

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website  
SMALL GROUP MINISTRY Plan for Facilitators  
**Asking for Help**  
Main Line Unitarian Church, Devon, PA December 2003

Opening Words & Chalice Lighting:

Each morning we must hold out the chalice of our being to receive, to carry, and to give back. (Dag Hammarskjöld)

Check in/Personal Sharing (approximately 30 minutes)

(The facilitator should briefly remind the group of confidentiality/ anonymity, that this is not the time for cross conversation, etc.)

Focus Readings: Asking for Help

Sometimes life deals us a blow that we can't cope with on our own. What constitutes such a blow is different for each of us. ... It may be a physical or mental illness, an addiction, or a profound loss. Or it may be something that would not disturb most other people but does disturb you.

We sometimes ascribe valor to those who suffer in silence. But when suffering is prolonged or interferes with accomplishing what we want with our lives, then such suffering may be more reckless than brave. Whatever it is, if you've worked to get over it and can't we encourage you to ask for help. From friends, from colleagues, from family, from professionals. From anyone who might be able to offer a hand.

For many of us, that's not easy. Our [sense of self] tells us loud and clear that asking for help is not okay – that it is shameful or weak and creates burdens on others. These thoughts are powerful, but ask yourself this: If someone you loved – an uncle or daughter, a favorite colleague – were in the situation you find yourself in, would you think it was okay for them to ask for help? Why should you be held to a different standard?

If part of your identity is believing that you don't need help, then asking for it is never going to be easy. And when you do ask, not everyone will come through for you, and that will be painful. But many people will. And by trusting them enough to ask, you offer them an extraordinary opportunity to do something important for someone

they care about. Then one day, you may have the opportunity to return the favor. (Douglas Stone, Bruce Patton, and Sheila Heen, Difficult Conversations: How to Discuss What Matters Most)

Focus Questions: (45-60 minutes)

- Tell us about a time you asked others for help with an emotional, physical or spiritual problem.
- How did you feel about asking for help?
- What kinds of help are you comfortable asking for? Uncomfortable asking for?
- What prevents you from asking for help? What makes it easier for you to ask for help?

Checkout/Likes and Wishes

(This is the time for facilitators to ask participants what they liked about this meeting and what they might wish for future meetings. This is also the time for any discussion of logistics.)

Closing Words & Extinguishing Chalice:

I have come to believe that giving and receiving are really the same. Giving and receiving – not giving and taking. (Joyce Grenfell, Joyce Grenfell Requests the Pleasure)