



Pervasive Hope Starts With Me.

KEYS TO A SUCCESSFUL GROUP

- ◆ It's easy to chase "*rabbit trails*" – When you feel like the group is starting on a subject outside of the session, say something like, "*Well, that's a great point/question/thought but that may open another can of worms so let's look at the next question*". Or maybe say, "*Well, we can look at that on another day/discussion if time permits, but let's get back to today's topic/discussion.*" Remember, try not to interrupt people but make sure to find an opportunity to get the group back on track as soon as possible.
- ◆ If your discussion time turns to *criticism* – Do your best to redirect the group back to the study. You can tell that person(s) you can speak to them about their concerns after the group, if necessary.
- ◆ If something is asked that *you don't know* – Just be honest. A great reply could be, "*I'm not sure about that one. Can I get back to you about it next week?*"
- ◆ Try to *ask questions that are open-ended* – These questions can help you get people to talk about themselves and steer the conversation in a specific direction. Avoid questions that can be answered by simple yes/no or true/false answers. We want to ask questions that require people to share some actual thoughts and feelings.
- ◆ *Ask follow-up questions* – Sometimes people will default to answering questions with surface-level answers. Try to get in the habit of asking questions that can follow their responses to further the discussion. Here are a few examples of follow-up questions:
 - What makes you say that?
 - How do you feel about that?
 - How do you think that would've affected you?
- ◆ Remember that *your transparency as a leader can encourage others to open up* and be honest. A point of caution is to be careful not to disclose too much, too soon. If you do this, it can actually intimidate people and it works against a healthy environment.
- ◆ *Be comfortable with silence*. Some people "talk to think," while others "think to talk." Occasionally, let silence linger for at least a few seconds before rephrasing a question and/or asking again.
- ◆ *Keep the schedule "loosely tight"*. The reason is typically when people know what to expect they feel more at ease and can be more willing to engage with the group discussion.
- ◆ *Remind everyone that we are all learning together*. None of us have all the answers; no one has it "down". Ask everyone to engage and when they do, make sure to acknowledge their participation with "Thanks for sharing", etc.