# C.A.R.E. LEADER’S MANUAL

Foreword

Establishing and leading a CARE Group requires a very special kind of person. Those who lead and sponsor must have a “real life” understanding of what grace really means when it comes to relationships. They must possess a humble, positive attitude and be completely non-judgmental. They must also be teachable and willing to follow suggested guidelines when it comes to establishing and overseeing a group. And a leader must also work hard at not controlling the meetings, give people a chance to express what it is they are struggling with, and resist giving some kind of advice. As people progress in the program they will become aware of what needs to be changed and how to allow God through his Word and Spirit to make the changes according to his time-table.

The most important thing that a leader must do and communicate to group members is that everything that is said in a group setting is strictly confidential. Our motto is “who is seen here and what is said here stays here.” Anyone who passes on the *who* and *what* of a group to anyone who is not a group member will be asked to leave.

Before one begins to establish a CARE group a person should read carefully and prayerfully the following articles and books:

* “Why Twelve Steps for Emotional & Spiritual Healing” (Next page)

o (Then take some quiet time to write out your recovery testimony. I give mine in the following article as a help to get you started.)

* “Search for Significance” by Robert McGee
* “A Christian Perspective on Codependency by Pat Springle” – LifeWay Press

The leader needs to also to purchase a *NIV Recovery Devotional Bible* published by Zondervan or a *Life Recovery Bible-NLT* – Tyndale House and use it for daily devotions. We also recommend that you subscribe on your computer to Daily Recovery Meditations at [www.nacronline.com](http://www.nacronline.com/).

Also it is recommended that a leader daily pray Psalm 139:23-24 and encourage other members to do the same. Psalm 139:23-24 (NIRV): *God, see what is in my heart. Know what is there. Put me to the test. Know what I'm thinking. See if there's anything in my life you don't like. Help me live in the way that is always right*.

Other resources: NIV Celebrate Recovery Bible – Zondervan

The Christian Codependence Recovery Workbook: From Surviving to Significance by Stefanie Tucker

WHY “TWELVE STEPS” FOR EMOTIONAL & SPIRITUAL HEALING?

Hi! My name is Tom and I am a recovering sinner who is struggling with alcoholism, control problems, compulsiveness and codependent characteristics that often contribute to deep depression. I became a Christian May 5th, 1965. With the help of God I was able to quit drinking by August of the same year. However, I “fell off the wagon” in 1969 and again in 1974. The main reason I slipped was because I never dealt with the character defects that all addictive, compulsive sinners possess, thus I was unable to surrender them to God. Although I have been dry since 1974, it has only been within the last few years that I began to deal with my denial concerning many of my character defects. This happened as a result of starting a 12-step group at the insistence of others with problems that had them enslaved. Praise God for these people. I experience emotional healing one day at a time as long as I work my program of recovery and pray regularly Psalm 139:23-24: *God, see what is in my heart. Know what is there. Put me to the test. Know what I'm thinking. See if there's anything in my life you don't like. Help me live in the way that is always right*.

As I began to read devotionally from my Recovery and Life Recovery Devotional Bibles, develop weekly support group lessons, and take an honest evaluation of myself, I found I had more character defects than I wanted to admit. With the help of God and my support groups, I have been able to over-come many of these character defects. Some of them, however, have a tendency to creep back. That is why I continue to need the 12 steps, my support group, and most importantly a daily, intimate relationship with Jesus Christ.

Guess what? Many Christians I have been acquainted with over the past nearly 40 years are filled with emotional distress as a result of enslavement to someone or something destructive. These addictions are basically behaviors that help those who are emotionally insecure alter reality. Many Christians live in constant denial of the problems of codependency and an obsessive-compulsive lifestyle that has led to generations of dysfunction and inter-personal conflict. A Bible-based, Christ- centered twelve-step program can help us admit our denial and get the help necessary to become a functional, well-adjusted Christian.

There are many 12 step lists. The following list is revised from the twelve steps of Alcoholics Anonymous. These, along with weekly support groups, have be instrumental in healing sin-sick people from problems that have ranged from alcohol/drug addiction, sexual perversion, control issues, codependency, obsessive- compulsive behaviors, religious legalism, unhealthy emphasis on work, success or achievement, food addictions, compulsive spending or unhealthy hoarding, constant physical illness, internet addiction, approval dependency, perfectionism, over- emphasis on structure and organization, etc., etc.

