation.

What is a redemptive conversation?

A redemptive conversation is one in which you minister to another person by allowing yourself to be used by God as a vessel for carrying His love, and pouring out that love upon others. During a redemptive conversation, you testify that God works all things together for good (Romans 8:28), and that He has a plan to give us a hope and a future (Jeremiah 29:11).

In an authentically redemptive conversation, there are always at least three people 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.

Exercise 2.2 (45 minutes)

Note for Facilitator:

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

1. Draw a line down the center of a whiteboard or poster-sized sheet of paper, dividing it in half. Title the left side **Goals**, and the right side **Responsibilities**.
2. Ask the group to define the difference between a goal (or outcome) and a responsibility.
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?” *Note: If they have missed one of the identified six goals (included after this exercise), add it to the list and ask for feedback.*
4. Give the group about 20 minutes to identify some **responsibilities** that a counselor might have for a conversation with a client. Record their responses on the board. Ask participants: “Why are these responsibilities important?” *Note: If they have missed one of the identified seven responsibilities (included after this exercise), add it to the list and ask for feedback. Remind them at this time that persuading the client to make a particular decision is not their responsibility as a counselor.*
5. Once the discussion has concluded, keep the list visibly posted in the room, when possible, for the remainder of the seminar.

Counselor goals (objectives that you want to meet during your conversation)

1. **Model** God’s unconditional love and acceptance of the client.
2. **Explore** and **clarify** the situation from the client’s perspective.
3. **Exhibit** a godly perspective.
4. **Empower** the client to make an informed decision by educating them about fetal development and abortion procedures.
5. **Identify** support resources in your community and assist the client in obtaining them.
6. **Welcome** the client to return and talk with you, regardless of their decision.

Counselor responsibilities (guidelines for your behavior and attitude during your conversation)

1. Be trustworthy

Your client needs a person whom they can trust with their problem. Often they have not told anyone else of their circumstances. 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. This takes self-discipline, because it is very easy to reveal to other people things that you have been told in confidence. Once you have violated confidentiality, you have broken an unspoken promise made to your client, as well as violated a responsibility given to you by God.

2. Be a good listener

One of your primary responsibilities is to listen well to your client (James 1:19), and listening is a learned skill that takes 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 assist your client in exploring and identifying the specific challenges they may be facing. More challenges can be created in the life of your client if you—as their counselor—hurriedly respond without being sure of the exact nature of the problem. *And the only way to be sure is to listen!*

3. Be a witness

God has prepared and qualified you to speak truth, and your ministry must always testify to *His* truth, *His* authority, and *His* love. It is out of the fullness of His spiritual blessings that you will be in a position to spill over with blessings for others. God continuously washes you clean of sin, fills you with the Holy Spirit, and pours out upon others His love and His truth.

4. Be prepared

Familiarize yourself with the curricular content from *The Journey of a Life-Giver*, including human reproduction, fetal development, abortion procedures, and the effects of abortion.

5. Be truthful

Do not exaggerate. Speaking only the truth will demonstrate to other people that you are trustworthy, and the truth of God sets people free (John 8:32)! The plain facts of fetal development are astonishing 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. While you are not a physician, or a medical expert, it is possible for you to share facts and reveal truths that equip a person to make a decision for life.

6. Be balanced

People need a conversation that balances love and truth (2 John 1: 4-11). Your understanding and compassion can provide immediate relief, but they also need the long-term hope that only God can provide. Your words of truth can give them an opportunity to recognize their sin and receive forgiveness, but that forgiveness comes only through repentance and reconciliation with God, through Jesus (2 Corinthians 5:18-19).

7. Be courageous

Enter a redemptive conversation with confidence. God loves this person and is with you in your desire to minister to them. He desires to redeem their life from sin, and for them to find the truth of his hope in the midst of their problems and suffering. God will give you His words of wisdom (Isaiah 50:4)!

A counselor has many responsibilities when engaging with a client in a redemptive conversation, but one responsibility he or she ***does not have*** is to change someone's mind or persuade someone to make a "recommended" decision. As you provide a safe space and speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15) to your client, the Holy Spirit will guide him or her to ***His*** revealed path.

Understanding where your responsibilities end is an appropriate and healthy guideline for *every* redemptive conversation.

Session 3

Understand Your Client

Recommended Session Time: 90 minutes

Introduction

When we encounter a person who is experiencing personal trials, it can be tempting—in our desire to help or to counsel—to try to “fix” them, to offer solutions for their problems. We can easily allow our personal responses—whether positive or negative—to influence our communication with them. Judgment about a person’s circumstances or decisions (“I can’t believe they did that!”) can also affect our ability to engage and empathize in a meaningful, healing manner. It is therefore imperative that you invite the Holy Spirit to fill you with God’s love for the person you are speaking with. And in order to participate in this process, there are many things you should seek to understand about your client before you attempt to give any counsel.

