



Life Groups Training

# Interaction

- Partner up with another person.
- Introduce yourself and give one way life groups or having close relationships in the church has helped you.
- Take approximately 3 minutes to discuss.



# Confidentiality

- Everything that is said in the group, stays in the group, except...
  - Danger to self
  - Danger to others
  - Danger to the church



## Empathetic Listening

1) Talker describes content and feelings.

3) The talker is aware of being understood and accepted.

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2) Listener restates the talker's content and feelings.

# Discussion

- Statement: I guess I have just been overwhelmed this week with all that's happened. I sometimes want to give up, but then I feel like I am just having a pity party. I'm not even sure what to do. I even feel guilty for talking about it. God is probably disappointed in me.
- What are examples of typical “churched” responses that might shut her down?
- How might she respond to those replies?

# Listening Skill Development

- James 1:19: quick to hear, slow to speak...
- Romans 12:15 Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep...

# Verbal Villains

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- **Spock:** logic and facts only. "You know that everyone goes thru tough times; you'll be fine and get thru this."
- **Detective:** asks question after question to eventually solve the problem or prove your point. "Why do you think God is testing you?" "Have you prayed about it and asked God to reveal if there's some unconfessed sin that's causing it?"
- **Florist:** focusing only on the positive. "Oh, things can't be as bad as all that, especially for you! You can do it! God does love you, and we all know you are a strong person!"
- **Mr. Nostalgia:** let me tell you how bad I have had it. "When I was younger I went through the same thing. I remember when I prayed and God helped me. But I hung in there and realized God was just testing me." And the person goes on about "their" story now.

# Verbal Villains

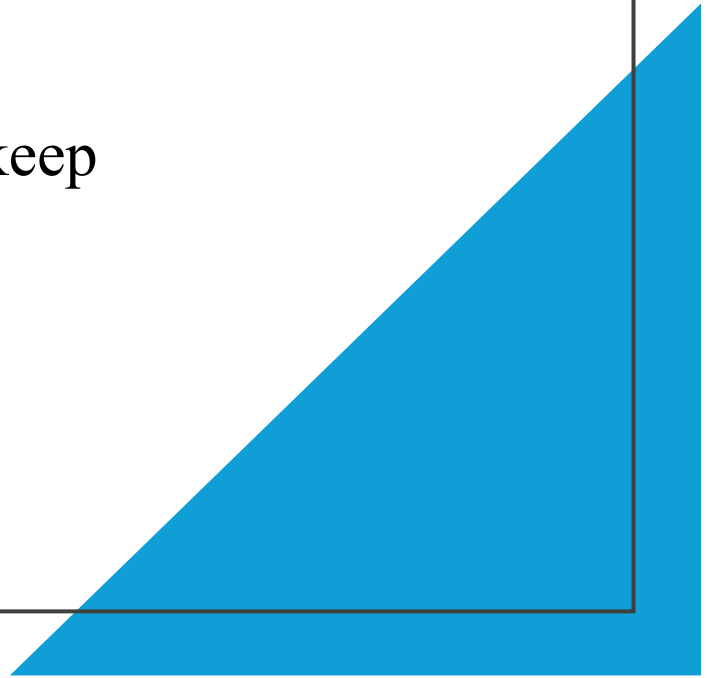
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- **Drill Sergeant:** Tells you what to do. "If you want to feel better, here's what to do. First, journal and then pray about. Then, find and memorize Scripture that deals with it. Next, talk with your small group about it or one of the pastors. After you have done that, the next step is to . . ."
- **Hangman:** criticism, you did not do enough. "Where's your faith?" "You're overreacting." "No, you don't really believe that!"
- **Foreman:** get busy with something else. "I know that what will get your mind off that. Let's go to church and listen to worship music; that'll cheer you up."
- **Guru:** religious clichés, cheap advice - "Don't worry, God will work it out." "Remember – let go and let God!"
- **Magician:** it will go away, not really a problem anyway. "Oh, you don't really feel that way...you're probably just having a bad week; but you'll feel better soon. God can meet your needs, and we will help you get through this time. It won't be too much for you."



# Discussion

- Which one do you tend to use the most?
- Why aren't these helpful responses and how might they keep someone from opening further dialogue?



