

## Practice Exercises for Leader Training

Read the scenario and ask for a couple of poor responses. Then read the scenario again, asking for better responses. In each exercise, do not offer poor/better examples until the group has offered a few responses.

### Exercise 1

Read the following small group scenario and have each leader practice a response using the basic processing technique—listen, paraphrase, and respond with empathy.

Scenario	Chris says, "I can't believe what Kelly did to me at work. I have tried to help her over and over by trading shifts when she needed to be off and even gave her my shift once when she needed some extra money. And then she went and told the manager I was stealing. That's what I get for being nice."
Poor Response	<i>What a rotten friend she was. I would quit if I were you. She did the right thing if you really were stealing. God is obviously trying to get you to stop sinning.</i>
Why It's Poor	These responses are judgmental and attempt to tell them what to do.
Better Response	<i>It sounds like you had a pretty upsetting day at work. I am sorry Kelly hurt your feelings by talking to your manager.</i>

### Exercise 2

Practice the basic processing technique again with the following small group scenario.

Scenario	Chris says, "I know I shouldn't be doing drugs, but I just don't have the motivation to stop right now. It is the only thing that is getting me through this hard time."
Poor Response	<i>Drugs will kill you and ruin your life. I had an addiction to alcohol and God healed me from it. He can heal you if you will just let him</i>
Why It's Poor	This response is judgmental, preachy, and disrespectful of the honest pain and hard process involved in healing from an addiction.
Better Response	<i>It sounds like you are in a lot of pain. Chris, I know drug addiction is a difficult thing for many people. I myself struggled with alcohol for years. I am sorry you have this very hard issue in your life.</i>

### Exercise 3

Continue to practice the basic processing technique (listen, paraphrase, and respond with empathy). This time include a question or two in your processing response.

Scenario	Chris says, "I was sexually abused."
Poor Response	<i>I had the same experience. It caused me to act out sexually and seek inappropriate sexual relationships as a result. I bet you did the same thing!</i>
Why It's Poor	The leader is projecting their experience onto Chris. This response is disrespectful as it makes assumptions rather than allowing Chris to make the discovery.
Better Response	<i>I am so sorry, Chris. I, too, experienced this in my life. What has it been like for you as you have tried to cope with this? How has it affected your life?</i>

## Practice Exercises for Leader Training (continued)

In each exercise, do not offer poor/better examples until everyone has offered a response.

### Exercise 4

In the next exercise, practice responding in a way that points Chris to God as their source of healing.

Scenario	Chris says, "Man, am I a mess! I am depressed and find myself crying all the time. Ever since I signed up for this class, I have had trouble sleeping. I keep remembering the horrible things that went on when I was growing up. I just don't know what to do anymore."
Poor Response	<i>Chris, I don't want you suffering like this. I am wondering if you can meet me for coffee every week, so I can help you through this.</i>
Why It's Poor	This response indicates the small group leader is trying to be Chris' god and take responsibility for healing him/her.
Better Response	<i>Chris, I am sorry your pain level is so high right now. Unfortunately, this is a normal part of the healing process. I wish I could make it easier for you, but I can't. I want to reassure you that you are never alone, even during the darkest nights. God is not only with you, he is holding you. Are you able to reach out to him for love and support when you are having a hard time? (If Chris says, "No.") Do you know why not?</i>

### Exercise 5

Use the basic processing technique and ask questions to respond to the following situation. Communicate acceptance of Chris' struggle and avoid judgment.

Scenario	Chris says, "I left my spouse last month. I realize I got married too young, before I really had time to find myself. About three months ago I met the person I should have married. They respect me and my spouse doesn't. I don't want to get a divorce, but I really want to be with my new lover. I think I just need to take it as it comes."
Poor Response	<i>God says adultery is a sin. You need to return to your spouse. Have you confessed your sin?</i>
Why It's Poor	This response is judgmental and will shut Chris down and block honest processing.
Better Response	<i>It sounds like you have really struggled in your marriage. I am wondering if you have felt disappointment in how it has turned out. Chris, what are the needs you are trying to meet? Will your present situation meet them? Where can you turn to get these real needs met?</i>

## Practice Exercises for Leader Training (continued)

In each exercise, do not offer poor/better examples until everyone has offered a response.

### Exercise 6

In this next exercise, respond to Chris in a way that lets him/her know your group is a safe place to admit honest struggles with God.

Scenario	Chris says, "I don't trust God. He is mean and cold-hearted."
Poor Response	<i>How can you say that after all he has done for us? He sacrificed his only Son to give us life.</i>
Why It's Poor	This is a true statement but not helpful at this point. All it does is evoke guilt which will block Chris from doing the work to discover why he/she doesn't trust God.
Better Response	<i>Chris, I appreciate your honest place. I wonder if you have gone through some tough times and felt disappointed about God's response to your life. Does it feel like he hasn't been there for you?</i>

### Exercise 7

In this next exercise, try to ask questions that engage Chris' will. Inviting Chris to explore his/her wants and needs might lead him/her to healthier choices.

Scenario	Chris says, "I hate my life. I am too busy with too many demands at work, church, the house, the kids. I'm forever screaming at my family. I feel like I'm drowning and doing nothing well."
Poor Response	<i>Well, Chris, you are totally responsible for what's going on in your life. If you would just process through your victim choices here, you could start making some changes.</i>
Why It's Poor	Yes, Chris is responsible and, yes, Chris is making victim choices that need to be processed. But Chris will be more likely to explore those areas if you can find something that motivates him/her.
Better Response	<i>Chris, it sounds like you have some important needs here that are not being met. What do you want in this situation?</i>