Exercise 3.1 (60 minutes)

Note for Facilitator:

Following this exercise is a teaching to instruct participants about how to better understand their clients. It will be useful for you to give the following instruction to the full group, in order to help them avoid the natural temptation to talk more than they listen: “Skilled listening takes self-discipline and practice. It is much more difficult to become a better listener than an ‘advice-giver. In this next exercise, the individual in the counselor role must only **ask questions**, and avoid **giving counsel or advice**.”

1. Divide participants into four groups: two groups of women only (**Women 1** and **Women 2**), and two groups of men only (**Men 1** and **Men 2**).
2. Ask **Women 1** and **Men 1** to compose a scenario of a **woman** who is experiencing an unwanted pregnancy and is considering an abortion.
3. Ask **Women 2** and **Men 2** to compose a scenario of a **man** who has fathered an unwanted child and is pressuring the mother to have an abortion.
4. Prepare a role-play for the whole group **only** about the client, and **not** about giving her any input or advice. *What does **she** do? What does **she** say?*
5. Each group will prepare and enact a brief role-play in which they demonstrate the discovery process of understanding the abortion-minded person. The “counselor” should restrict their interaction to gathering information about the client, and should not offer any advice or counsel.
6. Give each participant a copy of the *Categories of Understanding* handout and instruct groups to ensure that their role-plays have identified elements from each of the six categories.
7. Before the role plays are presented, the facilitator will ask the audience to take notes about their own observations during the presentations. Ask audience members to identify specific examples from the six categories.
8. After each role play has concluded, the facilitator will ask the large group to share their observations about the interaction. *What did they learn about the client, according to the*

six categories? What facts are still missing? What did the “counselor” do well? What could have been improved?

Note for Facilitator:

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

Six Categories of Understanding

1. Know your client’s 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 certainly need to know the unconditional love of God the Father in the midst of 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 relationship, purpose, and forgiveness.

Love and Relationship

The client is often struggling with a deep need to be loved. This need is often misdirected into a relationship with someone of the opposite sex 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 to have meaning and purpose in life, whether or not they realize it. Each person wants to be useful, and to know that his or her presence on earth has a purpose. Abortion is often considered or chosen because an individual perceives an unwanted child as a threat to their perceived purpose in life, like finishing school, 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)

Forgiveness

We weren’t designed to bear the accumulated guilt of our sins. We desperately need God’s forgiveness as well as forgiveness from people. If your client is someone who just learned they are pregnant outside marriage, they will need to receive forgiveness from God, the people in their life, and themselves. You have personally experienced guilt, hurt, and broken relationships in your life, but you also know what the Bible says about forgiveness. You can use a redemptive conversation to share these truths with your client. (Colossians 3:12–13)

2. Know your client's circumstances

It is important that you 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 on. Remember that the more difficult a person's circumstances, the more overwhelmed he or she will likely feel when coping 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 getting to know what is most important to *them*, and saving time to speak about those issues. As you gain experience, you will learn how to pace your discussion.

3. Know your client's support system and pressure people

The people in your client's world are important to them and will powerfully influence their decisions. You will hear about boyfriends, girlfriends, spouses, parents, grandparents, and more, and as you listen you should be able to build an understanding of the people who will be most affected by this pregnancy. Some of these people may have a positive influence on them and will speak truth and life 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, you will not be going home with them. They will return to their own family and the people most important to them, and those people will influence your client to *think* the way they think, and *do* what they want them to do. Your interaction will have a better chance of long-term effectiveness if you talk about the peer, parental, and social pressure he/she may face later. Additionally, it may be beneficial for you to meet with any person who has been deeply affected by the pregnancy.

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 in order to accept and respond to them in a responsible manner, versus being controlled by their emotions. Feelings, as natural as they may be, are only a small part of an individual's decision-making toolkit, and they can mislead or trick us, and even immobilize us. Making decisions based on immediate feelings alone is not wise, and this rashness often creates more problems. During a redemptive conversation, you can allow an opportunity—a safe place—for the client to examine and discuss their feelings, and carefully evaluate the outcomes that are available to them.

5. Know your client's strengths

When you talk with your client, they will likely be under great 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 tell you what their strengths are, and these strengths may be obscured under all of the visible challenges. But they are there! Reminding an individual of his or her God-given strengths demonstrates love and acceptance, and creates a more solid foundation from which you can begin to

rebuild confidence, problem-solving skills, and hope. Reminding your client of their strengths also empowers them to make right choices.

6. Know your client's beliefs

In order to better understand your client, take time to learn about their views and practices about sexual intimacy, abortion, and God. As the client talks about their life, you may even discover their beliefs without having to ask about them, and once you know what they believe you'll know what information would be 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.