# Empathetic Listening Explained

- Identify their most prominent emotion.
  - Name possible feelings she might have had?
- Say their emotion with the intent to understand.
  - So, if I'm hearing you right...
  - As I understand it, you...
  - You're saying... is that correct?

# Interaction

- *Joe comes up to you after a group meeting and says, "I feel badly that I don't have much to say during Bible study. I can't study the Bible like other people. I dropped out of school and I can't read too good. I try to read the Bible but it doesn't make much sense to me."*



# Pros and Cons

- It can't be that bad. Just keep trying and I'm sure you'll catch on.
- Take time to read the Bible, be here every week and you'll be fine.
- Why don't you pray about it and see what happens?
- It's too bad you never learned to read well. Maybe you could get some help.
- Why have you never learned to read all these years?



# Pros and Cons

- You feel badly because you can't keep up with the other people.
- I'm sorry you feel badly.
- You feel like you don't fit. Everybody else seems to be able to read and understand the Bible. You're trying also, but it isn't working for you.
- What I hear you saying is that you feel like a failure in our group. Everybody else answers the questions but you haven't been able to read the passage so that you can understand it. Is that right?





# Label Their Emotion

“I hear ....”

“As I understand it, you felt that...”

“Listening to you, it seems as if you’re feeling \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_”

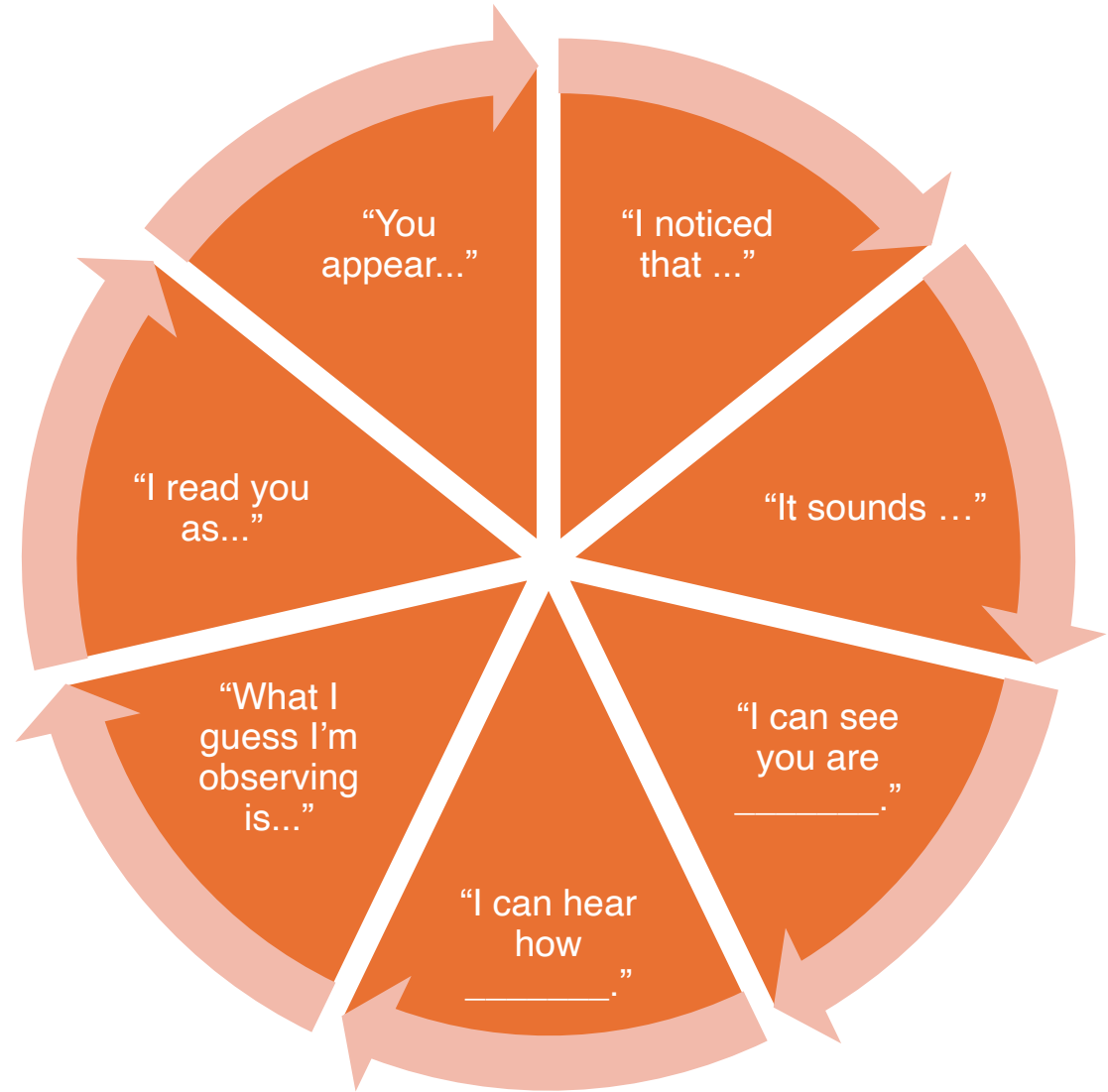
“So as you see it, you’re feeling \_\_\_\_\_ about \_\_\_\_\_”

