

## **Chapter-by-Chapter Recommended Agenda**

### **Duration**

This agenda is based off of doing the group in 14-15 weeks, which is generally the number of weeks many facilitators use to complete their groups. You may need to adjust if you are doing the group in fewer than 14 weeks or more than 15 weeks.

### **Structure allows time for the Holy Spirit**

MTS wants to provide you with some structure around how to lead your group. By providing this structure, you will have time for sensitivity to the specific and unique needs of your group and to the leading of the Holy Spirit. Please remember that sensitivity to your participants' needs is more important than following a specific schedule or being able to say you accomplished all that is on the suggested agenda.

### **Textbook Key Topic Instructions**

There will not be time in the group to cover all the materials from the textbook. For the textbook, spend time highlighting only the most important pieces. Then ask how the textbook chapter impacted the participants. This should take no more than 30-45 minutes but may take as little as 15 min depending on your group needs or the content of the chapter.

### **Workbook Key Exercise Instructions**

Much of the remainder of the time in the group will be spent on the workbook and sharing. There will not be time in the group to cover all exercises in the workbook. We recommend you choose 2-3 key exercises from the workbook to cover, then ask participants if there were any exercises that stood out to them—either from a positive or challenging aspect. It can be difficult to choose the key exercises, so below you will find suggestions from each chapter. Please do not tell participants ahead of time which exercises you plan on focusing on in the next group. We want participants to do as much of the homework as they are able, and not just the key exercises. Also, which exercises you cover may vary if a participant expresses a need to look at an alternate exercise. These key exercises are just to get you started, depending on the needs of your group, you may choose to use alternate exercises. The idea here is not to always do these exact exercises, but to think through which exercises best represent the chapter based on your group's individual needs and stories. Please do not try to cover all the exercises in the workbook, this has proven to be ineffective because it is time intensive and could shut down safety and sharing as a result.

### **Homework**

Sometimes participants struggle with completing homework. Our suggestion is to be flexible and filled with grace when it comes to expectations around homework. Try to find out the reason for struggles with homework, if possible. The participants have likely experienced immense amount of

shame in their lives and our desire is to decrease not increase shame. Remember that showing up and participating in the discussion will change their lives.

## **Story Sharing**

On weeks that there will be story sharing, managing time may be more of a challenge. You need to save time to share stories and discuss the chapter and workbook. Below is a recommended way to schedule story sharing, that from experience works well as far as timing and chapter content.

Generally, it is recommended that you save 10 minutes for each person who will be sharing their story, and 5 minutes after the story is shared to offer empathy, validation, support, and care. This applies to when the facilitators sharing as well. Please do not use a timer, as this could feel harsh to participants. Have a clock close by so you can see what time it is. When it is close to 10 minutes, gently let the person sharing their story know that time is almost up by saying, "It is getting close to 10 minutes, we will need to wrap up soon."

Start off each group with prayer if everyone in the group feels safe with prayer, and a brief check in, "How was your time this week working through the materials?"

## **Introduction and Group Guidelines**

- Collect all remaining paperwork
- General introductions (name, place of work, family, connection to MTS, etc.)
- Read Mending the Soul Group Guidelines aloud, workbook page 26
- Facilitators share their stories
- Workbook key exercise:
  - My Safe Anchor, page 32
- Wrap up by scheduling who will share their stories over the next three weeks

## **Chapter One**

- Review textbook chapter *A Wake-up Call Regarding the Extent and Power of Abuse*
- Begin participant story sharing (2 stories)
- Workbook key exercises:
  - Stone of Remembrance, page 44
  - My Timeline, page 36-37
- The timeline is closely related to story sharing, so it is good to ask, "What stood out to you the most from your timeline?" rather than having each participant go through their entire timeline.