To be honest, most of us could find ourselves somewhere on the earlier list of unhealthy, hurtful behaviors. The problem is that many of us are in denial. We have lived so long in our dysfunctions that we have become comfortable in them. We've learned to deny, excuse, and/or justify our problem behaviors. And, of course, we have become very vocal in our opposition to such words as co-dependency and dysfunction. This comes from a lack of knowledge concerning the true meaning of these behavioral problems and a denial of our own character defects.

It is my observation that 12-step members are more in tune with such Scriptures as Galatians 6:1-10; James 5:13-20 and Hebrews 3:13 than most Christians, including many church leaders. (**Take a moment to read these Scriptures**). The understanding and compassion of those in recovery far exceed those who live in daily denial of their own sins and resulting character defects. Let us commit ourselves to living daily according to what the Bible says: *“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.*

*Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus”* (Philippians 2:3-5).

THE DEVIL'S LIE:

“Self-worth = Performance + Others' Opinions”

Psalm 139:23-24 (NIRV): *God, see what is in my heart. Know what is there. Put me to the test. Know what I'm thinking. See if there's anything in my life you don't like. Help me live in the way that is always right*.

THE SERENITY PRAYER

God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can,

and the wisdom to know the difference.

Living one day at a time; enjoying one moment at a time; accepting hardship as the pathway to peace.

Taking, as he did, this sinful world as it is, not as I would have it. Trusting that he will make all things right if I surrender to his will; That I may be reasonably happy in this life,

and supremely happy with him forever in the next. Amen

MEETING ORDER

WELCOME TO C.A.R.E. (Christian – Understanding – Recovery – Experience). We are happy you are here. Please remember the confidential nature of this meeting.

OPENING UNISON PRAYER: Father God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference. In Jesus name, amen.

INTRODUCING OURSELVES (First name only and reason for being here).

 Hi, I’m \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and I’m struggling with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

NOTES OF INTEREST (Donation basket at door for sharing expenses.)

* Special Note: It is very important that no one particular person controls the meeting. No cross-talking. This is a sharing time, not an advice time.

READING OF THE TWELVE STEPS (Feel free to pass when it comes your turn).

LESSON AND SHARING TIME

PRAYER TIME (Pray for individual needs – 3-5 minutes total)

CLOSING PRAYER (In unison): God, grant us the serenity to accept the things we cannot change, courage to change the things we can, and the wisdom to know the difference.

Living one day at a time; enjoying one moment at a time; accepting hardship as the pathway to peace.

Taking, as he did, this sinful world as it is, not as we would have it. Trusting that he will make all things right if we surrender to his will;

That we may be reasonably happy in this life, and supremely happy with him forever in the next.

Lord, bless us and keep us; make your face shine upon us and be gracious to us; turn your face toward us and give us peace. In Jesus precious name, amen.

(From time-to-time you might want to serve some healthy refreshments).

12 Steps with Biblical References

1. We admitted we were powerless over our addictions and dependencies – that our lives had become unmanageable.

*“I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out.”* (Romans 7:18)

1. Came to believe that only Almighty God could restore us to sanity.

*“My grace is all you need. My power is strongest when you are weak.”* (2 Corinthians 12:9 NIrV)

*“God is working in you. He wants your plans and your acts to be in keeping with his good purpose.”* (Philippians 2:13 NIrV)

1. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God through Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior.

*“... If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.”* (Luke 9:23)

1. Made a searching and fearless moral and ethical inventory of ourselves.

*God, see what is in my heart. Know what is there. Put me to the test. Know what I'm thinking. See if there's anything in my life you don't like. Help me live in the way that is always right.”* (Psalm 139:23-24 NIrV)

*“Let us examine our ways and test them, and let us return to the Lord.”*

(Lamentations 3:40)

1. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our harmful, sinful behaviors.

*“Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.”* (James 5:16)

1. Were entirely ready to have the Holy Spirit remove all these sinful behaviors and resulting defects of character.

*“If you are willing and obedient, you will eat the best from the land.”* (Isaiah 1:19)

1. Humbly asked God to remove our sins and shortcomings.

*“Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will lift you up.”* (James 4:10)

1. Made a list of all persons we had sinned against, and became willing to make amends to them all.

*“Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.”* (Matthew 5:23, 24)

1. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

*“Give and it shall be given you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.”* (Luke 6:38)

1. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.