- Is sexual purity valuable?
- Is this pregnancy the result of their first sexual experience?
- Do they feel free to have multiple sexual partners?
- Is the preborn child a person, or just a “blob of tissue”?
- Is abortion an easy or painless procedure?
- Should a baby with a hereditary disease or handicap be aborted?
- Is abortion a sin?
- Do you have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ?

Conclusion

As you learn about these six categories—basic needs, circumstances, support system, feelings, strengths, and beliefs—you will develop an appreciation for your client's struggle, and identify the internal and external pressures pushing him or her to consider or recommend abortion. Learning about these areas will help you to determine what your client needs to hear, and will guide you to lovingly speak God's truth in a 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.

Categories of Understanding

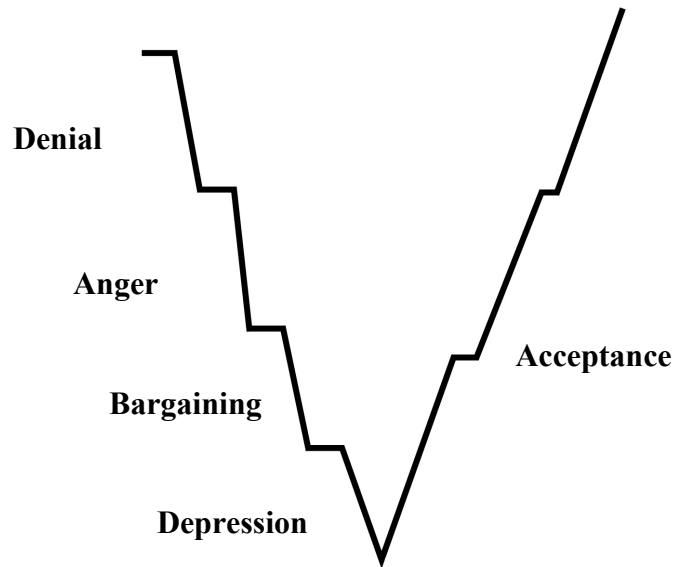
(Exercise 3.1)

1. 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 or shame regarding their situation? (Forgiveness)
2. 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 is the spoken reason for their coming to you?
 - If they are pregnant and don't want the baby, what are they afraid of?
3. Support system and pressure people
 - Who are the people in their life?
 - Which people would support a pregnancy? Which would pressure to abort?
 - Who does he/she share their secrets with?
 - Who is the hardest person for them to talk with?
4. 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?
5. Strengths
 - What is the client telling you that reveals something they can do well or correctly?
Are they hard-working, honest, brave, etc?
6. Beliefs
 - What do they believe about God?
 - What do they believe about abortion?

Session 4

The Crisis Cycle

Recommended Session Time: 2 hours



Exercise 4.1 (30 minutes)

1. Facilitator should review the above diagram of the crisis cycle.
2. Facilitator should share with the full group a personal story from his or her life about a crisis, making sure to include behavior and observations at each of the five stages: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance.
3. Draw the crisis chart on a chalkboard or paper, illustrating the thoughts and actions from each stage, and show the participants how you moved through your crisis. Linking your experience to the crisis cycle will model for participants what you will soon be asking them to do.

Exercise 4.2 (60 minutes)

1. Divide large group into smaller groups of no more than five people each. In order to encourage openness and the development of trust, these groups will meet together regularly throughout the training.
2. The facilitator can give themed names to each group, such as fruits of the spirit (love, joy, peace, etc.) or Bible characters (Moses, Ruth, Paul, Esther, etc.).
3. Within each group, have participants personally share about a crisis that they experienced. This personal crisis *does not* have to be a catastrophic one, but it should be significant and memorable.
4. Using the crisis diagram for guidance, 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."

5. Groups should be given about an hour (10-15 minutes per person) to share their crisis experiences.
6. Encourage group members to pray briefly for each other after a participant has shared their crisis experience.

What is a crisis?

A *crisis* can be defined as a time of trouble or great danger. And although we tend to think of it in wholly negative terms, the word “crisis” can also mean “turning point”—a decisive or crucial time or event. This turning point creates an opportunity: will this crisis work in my life for good or for bad?

What are the stages of a crisis?

People typically travel sequentially through five particular stages during a crisis:

Denial > Anger > Bargaining > Depression > Acceptance

Although there is generally a predictable progression through the crisis cycle (a type of valley, like the illustration shows), 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 people loop back into a stage that they have already experienced, while others may get stuck in a stage and need help to move on. 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, but it can be beneficial to understand this common pattern.

Denial

A normal initial reaction to crisis is *denial*. Though “denial” sounds negative, it 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?” Your gentle response, “Yes, this is happening,” offers them a reality check, and allows them to progress through the crisis cycle toward ultimate acceptance.

