

SAFE & SEEN



TREEHOUSE



Creating mental health friendly youth ministries

The culture we foster in our ministry determines the level of safety for teens struggling with mental health.

This five-part video series will help your ministry team create a safe environment for any teen, including those struggling with mental health.

DISCUSSION GUIDE **SESSION 5** DEEP RELATIONSHIPS



About TreeHouse

TreeHouse exists to **unleash hope** in teens by empowering Christ-centered leaders to provide grace-based teen mental health support.

Our vision is to turn the tide of teen mental health by empowering the Church to bring living hope to teens in their community.

To learn more about how TreeHouse can help position your ministry as a community leader by offering non-clinical mental health support, visit TreeHouseHope.org/partner.

Let's Connect

TreeHouseHope.org

 @treehousehope

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SESSION 5 DISCUSSION: DEEP RELATIONSHIPS



Review group rules and their purpose:

Confidentiality: What's shared in this group stays in this group.

Respect: Listen without interrupting or judging.

Assume positive intent: Approach others' contributions with grace.

Speak for yourself: Use "I" statements to share your thoughts and experiences.

Practice empathy: Seek to understand others' experiences.

No dumping: Identify ministry growth areas without dwelling on past mistakes.

WATCH VIDEO 5: DEEP RELATIONSHIPS

1. Understanding Teens' Barriers to Connection (10 minutes)

Mental health challenges and stigma often prevent teens from connecting with adults. Discuss how we can reduce these barriers and make ministry spaces more welcoming.

- ☆ Why do you think only a small percentage of teens seek help from Christian leaders for personal problems?
- ☆ What steps can you take to make teens feel safe enough to share their struggles with you?

NOTES:

2. Defining the Mentor's Role (10 minutes)

Mentors guide teens spiritually and emotionally without stepping into the role of therapist. Explore the boundaries of mentorship and how to stay within them.

- ☆ What does it mean to mentor teens without trying to fix their problems or act as their therapist?
- ☆ How can we focus on guiding teens while respecting their need for professional help when necessary?

NOTES:

3. Supporting Teens Without Retraumatizing Them (10 minutes)

Asking teens to recount painful experiences can do more harm than good. Learn how to provide support without inadvertently causing distress.

- ☆ Mandy mentioned the risks of retraumatizing teens by digging into painful details. How can we avoid this while still being supportive?
- ☆ What phrases or questions can you use to validate a teen's emotions without asking for details of their trauma?

NOTES:

4. Navigating Family Dynamics (10 minutes)

Families often influence how teens approach mental health. Discuss how to build trust with parents and respect cultural values while supporting teens.

- ☆ How can we partner with parents or guardians without creating conflict or competing with them?
- ☆ What steps can you take to learn more about a teen's cultural and familial context to better support them?

NOTES:

5. Leading with Validation and Curiosity (5 minutes)

Teens want to feel seen and heard before they seek solutions. Reflect on how validation and curiosity can deepen mentoring relationships.

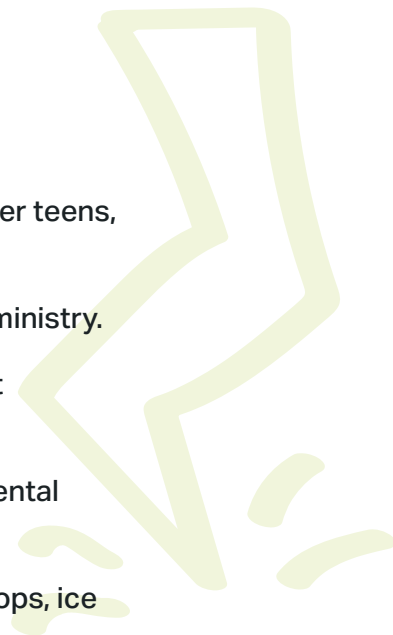
- ☆ Marlen said teens often just want to feel seen. How can you lead with validation instead of jumping to problem-solving?
- ☆ How can curiosity help you better understand a teen's needs and aspirations?

NOTES:

Possible Action Steps

Discuss these action steps and try to reach consensus on what step you will take next in your ministry.

- ☆ Create a list of trusted counselors and therapists where you can refer teens, and write a policy about when a referral is needed.
- ☆ Create a system where teens are assigned an adult mentor in your ministry.
- ☆ Create a list of open-ended questions that mentors can use without retraumatizing teens.
- ☆ Put adults in your ministry through training on how to respond to mental health crises in teens they mentor.
- ☆ Hold a gift card drive at your church for local restaurants, coffee shops, ice cream shops, etc. Give the cards to mentors to use with teens.



NOTES:

Closing Reflection & Prayer (5 minutes)

Takeaway:

- ☆ What is one action you will take to build stronger, healthier relationships with teens in your ministry?

Prayer:

- ☆ Pray for patience, wisdom, and compassion as you walk alongside teens on their mental health journeys.



NOTES:

DISCLAIMER

The Safe & Seen series is designed for educational purposes only. It is intended to provide tools and strategies for fostering a safe, supportive, and inclusive ministry environment for teens.

This course does not qualify or license any individual or organization, including the church, to practice mental health care, provide clinical counseling, or diagnose mental health conditions. We expect participants will observe the parameters of their respective roles and educational limits, referring individuals with significant mental health concerns to licensed mental health practitioners.

Mental health concerns or crises? Please reach out to a local mental health professional or seek immediate professional help for yourself or anyone in your ministry.

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Session five references The Relate study (2024). View the full study at relate.younglife.org.