



EQUIPPING CARE

LEADERS GUIDE

www.hcmachaplains.org/equippingcare



EQUIPPING CARE Leaders Guide

Dear Friends,

Thank you for taking part in the Equipping Care lessons. We are so grateful for your heart to serve those who are hurting, struggling, or nearing the end of life. These lessons were created to equip and encourage you as you step into moments of ministry, offering Christ-centered care to those in need.

Our prayer is that through this series, you will gain practical skills, deeper confidence, and a renewed understanding of how to walk alongside others with compassion, wisdom, and faith. Whether it's through active listening, making visits meaningful, offering support in grief and loss, or maintaining healthy boundaries, we hope you find these tools valuable in your ministry and everyday life.

Most of all, we want you to know that you are not alone in this calling. As you care for others, we encourage you to lean on God's strength, remembering that He is the ultimate source of hope and healing.

Thank you for being a part of this journey. May God bless and guide you as you serve.

In Christ,
Healthcare Chaplains Ministry Association

WHY EQUIPPING CARE

Caring for others is a sacred calling—one that requires more than just good intentions. As chaplains, pastors, and caregivers, we are called to bring hope, comfort, and the presence of Christ to those in need. But to serve well, we must be equipped with wisdom, understanding, and practical skills. That's why we created Equipping Care—a free, four-part video series designed to help you minister with confidence, compassion, and effectiveness. Whether you're sitting at a hospital bedside, comforting someone in grief, or offering support in crisis, these lessons will guide you in providing meaningful, Christ-centered care. Through active listening, making visits impactful, walking alongside the grieving, and maintaining healthy boundaries, this series equips you to serve others in a way that truly makes a difference.

*“He comforts us
in all our troubles
so that we can
comfort others
with the comfort
we receive from
God.”*

2 Corinthians 1:4

THE VISION

To equip and empower caregivers, chaplains, and ministry leaders with the wisdom, confidence, and biblical understanding needed to provide Christ-centered care to those in need - expanding the ministry of chaplaincy.

THE MISSION

Equipping Care exists to provide practical, biblically grounded training that helps caregivers offer meaningful support to the sick, grieving, and struggling. Through accessible resources, we prepare individuals to serve with compassion, wisdom, and confidence - locating those called to Healthcare chaplaincy.

SESSION 1

Active Listening

"I love the Lord because He has heard my voice" Psalm 116:1



AS A LEADER...

- **Prepare Ahead:** Familiarize yourself with the video and materials by reviewing them before the session.
- **Encourage Engagement:** Create opportunities for participants to interact and contribute.
- **Create a Comfortable Environment:** Avoid tables; instead, use seating that allows participants to move and adjust freely.
- **Stay Flexible:** Allow space for participants to learn and grow at their own pace.
- **Highlight the “I Will” Statement:** Emphasize the importance of the commitment statement at the end. Research shows that when people write and share their commitments, most will follow through.

Setting the Tone: (10 Minutes)

- Briefly introduce the purpose of the video and why it’s being shown.
- Distribute the participant worksheets.

Setting Expectations:

- Attend each session regularly.
- Come prepared with an open heart, ready to hear what God wants YOU to learn.
- Be open and honest in your interactions with others.

Prayer

Session 1: Active Listening (15 minutes)



NOTES:

*Active
Listening
seeks to
understand*

Why do we struggle with listening?

1. We make assumptions
2. We have our own biases
3. We want to control the conversation
4. We are distracted
5. We redirect the focus onto ourselves

Leaders: Active Listening seeks to understand.

Listen to understand rather than to reply. | Concentrate with your heart and mind. | Seek to understand rather than be understood.

Practical Steps to Active Listening:

1. Give your full attention
2. Be comfortable with pauses
3. Reflect back what they said
4. Respond to feelings
5. Ask open-ended and clarifying questions
6. Summarize

Things to Avoid:

1. Being critical
2. Being overreactive
3. Being preachy

Non-Verbal Communication to avoid:

- Yawning
- Crossed arms
- Looking at your phone or watch
- Tapping fingers or pen
- Frowning
- Gazing around instead of good eye contact
- Tightening your jaw
- Raising eyebrows
- Staying distant

Leaders: After the video, some participants may want all the fill-in answers. Inform them that these will be provided at the end of the session via a PowerPoint slide.