“That sounds .....

“Okay, I think I get it. So, what you are feeling right now is ...”



# Observe Non-Verbals and Visuals





# Guess Their Intent

“It seems...”

“To me it’s almost like you are saying...”

“As I understand it, you ...”

“I wonder if you’re ...”

“I somehow sense that maybe you feel...”

“I’m picking up that you...?”



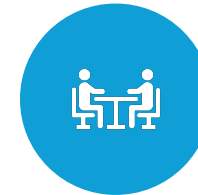
# Follow The Person



“Tell us more about that ...”



“Help us understand your feelings a little better. Say more please.”



“Talk to us about what you're experiencing...”



“That's seems important; would you help us see this situation from your point of view?”



“Maybe it would be helpful to share your thoughts or feelings about...”

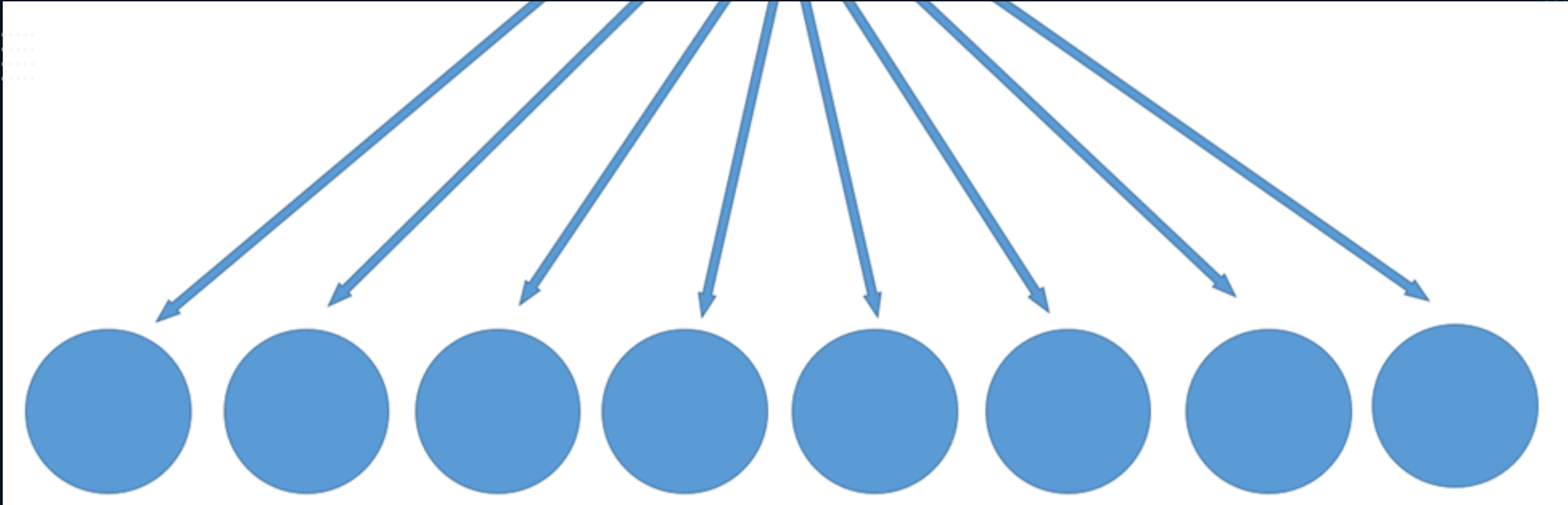


“Let's explore that some more...”

