

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website
Support
First Parish Church of Stow and Acton, MA. February 2023

Opening Words and Chalice Lighting

“Let us hold a quiet moment together as our chalice is lit.
As the wild wind bites, so does the still flame warm us...” - *Ben Soule*

“Here, today, in this place and with these people,
May we listen so that we can hear;
May we hear so that we can feel;
May we feel so that we can know; and
May we know so that we can change ourselves and this world.
May this chalice we light,
Light our Way.” - *Erik Walker Wikstrom*

Check-in/Sharing: This is the time to mention any issues or events on your mind that you would like to share. Please briefly review the Participant’s Handbook, Covenant (confidentiality, showing up), and read together “Let Us Listen” (appended).

Topic: Support

No one gets through life without the support of others, whether this is emotional support, advice or information, feedback, or practical assistance (like a ride when we cannot drive ourselves). There are circumstances in our lives during which we need more support than usual, such as new situations, loss, being overwhelmed, or physical challenges such as injury, illness or aging. Throughout our lives, many of us seek out friends and communities of people who support our ideas and goals, believe in us, encourage us, offer help when we need extra, and support us in our struggle to find our own paths and be true to ourselves.

Many of us give a lot of support - to family, friends, community members and strangers. We offer all kinds of support, from a shoulder to lean on, to pitching in on a project, to delivering food. Being sensitive to a recipient’s current abilities is helpful – whether we’re offering support to a child, to a friend recovering from sickness, injuries or surgery, or to one or both of our aging parents. There is a skill to offering the kind of support that matches what the recipient needs, so that we respect their independence and empower them rather than fix things for them.

When our own life gets rough, it can be hard to ask for support, to figure out our needs, or to reach out to someone for their support. We might need a hug, some space, help focusing, or a distraction. Sometimes what we need most is someone to listen to us and to hear the meaning and emotions behind what we are saying.

“There is no greater power and support you can give someone than to look them in the eye, and with sincerity/conviction say, 'I believe in you'.” - *Ken Poirot*

“If you want to support others you have to stay upright yourself.” - *Peter Hoeg*

“To ease another's heartache is to forget one's own.” – *Abraham Lincoln*

“The challenge that so many people have is not knowing how to take that first step of reaching out to another person for help.” - *Kate Middleton*

“Geese always support each other. When a goose gets injured two birds always accompany it down to the ground. Just as geese do, we must support each other.” - *Emma Hayes*

“I tell women who have gone through cancer that healing from it requires receiving care, receiving support, letting friends and family rally around us. It is time to receive.” - *Sonali Bendre*

“Would you like some help? What sort of help would you like?” - *Wiley Cordone*

Possible Questions for Discussion:

- Could you share any circumstances in which you have received support that made a big difference?
- When do you reach out for support? Who might you include in your support circle?
- Are there times you wish you had been able to ask for support? What did you need?
- Can you share any examples that you feel good about of ways in which you have offered support to someone?
- Have you ever found yourself trying to support someone only to discover that what you offered or tried to do was not what they actually needed or wanted?
- Have there been times when someone has offered you support, but it was not what you needed or wanted? Have you found ways to ask for support that work for you?
- How are you at receiving support? Is it difficult if the support is unasked for? When do you find it hard to ask for or receive support?

(Group will take a few minutes to consider topic and questions and then share).

Wrapping Up: How did you like this topic and session?

Closing Words

“Do You Want Me To Listen or Do You Want Me To Give You Advice?” - *Emily Carlson*