

LIVING CHRISTIANLY: EQUIPPING LEADERS FOR CLINICALLY INFORMED SOUL CARE

When to Refer: A Quick Guide for Soul Care Leaders

Living Christianly Care & Grow Groups — Leadership Formation Series

WHEN TO REFER

Most people experiencing discouragement, stress, grief, or life challenges benefit from compassionate listening, prayer, encouragement, and community support. Sometimes additional support from a mental health professional may be appropriate. Consider encouraging professional counseling when one or more of the following are present:

- ☐ The struggle has persisted for several weeks or longer with little improvement.
- ☐ The person's symptoms appear to be getting worse over time.
- ☐ The person reports feeling hopeless, trapped, or unable to cope.
- ☐ Depression, anxiety, fear, or emotional distress is significantly interfering with daily life, work, school, relationships, or ministry involvement.
- ☐ The person has withdrawn from family, friends, church, or activities they once enjoyed.
- ☐ The person reports significant changes in sleep, appetite, energy, or motivation.
- ☐ The person appears overwhelmed and unable to identify healthy next steps despite ongoing support.
- ☐ The same concerns continue to surface repeatedly with little progress or relief.
- ☐ The person is using alcohol, drugs, or other unhealthy behaviors to cope with emotional pain.
- ☐ You are uncertain how to help or feel the situation is beyond your level of training or experience.

IMMEDIATE REFERRAL IS NEEDED IF:

- ☐ The person talks about wanting to die, not wanting to live, or harming themselves.
- ☐ The person talks about harming someone else.
- ☐ The person appears disconnected from reality, highly confused, or reports hearing or seeing things others do not.
- ☐ There is suspected abuse, neglect, or significant danger to the individual or another person
- ☐ You believe the person may be at risk of harming themselves or someone else.

Remember:

You are not expected to diagnose, evaluate, or solve every problem. Your role is to listen, care, encourage, pray, and help people connect with appropriate support when needed. Referring someone for professional help is not a failure of ministry—it is often one of the most caring and responsible steps a leader can take.