Silence Is  
Okay

# Facilitating a Group Discussion



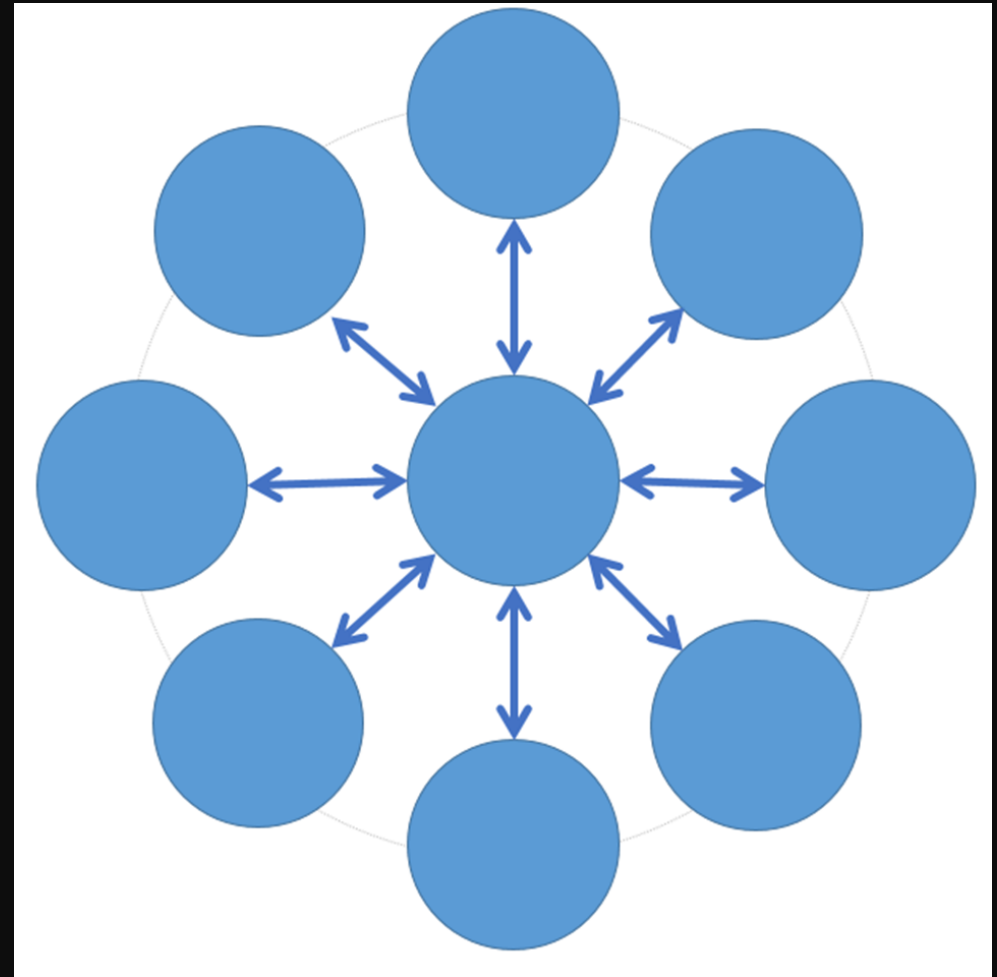


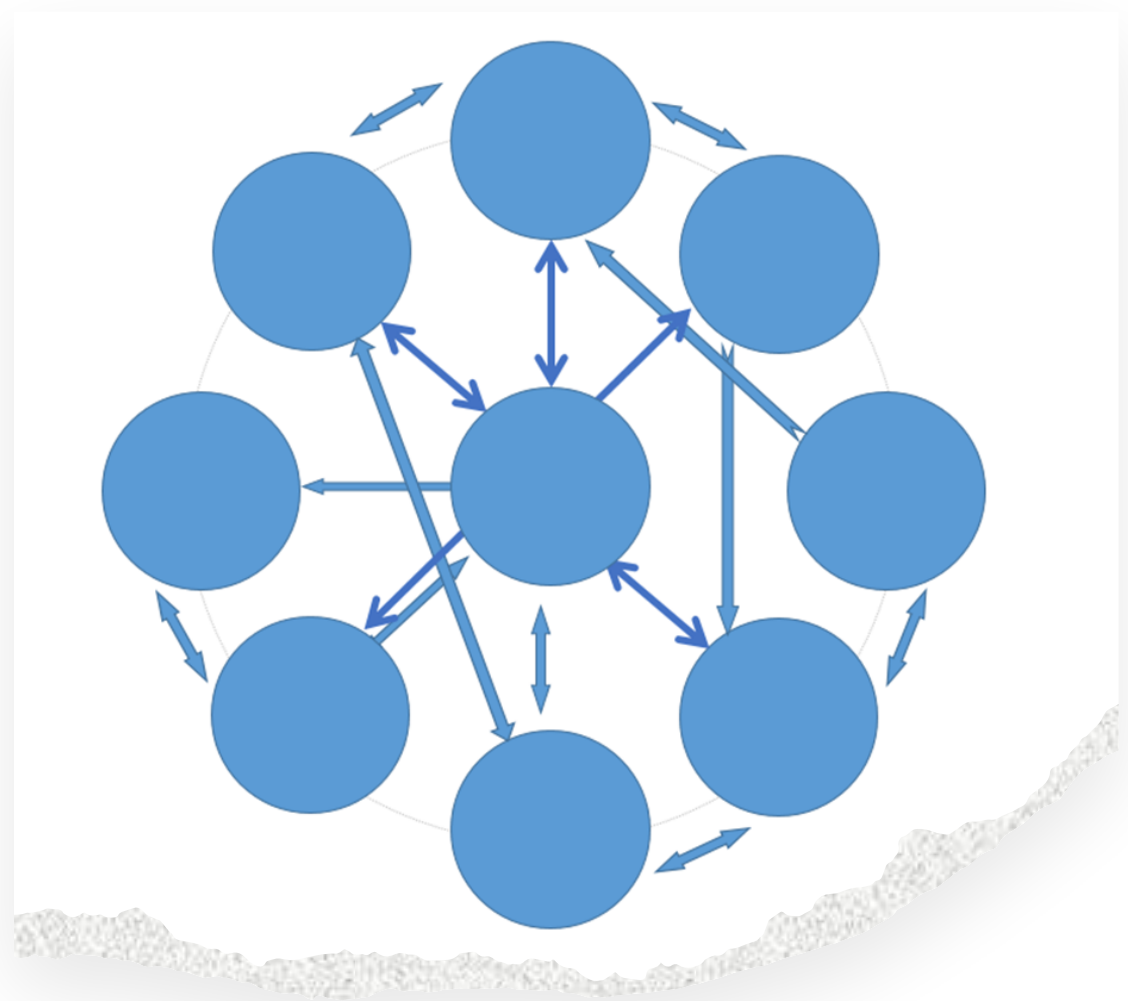
# Monologue

- Who is doing most of the work?
- What is the interaction, flow and information being relayed?