## **Chapter Two**

- Review textbook chapter *Abuse as a Perversion of the Image of God*
- Participant story sharing (2 stories)
- Workbook key exercises:
  - Write down your view of God, page 56
  - Draw a picture of your family of origin, page 58
  - Wheel of Abuse, page 64

- Chapter Two is a very long chapter, but much of what is covered in Chapter Two will also be shared as participants share their stories.

### **Chapter Three**

- Review textbook chapter *Profiles of Abusers*
- Participant story sharing (2 stories)
- Workbook key exercises:
  - Description of your abuser, page 90
  - Positive and negative aspects of your abuser, page 92
  - My Abuser's Profile, page 99

### **Chapter Four**

- Review textbook chapter *Portrait of an Abusive Family*
- Workbook key exercises:
  - Fourteen characteristics, page 105
  - Identify the basic unmet needs, page 109
  - Draw a picture of yourself as a child, page 110
  - Draw a picture of your current family, page 111

### **Chapter Five – Part One**

- Review textbook chapter *Shame*
- Workbook key exercises:
  - I feel guilt about/I feel toxic shame about, page 126-127
  - Label Shame as Shame, page 129
  - spend time discussing and sharing symptoms of shame

### **Chapter Five – Part Two**

- Check in and see how participants are feeling after sitting in the shame chapter
- Workbook key exercises:
  - Revisit Safe Anchor Image, page 32
  - Lies boxes, page 136-137
  - True Image of Your Original Design, page 142

### **Chapter Six – Part One**

- Review textbook chapter *Powerlessness and Deadness*
- Workbook key exercises:
  - Reviewing your experience with PTSD, page 148
  - Menu of Feelings and What I'm feeling now, page 150, 151
  - Take time to discuss the feeling word list and practice using it

### **Chapter Six – Part Two**

- Check in and see if participants are experiencing any PTSD symptoms, depending on level of symptoms provide with grounding skill sheet or refer to a local counselor (this can apply to any week)
- Workbook key exercises:
  - Feeling Again, page 152
  - Waking the Dead, page 158 -- discuss the concept of integrating the abuse

### **Chapter Seven**

- Review textbook chapter *Isolation*
- Workbook key exercises:
  - Abuse sabotages your relationship with God, page 175
  - Abuse sabotages your relationship with others, page 176
  - Discuss How to Journal, page 20 and check in with participants on how they are doing with journaling/writing/art journaling

### **Chapter Eight – Part One**

- Cover textbook chapter *Facing the Brokenness*
- Workbook key exercises:
  - Distorted Core Beliefs, page 184
  - Pray and Reflect, page 185
  - Cover the Feeling/Need/Request (FNR) boxes, page 185 and discuss how participants are doing with this

### **Chapter Eight – Part Two**

- Check in and see how participants are doing using the Feeling/Need/Request FNR model and the feeling word list
- Workbook key exercises:
  - Setting Healthy Boundaries, page 197
  - My Lies, My Memories, My Truth, page 186
  - The highest priority, page 195

### **Chapter Nine**

- Review textbook chapter *Rebuilding Intimacy with God*
- Workbook key exercises:
  - Re-Imaging the Parenthood of God, page 202
  - Circle the words that come to mind when you think of God, page 205

### **Chapter Ten**

- Review textbook chapter *Forgiveness*
- Workbook key exercises:
  - Begin by sensitively checking in with participants on Harmful Teaching on Forgiveness, page 221 and allow them to share how they are feeling as the group is starting on this chapter

- Stepping into Freedom, page 230
- If you are doing your group in 14 weeks, save up to an hour for closure, next steps, and celebration

### **Final Meeting**

- Celebration night -- ask the group ahead of time how they would like to celebrate
- Ask each participant to identify what the next steps are in their healing journey
- Share with the group any follow up you as facilitators/organization/church that will be occurring
- Allow time for participants to affirm each other and express how they are feeling at the end of this journey together
- If everyone is comfortable (ask privately ahead of time via individual text/email) make sure participants have each other's contact information