Anger

When denial can no longer be maintained, your client is likely to replace it with *anger*, *envy*, or *resentment*. Anger is a normal human reaction, and 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 often rooted in guilt, condemnation, shame, fear, or insecurity. He or she 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 talk these feelings out, they may begin to justify their decisions.

Bargaining

Once your client has worked through their anger, they are likely to come to a point of *bargaining*. People often bargain 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 has realized that they cannot bargain themselves out of this situation, but must face their crisis, he or she will likely begin to *feel* the loss, which is often accompanied by sadness. This stage in the crisis cycle is called *depression*, though in truth he or she may feel a variety of emotions: confusion, desperation, helplessness, guilt, ambivalence, sadness, depression, 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, and it is always hard work, but it is the only way to continue truly living. It is here, in *acceptance*, that your client accepts her situation, gets ready to move on with her life, and makes a decision. They don’t have to be happy about the process or outcome, but they 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 he or she may loop back through one of the earlier stages of the crisis cycle—denial, anger, bargaining, or depression. This is normal, and as you patiently communicate love and compassion, you provide the environment for your client to make life-affirming choices.

Decision-making during a crisis

Based on studies of crises, we know the more that people faced the realities of their circumstances and persevered in actively dealing with them, the stronger they emerged after the crisis. If your client chooses to carry their child to term, they will face additional challenges throughout the pregnancy, delivery, and parenting experience. Each new challenge they face will give them another opportunity to build confidence in their ability to make wise choices. If your client chooses to abort as a means of quickly exiting the crisis cycle, he/she may find that abortion is not actually such a simple solution. Many who choose to abort begin the crisis cycle again, this time with additional guilt and grief. It takes time to work through the stages of a crisis. Whatever their decision appears to be *during* your conversation, accept your client right where they are, pray for them, stay in contact with them, and trust God to continue to invite them to make a wise choice.

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 crisis is not yours*. It is their own opportunity to grow stronger, make wise decisions, and see good come out of trauma, not your opportunity 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:

- Help your client to recognize what he or she has been thinking and feeling during this crisis.
- Empathize with him or her and validate their feelings. You can increase your ability to empathize by recalling what you experienced during a personal crisis.
- Encourage your client that this crisis is neither insurmountable nor unending, but that he or she can survive it and even benefit from it.

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 walks with them through the valley of the shadow of death (Psalm 23:4).

Session 5

The Communication Process

Recommended Session Time: 90 minutes

Exercise 5.1 (10 minutes)

1. Two members of the teaching team should prepare in advance a role-play to illustrate a barrier to effective communication. Role-play should be brief, and preferably humorous, in order to provide an example to participants of what can happen when we experience difficulty in communication.
2. Role-play ideas:
 - Person 1 can begin a conversation in a shared language, then switch to a language foreign (or speak in gibberish) to Person 2.
 - Person 1 can begin talking to Person 2, who abruptly turns his or her back while Person 1 is speaking.
 - Person 1 can begin talking to Person 2, who loudly interrupts Person 1, who continues speaking.

These examples are suggestions, not prescriptions. Whichever scenario is used should simply illustrate a barrier to effective communication (even if the example role play may be unrealistic).
3. Facilitator can ask the audience 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?”
 - “Did effective communication occur? Why not?”
 - “What are some ways that either person could have improved their own communication?”

Communication is a process that involves active participation by all parties. At minimum, the communication process involves two people, who usually alternate roles of sender and receiver. During a conversation, for example, one person will act as *sender*. She will send a message—her spoken words—to the other person, known in this moment as the *receiver*. The *receiver*, at any point, can become the *sender*, when he sends 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.

In order for communication to be effective, both parties—sender and receiver—must actively engage in the process. Problems often arise when people talk (**send** a message) without considering whether or not listening (**receiving** the message) is even taking place on the other end. And every person has experienced the frustration of sharing his or her feelings only to have the “listener” demonstrate—in words or behavior—that he or she was not actually listening at all.

The speaking of different languages can also serve as a hindrance to effective communication. A literal “language barrier,” in which the parties speak different languages, is an obvious obstacle to successful communication. A less visible barrier can be experienced when the same language is spoken, but 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 his head as mere acknowledgment or politeness.

For the purposes of redemptive conversations, during which you will need to skillfully balance the roles of sender and receiver, it is crucial to understand the factors that will affect the communication process between you and your client. Some of these factors are:

- *Feelings*: What your client feels about himself or herself, the listener, and the message will all influence the way he or she communicates.
- *Intentions*: What are the outcomes that your client is seeking? These goals—whether spoken or unspoken—can have a significant impact on your communication.
- *Attitudes*: Beliefs and point of view will shape how he or she communicates.
- *Thoughts*: A person's "inner monologue" can influence the message in a healthy or unhealthy way.