Thoughts and Reflections: (15 minutes)

Leaders: For Quiet Reflection – Begin with 2 minutes of personal reflection, followed by 3 minutes of sharing with the person next to you, and then 5-7 minutes as a large group to discuss all the questions below. It's helpful to set a timer or ring a bell when time is up to keep everyone on track. This format allows individuals to hear what God might be speaking to them, provides an opportunity for intimate sharing in small groups of 2-4, and fosters the sharing of insights within the larger group for everyone to learn from each other.

- What is the key take away for you in this video?
- What is one area that you need to improve as it relates to active listening?
- What is one of your strengths as it relates to listening?

GROUP DISCUSSION

Open to the entire group: (10 minutes)

What is your response when you don't feel listened to?

Neglected, uncared for, upset, frustrated, withdraw, speak to someone else, or sense an underlying agenda

How do you feel when someone gives you undivided attention?

Loved, supported, important, appreciated, cherished

When you listen well, what is the result for you and them?

A genuine sense of care for one another, truly listening to the issue, encouraging deeper sharing, building trust, creating space to offer biblical insights, and providing opportunities for mutual learning.

Biblical References: (15 minutes)

Leaders: Group of 4 - Ask everyone in your group to read the following passages aloud.

Psalms 116:1 | Proverbs 18:13 | Romans 10:17 | James 1:19

Leaders: Discussion Questions - Start with 2 minutes of quiet reflection, followed by 5 minutes in your small group, and then 5 minutes for a large group discussion.

- Which verse can you identify with the most? Why?
- What is God's Spirit prompting you to do?
- What will you do this week to practice what you have learned?

Leaders: At this point, we want to focus on application. Give everyone 1 minute of quiet time to write down their "I will" statement. Research shows that when people write down their commitments and share them with others, most will follow through. Encourage the group to share their "I will" statements.

- Write an "I will statement" and share it with the person next to you.

This week, I will:

Leaders: Close with prayer and remind everyone of the time for the next meeting.

HELPFUL HINTS

Closed-ended questions typically require a simple yes or no response, while open-ended questions encourage deeper conversation and allow the speaker to share more of their thoughts.

Pay attention to body language, facial expressions, and the listener's level of engagement.

SESSION 2

A Valuable Visit

"Whatever you did for one of the least of these, you have done it unto me" Matthew 25:40



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Session 2: A Valuable Visit (15 minutes)



NOTES:

What has God called you to be?

1. You are an ambassador for Christ. 2 Cor 5:20
2. You are a compassionate neighbor. (good Samaritan passage)
3. You are a comforter. 2 Cor 1:3-4

Preparing for a visit:

1. Be spiritually prepared.
2. Be physically prepared.
3. Be emotionally prepared.

Practical tips for the visit:

1. Be observant
2. Be courteous
3. Be gracious with interruptions
4. Share Scripture
5. Ask questions.
6. Pray
7. Draw people into the presence of God.
8. Pray for courage, healing, the medical staff, and God to be glorified.

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- What is one key take away for you in this video?
- What is one area that you need to improve in, as it relates to visiting someone who is sick?
- How have you experienced God's presence when visiting someone who is sick or hurting?

GROUP DISCUSSION

Open to the entire group: (10 minutes)

What are some things we do in a visit that could discourage
a person in need?

We focus on ourselves, grow impatient, attempt to take control, and neglect to share Scripture or prayer,

What has been your experience,
when someone visited you when you were sick?

Experienced care and love, felt blessed, weary, in need of rest, and deeply grateful.

What are some other things we can do, to make it a valuable visit?

Bring a thoughtful gift, invite a friend, be mindful of your time, and show kindness to everyone present.

Biblical References: (15 minutes)

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Romans 12:15 | Psalm 34:18 | Psalm 139:3 | 2 Cor 5:20

Leaders: Discussion Questions - Start with 2 minutes of quiet reflection, followed by 5 minutes in your small group, and then 5 minutes for a large group discussion.

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HELPFUL HINTS

Before talking to people about God, talk to God about people.

Always ask permission to pray or share scripture.

Caring for others is not about you, it's about meeting their needs.