# Dialogue

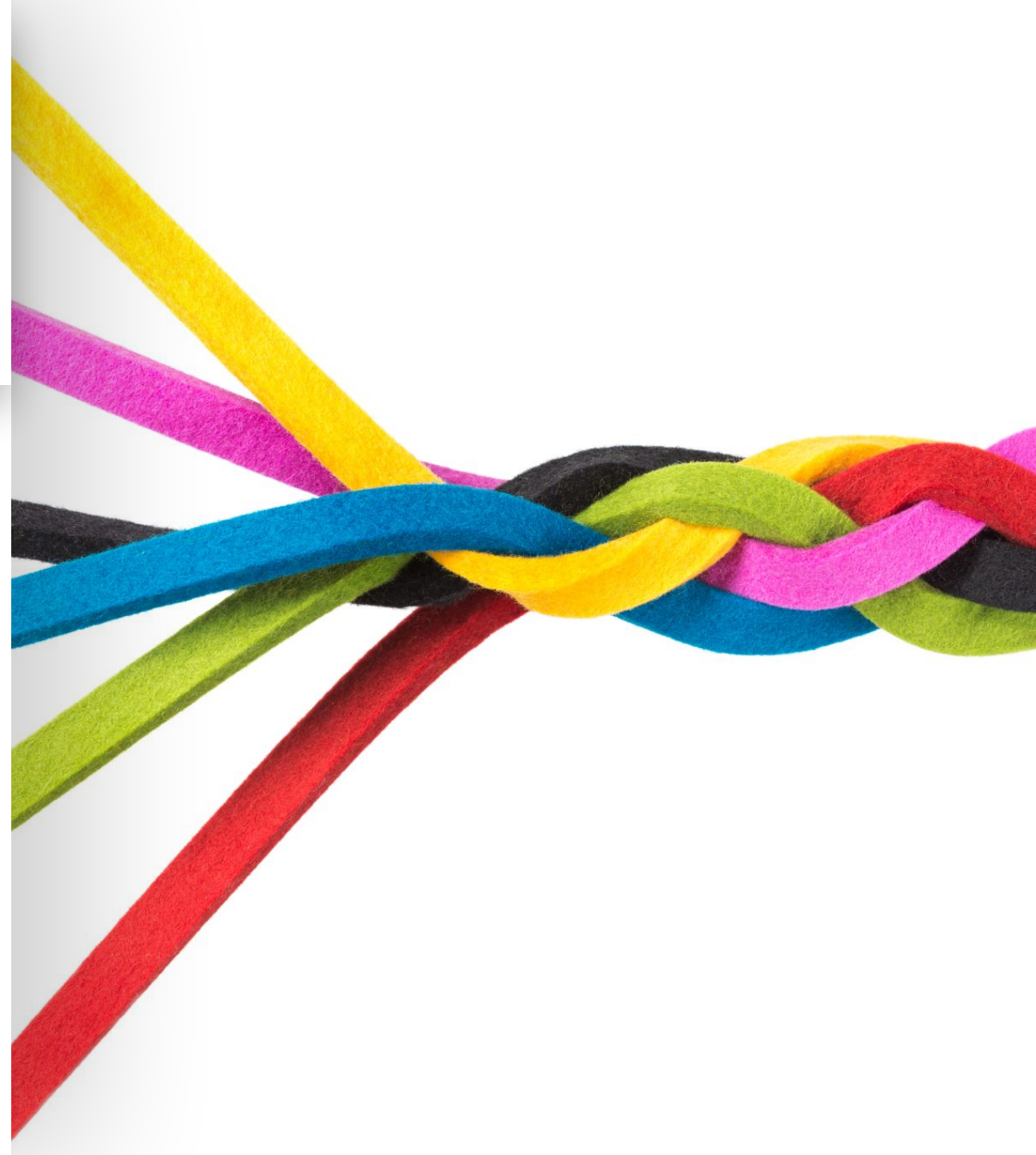
- Who is doing most of the work?
- What is the interaction, flow and information being relayed?





# Connecting Through Questions

- Help your group identify the most prominent emotion so they connect to the sharer.
- Paraphrase what they are saying and what they are not saying and relay that to a group member.





# Relay Questions

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- “Can someone very briefly restate, in their own words, what \_\_\_\_\_ is probably feeling right now?”  
(Such as: sad, angry, hurt, betrayed.)
- “If you can identify with the pain/hurt/struggle \_\_\_\_\_ feels right now...would you say that in a sentence to him/her?”
- “While looking at \_\_\_\_\_, would someone identify an emotion s/he might have just described?”
- “What is someone’s emotional response to what \_\_\_\_\_ just shared?”
- “If anyone else feels that way, could you briefly say how you are relating to them right now.”



# Bring The Group To Explore

- *I noticed you were...*
  - nodding your head while s/he shared ... tell \_\_\_\_\_ about that.”
  - tearing up, getting upset, etc. ... say what you were feeling inside.”
  - experiencing something inside you (that got stirred up) as \_\_\_\_\_ spoke; please talk about that for a minute.”
  - identifying with him/her, would you share a few words to describe what’s going on in you as \_\_\_\_\_ talked.”



# Support

If someone is vulnerable and needs help:

“I wonder how someone in our group could meet your need (i.e., validation, acceptance, understanding, encouragement, etc.)...”

“How might we support you in that?”

# Move The Discussion Along



If someone is stuck or word vomiting, support and summarize but move on.



“It sounds like this has been difficult for you, but just know we will add that to our prayer list. The next question asks...”

# Interaction

- Partner up with another person.
- A member states they are having a hard time staying afloat with bills and they may be getting fired from their job. Assume this role and let the other person treat you accordingly.
- Take approximately 5 minutes to discuss.