Verbal and nonverbal communication

Verbal communication is composed of the *words* that are used to convey a particular message. Verbal communication can be either *oral*, in which vocal language is used to speak words that convey information, or *written*, in which written words are used to share ideas. While conversations can certainly take place between people that are not together in the same room, using forms such as letters and email, 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 5.2 (10 minutes)

1. Facilitator can ask for a volunteer to come forward from the group.
2. Ask the volunteer to **not 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 him or her to remain silent, and remind the volunteer 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 the use of words.

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 deeply influence the effectiveness and success of communication.

Exercise 5.3 (10 minutes)

1. Write the sentence "I love you" on a whiteboard or large sheet of paper that is visible to the group.
2. To illustrate how these three simple words can be interpreted differently based on the use of nonverbal communication, repeat the sentence three times, emphasizing a different

word on each repetition. After each repetition, ask the audience to interpret the deeper assumed meaning of each repetition.

- Repetition 1: “**I** love you.” Examples of deeper meaning: “*That other guy doesn’t really care about you, but I do.*” “*She may love you, but so do I.*”
 - Repetition 2: “I **love** you.” Examples of deeper meaning: “*I don’t just **like** you, I have much stronger feelings for you.*” “*Please don’t leave me, because I won’t be able to live without you.*”
 - Repetition 3: “I love **you**.” Examples of deeper meaning: “*That other guy doesn’t matter to me anymore.*” “*There are many different women in my life, but I have chosen you.*”
3. The specific responses from the audience matter less than the observation that even for a simple sentence of just three words, nonverbal communication can deeply influence another person’s interpretation of a particular message.

Exercise 5.4 (10 minutes)

1. Facilitator can ask for three volunteers to come forward from the group.
2. Share privately one of the following emotions with each of the three volunteers, and ask them to demonstrate their particular emotion without using words or sounds.
 - Anger
 - Rejection
 - Surprise
3. After each demonstration, ask the audience what emotion was demonstrated, and ask what nonverbal cues they observed that revealed each emotion.
4. For further discussion, you can ask the audience to share observations about differences they have seen, or would anticipate seeing, between members of different cultures, or between opposite genders.

Exercise 5.5 (10 minutes)

1. Facilitator can ask the same three volunteers to role-play a brief interaction that uses only nonverbal communication. (Tell volunteers secretly what they are to represent; don’t share with the audience what is taking place.) Persons 1 and 2 are upset with each other (anger, hurt feelings, etc.) and person 3 is trying to calm them down and bring peace. Have volunteers use various forms of nonverbal communication such as:
 - Facial expressions
 - Arm and hand gestures
 - Posture
2. Afterwards, ask the audience what they understood was happening and what emotions were demonstrated.

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 his or her nonverbal communication does not align with his or her 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 some of the important communication dynamics you need to be conscious of when engaged 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.

Listening during a redemptive conversation

People in crisis are often unable to translate their feelings into words. Because of this difficulty, people will rarely just sit down and identify their feelings to you. You will need to listen carefully in order to recognize indicators and signs that reveal what your client is thinking or feeling. The Bible tells us that we should be quick to listen and slow to speak (James 1:19; Proverbs 18:13), and this instruction is at the heart of any redemptive conversation. Effective listening will encourage your client to share valuable information that will equip you to tailor God's message to them. You must always listen *before* you speak, and you must remember to listen *more* than you speak.

Listening involves more than hearing

Hearing is the physiological ability to perceive sound; it is a passive process. *Listening* involves an active decoding and interpretation of incoming messages, and it requires a greater degree of attention and effort. It is essential to *listen* to your client while they share about their circumstances and their feelings. Don't just *hear* the sounds coming out of their mouth while waiting for an opportunity to open your own.

Factors that influence a person's ability to listen

When you are given a divine appointment to engage with someone in a redemptive conversation, it is your responsibility to listen, and to offer God's hope and love to another person in great need. Even so, you enter the conversation not as 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, so it's important to remain conscious of the following considerations as you begin your redemptive conversation.

Exercise 5.6 (20 minutes)

1. Ask participants this question: "What are some factors that affect how you listen to other people or influence how others listen to you?"
 2. If participants seem unsure of how to respond, suggest "how you were feeling before you started talking" as a prompt to begin the conversation.
 3. Record participants' answers on the board, if you are using one.
 4. Ask questions that elicit factors that the participants may have missed.
- *Feelings*
How you were feeling before you started 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*
What you think your client *means* by the words that he or she is using can affect your ability to listen well. Be cautious about assuming too much. Use clarifying statements ("I heard you say *this*," or, "Please help me understand") in order to clarify your client's message—both for you and for them.