SESSION 3

Grief and Loss

"Answer me when I call, Oh God" Psalm 4:1



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Session 3: Grief and Loss (15 minutes)



NOTES:

Understanding the Five Stages of Grief:

1. Denial
2. Anger
3. Bargaining
4. Depression
5. Acceptance

RESPONDING TO GRIEVING FAMILIES

Attitudes to Convey Care:

1. Be genuine.
2. Be empathetic.
3. Be warm.
4. Be available.
5. Be an empathetic listener.
6. Be affirming.
7. Be patient.

Thoughts and Reflections: (15 minutes)

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- What part of the video impacted you the most? Why?
- What attitudes in care can you identify with most? Why?

**GROUP
DISCUSSION**

Open to the entire group: (10 minutes)

As you think about grief and loss, how have you witnessed the stages of grief, in yourself or others? How did you handle it?

What is the most difficult part for you when dealing with death? How do we overcome that?

Biblical References: (15 minutes)

Leaders: Group of 4 - Ask everyone in your group to read the following passages aloud.

Psalm 4:1 | Psalm 139:16 | Matthew 5:4 | Philippians 1:21

Leaders: Discussion Questions - Start with 2 minutes of quiet reflection, followed by 5 minutes in your small group, and then 5 minutes for a large group discussion.

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HELPFUL HINTS

Hurting People Hurt People

Many people, when they are dying, feel untouchable. Ask to hold a hand.

A joy shared seems to double it, while a sorrow shared seems to halve it.

Grief is hard work and should not be done alone.

SESSION 4

Boundaries and Burnout

"The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want...." Psalm 23



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Session 4: Boundaries and Burnout (15 minutes)



NOTES:

How do boundaries help?

1. Boundaries guard against harm to the people we serve.
2. Boundaries guard against ruining our ministry.

SERVITUDE VS SERVANTHOOD

Servitude - Acts out of Compulsion

Over-identification
Superficial Sweetness
Being Manipulated
Begrudging Care

Servanthood - Is Voluntary

Empathy
Genuineness
Meeting Needs
Intentionality

3. Boundaries guard against compassion fatigue.

Physical Indications of Compassion Fatigue

1. Exhaustion.
2. Headaches
3. Jaw clenching
4. Muscle tension
5. Digestive problems
6. Sleeplessness

Psychological

Indications of Compassion Fatigue

1. Depression
2. Difficulty concentrating
3. Increased negativity or irritation
4. Apathy
5. Feelings of helplessness
6. Withdrawal

Spiritual

Indications of Compassion Fatigue

1. Disillusionment with God
2. Abandoning religious practices
3. Spiritual Apathy

How did God care for Elijah?

1. Rest and nourishment
2. Time with God
3. Companionship
4. Change in activity

How do we refresh?

1. Rest and nourishment
2. Time with God
3. Companionship
4. Change in activity

Thoughts and Reflections: (15 minutes)

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- What indications of compassion fatigue can you most identify with?
- How do you replenish yourself to ensure that you don't burn out?

GROUP DISCUSSION

Open to the entire group: (10 minutes)

What are some boundaries that you have established to guard your ministry?

Consulting nurses first, keeping the door open, staying within my role, visiting with a companion, taking breaks when exhausted, recognizing my limits, never giving money, and respecting facility rules.

How do you cope with the emotional toll of caring for others?

Ensuring adequate rest, seeking support through conversation, engaging in prayer, maintaining healthy boundaries, knowing when to step back, balancing responsibilities with enjoyment, taking vacations when needed, acknowledging my limits, never giving money, and adhering to facility rules.

What are some ways we can support each other?

Engaging in prayer, building fellowship, seeking mentorship, and maintaining open communication.

Biblical References: (15 minutes)

Leaders: Group of 4 - Ask everyone in your group to read the following passages aloud.

Psalms 28:7 | Psalm 23 | Isaiah 40:31 | Matthew 11:28-30

Leaders: Discussion Questions - Start with 2 minutes of quiet reflection, followed by 5 minutes in your small group, and then 5 minutes for a large group discussion.

- Which verse can you identify with the most? Why?
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HELPFUL HINTS

Having an accountability partner will
help in ensuring that you won’t burn out.

Care but don’t carry. God loves people more than we ever could.
He is more than capable.

When you care about others problems
more than they do, that’s a problem.