*“For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith GOD has given you.”* (Romans 12:3)

1. Sought through prayer, study of the Scriptures, and meditation to improve our conscious contact with Almighty God, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.

*“May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer.” (Psalm 19:14)*

*“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly...”* (Colossians 3:16)

1. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of the Holy Spirit and these steps, we tried to carry this message to others with character defects, and to practice these principles in all our relationships.

*“Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.”* (Galatians 6:1-2)

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# TWELVE STEP PRAYERS

Serenity Prayer: God, Grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and the ability to know the difference.

First Step Prayer: Dear Lord, I admit that I am powerless over my addiction I admit that my life is unmanageable when I try to control it. Help me this day to understand the true meaning of powerlessness. Remove from me all denial of my addiction.

Alternate Prayer: Today, I ask for help with my addiction. Denial has kept me from seeing how powerless I am and how my life is unmanageable. I need to learn and remember that I have an incurable illness and that abstinence is the only way to deal with it.

Second Step Prayer: Heavenly Father, I know in my heart that only you can restore me to sanity. I humbly ask that you remove all twisted thought and addictive behavior from me this day. Heal my spirit and restore in me a clear mind.

Alternate Prayer: I pray for an open mind so I may come to believe in a Power greater than myself. I pray for humility and the continued opportunity to increase my faith. I don't want to be crazy any more.

Third Step Prayer: Father God, I offer myself to You to build with me and to do with me according to Your will. Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Your will. Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of Your Power, Your love and Your way of life. May I do Your will always!

Alternate Prayer: Take my will and my life, Guide me in my recovery, Show me how to live.

Fourth Step Prayer

Loving Father, it is I who has made my life a mess. I have done it, but I cannot undo it. My mistakes are mine and I will begin a searching and fearless moral inventory. I will write down my wrongs, but I will also include that which is good. I pray for the strength to complete the task.

Fifth Step Prayer

Almighty God, My inventory has shown me who I am, yet I ask for your help in admitting my wrongs to another person and to you. Assure me, and be with me, in this Step, for without this Step I cannot progress in my recovery. With your help, I can do this and I will do it.

Sixth Step Prayer

Dear God, I am ready for Your help in removing from me the defects of character which I now realize are an obstacle to my recovery Help me to continue being honest with myself & guide me toward spiritual and mental health.

Seventh Step Prayer

Almighty God, I am now willing that you should have all of me, good and bad. I pray that you now remove from me every single defect of character which stands in the way of my usefulness to you and my fellows. Grant me strength, as I go out from here to do Your bidding.

Eighth Step Prayer

Almighty Father, I ask Your help in making my list of all those I have harmed. I will take responsibility for my mistakes and be forgiving to others as You are forgiving to me. Grant me the willingness to begin my restitution. This I pray in Jesus name.

Ninth Step Prayer

Loving Father, I pray for the right attitude to make my amends, being ever mindful not to harm others in the process. I ask for Your guidance in making indirect amends. Most important, I will continue to make amends by staying abstinent, helping others and growing in spiritual progress.

Tenth Step Prayer

I pray I may continue: To grow in understanding & effectiveness; To take daily spot check inventories of myself; To correct mistakes when I make them; To take responsibility for my actions; To be ever aware of my negative and self-defeating attitudes and behaviors; To keep my willfulness in check; To always remember I need Your help; To keep love and tolerance of others as my code; and To continue in daily prayer how I can best serve You, Almighty God.

Eleventh Step Prayer

Heavenly Father, as I understand You, I pray to keep my connection with You open and clear from the confusion of daily life. Through my prayers and meditation I ask especially for freedom from self-will, rationalization and wishful thinking. I pray for the guidance of correct thought and positive action. Your will, Father, not mine, be done.

Twelfth Step Prayer

Father God, my spiritual awakening continues to unfold. The help I have received I will pass on and give to others, both in and out of the Fellowship. For this opportunity I am grateful. I pray most humbly to continue walking day by day on the road of spiritual progress. I pray for the inner strength & wisdom to practice the principles of this way of life in all I do and say. I need You, my friends and the program every hour of every day. This is a better way to live.