- *Attitudes*
Your worldview, beliefs, and perspective can have a substantial influence on your ability to listen to your client, especially when there is disagreement or lack of alignment.
- *Thoughts*
It is easy to allow your own thoughts and ideas (your “inner monologue”) to distract you from paying attention and listening well to your client.
- *Experiences*
You bring a complex history of experiences to any conversation or relationship, and you have had trials and crises of your own. These experiences may very well be the explicit reason why your client is talking to you in the first place, but even if your experiences are unknown to your client, *God certainly knows* how your experiences have equipped you for ministry during this redemptive conversation. Just be careful that recollections of these experiences don’t hinder your listening 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 negative reactions to challenging things that your client has to say.
- *Age*
We all have experienced challenges when speaking with someone of a different generation, so it’s important to set aside your perceptions of your client’s age in order 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 higher education level than your client, you may be distracted by their language, or by their description of events and circumstances. Because God uniquely gifts every person, it’s important to recognize the God-given value and abilities of every individual.

Exercise 5.7 (15 minutes)

1. Ask participants to prepare a sheet of paper by drawing a line down the middle, separating the page into two equal columns.
2. Ask participants to recall a time when they felt someone had listened to them while they were sharing something meaningful or difficult. Then ask them to recall another experience when they were **not** listened to. Give them a minute to reflect on those experiences.
3. Ask participants to identify the things that were said during that time that were **helpful**, and the things that were said that were **harmful**.

4. Ask participants to write down their recollections on the sheet of paper they have prepared, using one column for examples of **good listening** and one column for examples of **poor listening**.
5. After a few minutes of reflecting and writing, the facilitator can ask for a couple volunteers to share their examples (but without sharing the specifics about the topic of the conversation).

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 was 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 can be empowered and released for ministry through every redemptive conversation.

Session 6

The Counseling Process

Recommended Session Time: 2 hours and 30 minutes

Introduction

In order for you to provide godly counsel to another person, you must be seen as trustworthy. Recognizing three discrete goals of a redemptive conversation—*bond, understand, and guide*—will help you to listen better to the other person (and to the Holy Spirit) and to speak with more wisdom. Each goal is served by three skills that are commonly used in our daily interaction with others. To become more effective in helping others to make godly choices, we need to develop these nine skills in order to increase our trustworthiness and our capacity to provide wise counsel. There is nothing mysterious or advanced about these skills; they are used regularly in daily conversation. Identifying and discussing them, however, can deepen understanding and increase skill in using them to become a more effective counselor.

COUNSELING PROCESS

Prayer



Bond

1. Acknowledge
2. Be genuine
3. Reflect feelings



Understand

4. Ask open-ended questions
5. Reflect impressions
6. Summarize



Guide

7. Give a new perspective
8. Give information for wise choices:
9. Close with hope

**Adoption
Discussion**

**Parenting
Discussion**

**Abstinence
Discussion**

**Abortion
Discussion**



Prayer

Included for each of the three counseling goals—*bond*, *understand*, and *guide*—are three components to assist you in increasing your proficiency:

1. Introduction to the supporting skills (three per counseling goal)
2. Biblical example for each skill
3. Learning exercise to practice the supporting skills

Bond

1. Acknowledge
2. Be genuine
3. Reflect feelings

Bond

As you listen to people and express acceptance of them, you will be providing a safe environment for a healthy **bond** to be established, and this should be your aim as you begin a redemptive conversation with another person. The three included skills—*acknowledge*, *be genuine*, and *reflect feelings*—need not be followed in a particular order. They will often be used simultaneously during the bonding phase of a redemptive conversation.

1. *Acknowledge*

The first step toward building a bond with your client is to *acknowledge* what he or she has said to you. This simple action will allow you to identify the key words in his or her statements and paraphrase what has been spoken.

Biblical example: John 4:1-27. *In spite of cultural rules, Jesus not only **spoke** to the Samaritan woman, he **spent time** with her and **listened** in order to understand her.*

2. *Be genuine*

It is critical for you to model integrity and sincerity when you are engaged in conversation. You can exhibit genuineness by prudently sharing personal information in order to build trust and exhibit empathy and compassion. Keep in mind that being genuine does not mean that you *agree* with your client's decisions. It simply means that you can empathize with the difficulty he or she is facing.

Biblical example: John 11:17-37. *Jesus was willing to show His humanity and His feelings when He wept with Mary and Martha as they mourned Lazarus.*

3. *Reflect feelings*

As you attempt to establish a bond of understanding, it is helpful to verify your perceptions of your client's emotions by reflecting what he or she is saying. Thoughtful and observant questions about your client will help you to clarify for him or her what has been said, and the feelings behind the words. This process will also give your client the opportunity to correct any misunderstandings or to expand on what has already been said.

