

difference.



Pastoral support

Listen deeply in the sessions, giving participants time to share their stories. Encourage them to respond sensitively to each other and to ask 'open', non-leading questions.

Look deeply, noticing non-verbal cues, such as distraction or anxious behaviour, and use your judgement about when to respond.

With your co-host, be each other's 'eyes and ears' when the other is talking.

If you sense that a participant needs further support, we'd encourage you to refer them to the pastoral support structures within your church. Make sure your church leader and pastoral team are aware that you are running the course before starting it and have seen the course outline. This will help them to anticipate and prepare for any issues that may arise.

Some issues raised may connect with an experience or current situation and act as an emotional trigger. It is important that participants feel comfortable to opt out of any activities that make them uncomfortable or distressed. A good rule of thumb is that if something doesn't feel right to share, it's better not to. The introductory session includes a time for 'Setting the Group Culture' in which the group agrees ways of working together which will enable them to get the most out of the course. At the start of the course, it would also be wise to encourage participants to identify people who can support them if they find themselves dealing with difficult personal issues or experiences.

Importantly, let go of any anxiety or responsibility you may feel for how people respond to the sessions. Trust that the Holy Spirit is at work in people even if you can't immediately see it.

Safeguarding

It is our expectation that all course hosts will act in accordance with the safeguarding policies and procedures of their church. Should someone disclose a safeguarding situation to you, help them access the assistance they need in line with your church's safeguarding policy. It is important that you report any safeguarding concerns via your own reporting structures in your church or worshipping community. Likewise, any suspected or disclosed illegal activity needs to be reported to the appropriate authorities. While the emphasis of the material is on engagement with others, there are some contexts – such as an abusive relationship – where this is not appropriate.

The course material has been designed for those over the age of 18 and is not a replacement for counselling or therapy.

Accessibility

Most activities for the in-person course involve some degree of moving around but all are designed to be flexible, so think about how you can run activities in a way which is inclusive and engaging for your group.

It is also important to think through access needs when running the course online, including familiarity with technology, hearing difficulties and visual impairment.

