

# ATMOSPHERE

CARE MODULE #1

**COMPETENCY:** Fostering a safe environment that promotes healing and growth..

**Opening Question:** Think of a time when someone made you feel really welcomed or safe. What did they say or do to make you feel this way?

Scripture: Hebrews 3:13

**Question:** Is it easy for you to encourage others? Why or why not?

**Question:** Was there ever a time in your life when you need encouragement and somebody encouraged you? What did that look like and what impact did it have on you? If not, was there ever a time when someone needed to be encouraged and you stepped in? What did that look like and what impact did it have on you?

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## ASSIGNMENTS

**Assignment 1:** Read 10 ways to lead better Divorce Care discussions and answer questions

## ASSIGNMENT 1

### 10 ways to lead better Divorce Care discussions in 2017 pt. 1

By Meredith Geldmeier

It's a new year, and new Divorce Care groups are beginning. Even if you're not one for making personal resolutions each January, we hope you have at least one goal: to increase your effectiveness as a Divorce Care group leader in 2017.

Whether you're a returning Divorce Care group leader or a brand-new one, we want to provide you with support, reminders, and encouragement for meeting this goal, and for getting your group off to a great start this year!

Facilitating good discussions is key to the success of your group; your group members can truly heal and grow as they have the opportunity to be heard and loved and to learn from others. Here are some helpful tips for leading effective discussions:

#### **1. Involve all the group members in the discussion.**

Your group should be driven mainly by the group members and group discussion. The more each person becomes involved in discussing the video and sharing personal experiences, the more he or she will heal. Reach out to each person; do your best to make sure that everyone feels included and has an equal opportunity to share.

#### **2. Remember, you're a facilitator, not a teacher!**

If you view your role as a facilitator and not as a teacher, you'll avoid falling into the teaching role and dominating the discussion.

#### **3. Listen!**

Your job as a group leader is mainly to keep the conversation flowing. There is, of course, a place for sharing your experiences, but keep your talk time short so others have time to open up to the group. These members have joined your group so they will be able to share with others what they are feeling and what is going on in their lives; the more involved everyone is, the more the group will benefit.

#### **4. Get comfortable with silence.**

Maybe no one is talking, and the silence feels awkward to you. But silence encourages people to gather their thoughts, and that very awkwardness may prompt someone else to speak up! Allowing silence is part of creating an environment with space for people to share.

#### **5. Choose great questions.**

Review the questions provided for you in your Leader's Guide. There will likely be more questions than your group can get through in a typical session, so choose the questions you feel best suit the needs and personality of your group.

#### **6. Review your group guidelines ahead of time with group members.**

This provides a gentle reminder to every one of the importance of letting others speak. A general list of group guidelines is provided in each Divorce Care workbook. If you'd like to customize a list of guidelines for your group, visit the Divorce Care Leader Zone for suggestions! Frequent reminders of the guidelines will help everyone get a chance to speak and feel involved with the group.

## **7. Don't allow individuals to dominate the discussion.**

Direct a question to another group member: You may need to gently take control of the discussion if a group member starts to monopolize the time. One effective technique for dealing with someone who is dominating the discussion is for you to direct a question to another group member.

Don't be afraid to interrupt if necessary: Sometimes, you'll just need to interrupt. If someone is going on too long, you can gently interrupt by saying something like, "John, I hate to interrupt, but I'd like to get a few others to respond before we move on to the next question." Or you could say, "John, for the sake of time, I need to ask you to hold that thought so we can move on to the next question."

Speak with the group member privately: You may need to take someone aside to speak privately before or after a group meeting. Be diplomatic but honest, and make the person aware of the issue, asking him or her to be considerate of other group members.

1. What stood out to you the most and why?
2. What challenged you the most?
3. What questions did this article raise for you?
4. What opportunities for growth did this article highlight for you?
5. What accountability questions would you like for me to ask you next time we meet?