Biblical example: Jonah 4:1-11. *In his conversation with Jonah, God simply asked him about his feeling of anger. By doing this God was giving Jonah an opportunity to examine where this feeling was coming from.*

Exercise 6.1 (35 minutes: 15 for facilitator model, 15 for activity, 5 for debrief)

1. Two teaching team members should prepare in advance the outline of a conversation between a counselor and an abortion-minded person. For this and the following two sections (bond, understand, and guide), the two facilitators should engage in a conversation that illustrates the three skills of each section. After the three skills of the particular section have been demonstrated, the role-play should be paused for further teaching and discussion about the included skills, before moving to the next part of the role play.
2. For this example role-play, the two facilitators should converse and illustrate the different **bonding** skills. These skills should be illustrated in an exaggerated way in order to make them clear to the audience. To further identify these skills, another member of the teaching team, known as the *observer*, should stand near the role players and hold up signs that designate which skill is being demonstrated during a particular point in the conversation. *Note: Reproducible signs are included at the end of this document.*
3. Upon completion of the model role-play, the large group should be divided into small groups of three people, where they will remain for the duration of the training. *It is helpful if people who have already shared their stories with each other can remain together.*
4. Each trio should sit in a small circle, facing each other. Label each of the three chairs with signs (one per chair) that read **counselor**, **client**, and **observer**. *Note: Reproducible signs are included at the end of this document.*
5. The facilitator can now instruct the small groups to practice the **bonding** skills (*acknowledge, be genuine, and reflect feelings*) as they have just been modeled for them.
6. The acting counselor should now take about ten minutes to have a conversation with the acting client. The client should share about the personal crisis that they previously shared with the group. Remind the counselor to utilize good listening and nonverbal communication while practicing the **bonding** skills.
7. Upon conclusion of the conversation, the observer should offer his or her insight and feedback once the counselor has demonstrated the three **bonding** skills. Once these three skills have been demonstrated and discussed, the three individuals should rotate chairs and have another discussion, with another debrief at the end of the conversation. Rotate positions one more time, and each triad member will have had an opportunity to participate in each of the three roles: counselor, client, and observer.
8. Participants should focus **only** on the three **bonding** skills at this time. They will have time to demonstrate the other skills in subsequent exercises.
9. After all participants have completed their discussions, the full group can answer the following questions: *What went well? What was difficult? What did you learn? Do you have any questions about the **bonding** skills?*

Note for Facilitator:

Teaching team members should sit together with small groups, rotating groups as necessary, in order to coach, guide, and answer questions.

Understand

4. Ask open-ended questions

5. Reflect impressions

6. Summarize

Understand

Establishing a bond with your client will serve little purpose if you don't **understand** his or her feelings, beliefs, strengths, and circumstances. You can also help the client understand herself or himself even more by exploring new and differing perspectives on their present challenges.

4. Ask open-ended questions

Open-ended questions create an opportunity for dialogue by inviting your client to elaborate. These questions also contribute to increased understanding, more authentic feelings, and clearer thinking by encouraging your client to think about what he or she is experiencing, and to explore options he or she may not have considered.

An example of an open-ended question is "Would you tell me about that experience?" or "Can you help me understand what happened?" An example of a close-ended question would be "Are you angry?" If you perceive anger in your client, an open-ended question would be "You seem upset. Can you tell me how you're feeling?" Why questions should generally be avoided because they can make a person feel defensive.

Biblical example: John 6:1-5. *In the story of the feeding of the 5,000, Jesus asks Philip, "Where are we to buy bread, so that these people may eat?" Jesus knew the answer, but he wanted Philip to struggle to reach the right conclusion.*

5. Reflect impressions

When you reflect *feelings* with your client, it deepens your bond and increases understanding. Reflecting your own *impressions* will help your client to see the challenges more clearly, and to evaluate a deeper layer of experience than his or her feelings, which are often limited to the surface. This is often a difficult moment for both the counselor and the client. By simply mirroring another person's emotions or words, the individual has the opportunity to see themselves and their circumstances in a different light. *The counselor cannot force this to happen, or the client may lose trust and end the conversation.*

Biblical example: Genesis 4:3-8. *In this passage God reflected Cain's feelings of anger before challenging him to change his thinking. If Cain were to have changed his thinking, his feelings and behavior would have changed as well.*

6. Summarize

Sometimes it is helpful to stop and review aloud what you have heard. *Summarizing* helps you to clarify what has been said and remember the details after a lot of information has been presented. This serves as an opportunity for you to make sure you understand the details of their story and also how they are feeling about it. This is a necessary step before you begin the next stage of the conversation: *guiding*.

Biblical example: Malachi 3:13-16. *Malachi gives a summary about the sad reality of how the priests had been acting and thinking about their sacred duties. Everyone involved agrees with the summary.*

Exercise 6.2 (35 minutes: 15 for facilitator model, 15 for activity, 5 for debrief)

1. Continuing the role-play from the previous exercise, the two facilitators should illustrate the different **understanding** skills.
2. Group members should group together in their same triads (counselor, client, and observer). Each triad can continue their conversation, now paying attention to the **understanding** skills.
3. Continue the conversations, as before, until all group members have acted as counselor, client, and observer. Participants should focus **only** on the three **understanding** skills at this time. They will have time to demonstrate the other skills in a subsequent exercise.
4. After all participants have completed their discussions, the full group can answer the following questions: *What went well? What was difficult? What did you learn? Do you have any questions about the **understanding** skills?*

Note for Facilitator:

Teaching team members should sit together with small groups, rotating groups as necessary, in order to coach, guide, and answer questions.

Guide

7. Give a new perspective

8. Give information for wise choices:

Adoption

Parenting

Abstinence

Abortion

Discussion

Discussion

Discussion

Discussion

9. Close with hope

Guide

You can serve as a **guide** to your client by leading, directing, and advising him or her toward God's truth about the life-giving options available to him or her in the middle of a challenging dilemma. It is important at this stage of a redemptive conversation to acknowledge deeper feelings that may have gone unrecognized and to identify circumstances that may be changeable.

It is important to study and know the content from The Journey of a Life Giver, which offers information about fetal development, abortion procedures, and biblical sexuality. You do not have to be an expert in these topics, but you *do* need to know enough to be credible and to help your client to understand the risks of abortion, the benefits of God's design for our sexuality, and the blessing of choosing life over abortion. If adoption is practiced in your culture, ask your leader for suggestions in introducing this option to a client. This is the time in a redemptive conversation when you can offer truthful information that will help guide your client. Your responsibility is to be a faithful witness to what is true, and to be careful not to manipulate. Leave the decision making to the client.

7. Give a new perspective

Giving a new perspective involves revealing and discussing any inconsistencies in your client's words and actions. The purpose is to help your client see his or her situation in a new light and to help clarify options for a positive change. This requires wisdom and listening to the Holy Spirit in order to know how to show the client where their beliefs and behaviors may not be in alignment with God's truth or His will for their life.

Biblical example: 2 Samuel 12:1-13. *The prophet Nathan uses a parable to illustrate King David's sinful thinking and behaviors. This gives David an opportunity to confess his sin and be restored in his relationship with God.*

8. Give information for wise choices

A wise choice is one made from sound judgment and keen discernment. Because it takes time and correct information to make a wise decision, your client needs to receive the facts about the options that should be considered. Since you have spent adequate time learning about your client's "six categories," now is the time to select the truths and information they need in order to make some choices that will lead them to good decisions for their lives.

Biblical example: Galatians 5:16-26. *Paul gives very specific information about what it looks like to be in obedience, and disobedience, to the Holy Spirit.*

9. Close with hope

Hope is the expectation of a future good, and that outcome can be obtained with God's help. You can close your conversation by providing your client with a vision of the future that includes a positive perspective about God's desire to redeem the difficult circumstances of a tough crisis.

Biblical example: John 8:1-11. *Jesus' actions and words to the woman caught in adultery literally saved her life and also gave her hope that she could live her life differently.*

Exercise 6.3 (45 minutes: 15 for facilitator model, 25 for activity, 5 for debrief)

1. Continuing the role-play from the previous exercise, the two facilitators should illustrate the different **guiding** skills.
2. Group members should group together in their same triads (counselor, client, and observer). Each triad can continue their conversation, now paying attention to the **guiding** skills.

3. Continue the conversations, as before, until all group members have acted as counselor, client, and observer. Participants should focus **only** on the three **guiding** skills at this time. They will have time to demonstrate the other skills in a subsequent exercise.
4. After all participants have completed their discussions, the full group can answer the following questions: *What went well? What was difficult? What did you learn? Do you have any questions about the **guiding** skills?*
5. Using any remaining time, while allowing time for wrap-up, participants should return to their groups and role-play counseling interactions and focus on **all** goals—bond, understand, and guide. Participants should rotate among the roles, as before, while demonstrating each of the nine skills.

Note for Facilitator:

Teaching team members should sit together with small groups, rotating groups as necessary, in order to coach, guide, and answer questions.

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. Don’t presume to know a person before you *actually* come to know them. At the same time, with experience you will learn to recognize recurring responses in different people. Over time your ability to balance an awareness of these differences and similarities will equip you to engage with others in a sensitive and compassionate fashion.

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 are able to manage. Be in prayer about the people that God will bring to you, and wait expectantly for a divine appointment for a redemptive conversation.

COUNSELOR

CLIENT

OBSERVER

BOND: ACKNOWLEDGE

BOND:
BE GENUINE

BOND: REFLECT FEELINGS

UNDERSTAND: ASK OPEN- ENDED QUESTIONS

UNDERSTAND: REFLECT IMPRESSIONS

**UNDERSTAND:
SUMMARIZE**

GUIDE: **GIVE A NEW PERSPECTIVE**

GUIDE:
GIVE
INFORMATION
FOR WISE
CHOICES

GUIDE: CLOSE WITH HOPE