

HOW TO ADDRESS COMMUNITY KILLERS

What is a community killer? Every group has its fair share of “community killer” people and moments. If you’re honest with yourself...you’ve been one at times! Below are some of the most common behaviors that can kill a group and what to do about it.

THE “OVERLY TALKATIVE” MEMBER

In the group:

- Acknowledge their sharing and say “Thank you so much for sharing. Does anyone have anything else?”
- Redirect by asking people questions by name.
- Refrain from embarrassing them in front of the other group members.
- Refrain from snapping at them out of frustration.

One-on-one:

- Say “We love it that you want to share but want to hear from other group members as well. Some are quieter and you're more extroverted, which is great. You share freely. I want them to contribute more and want to hear from them and you. Can you help us as a group to involve them more? I'm going to remind you to give others more airtime and when I do that we'll both know what I mean by that. You model "authenticity and sharing" for us but we want everyone else to share as well.”
- Point out their strengths.
- Encourage them to keep sharing but be mindful of time when they do share.
- Say, “If I see it happen in group again, I might share, “Does anybody else have anything?”
- Ask, “What’s your hope to get out of this group?”

THE “QUIET/SUPERFICIAL SHARER” MEMBER

In the group:

- Say “What's going on with you? What can we pray about for you this week? Is there anything you can relate to from
- what other people said?”
- By having he/she talk, then it helps them open up when life gets hard. You don't have to do this every week, only if
- this is a pattern.
- Call them out directly and ask what they think about the topic that is being addressed that night.

One-on-one:

- Say “This is a safe place to share and I don't know that much about you. We want to know about victories and struggles. Is it hard for you to share in the group? How does it feel? When people are vulnerable it draws others to them. We want to know you.”
- Ask “What’s your hope to get out of this group?”

THE “DIS-ENGAGED” MEMBER

In the group:

- If it happens once or twice, extend grace.
- If it’s a weekly occurrence, address the issue in group and one-on-one.
- Don’t ignore the issue because it will become the elephant in the room.

- Don't let it deter your group from whatever you might be in the middle of whether that's during sharing or a lesson from a study, etc.
- Texting – Say, “Hey, I totally understand if that's important right now, but if not, can you wait for after group time?”
- Late – After a pattern, have the one on one and then address with the group letting them know you've had a conversation and give the other person a chance to ask for forgiveness.
- Late – If they come in acknowledging that they're late and apologize, that is great, no need for follow-up, unless they do it every week.

One-on-one:

- Say “Hey, I noticed it's been hard for you to get to group on time the last several meetings. I'm concerned about that and how it affects the group. Help me understand what's going on. I know sometimes life happens and we're late, but I have noticed this to be a pattern. I know our group agreed on 7pm start time and that worked for you. Has anything changed?”
- Say “When you are late, it can communicate that group is not that important to you, or that the stuff going on in our lives isn't as important. This might not be what you are trying to communicate, but since it's a pattern, it can start to communicate these things.”
- Let them share so that you both can reach a level of understanding.
- Open up dialogue about him/her apologizing to the group at the next meeting.

THE “GIVES COUNSEL FROM PERSONAL OPINION AND NOT FROM SCRIPTURE” MEMBER

In the group:

- Acknowledge the person that shared their opinion and let them know if you disagree in a loving way and redirect group as a whole to search through scripture that would speak to the circumstance.
- Be willing to divert from your plan for the evening.
- Be willing to be bold.
- Be ready to answer questions and ask your coach/director as things come up that you may not have answers to.
- Refrain from embarrassing the person that spoke from opinion.

One-on-one:

- Meet one-on-one with the person in the group that consistently shares from opinion.
- Share that you are thankful that they care and do want to give counsel to others.
- Let them know that part of biblical community is sharing through the filter of what scripture would say as we seek to counsel others in the group.

THE “AGGRESSIVE” MEMBER

In the group:

- Acknowledge their emotion towards the topic or person or their defensiveness towards counsel being given.
- Say “This is something we can talk about after group time” if it's regarding a specific topic.
- If the aggression is towards a person, encouraging them to talk to that person one on one after group or at another time that week.
- Reiterate we do want to hear more about your thoughts and feelings.
- Be mindful of the safety of the members of the group and if you see that someone's feelings may have been hurt by the aggressor during group time, take time to acknowledge that.

One-on-one:

- Ask, “How have you been feeling about group?”
- Say, “I’ve observed frustrations from you; is that how you have felt?”
- Remind them of how it affects the group when the members don’t feel like it’s safe to share truth with this person.
- Remind them of how it affects the group when there is aggression and how the atmosphere gets quenched of being a place where safe sharing thrives.
- Seek to understand where they are coming from as there might be deeper issues.
- At the same time, continue to be bold in sharing how it affects the group and encouraging them on how they can approach the members of the group differently (timing, tone, volume, etc.).

THE “ABSENT” MEMBER

In the group:

- The leader can share with the group that they acknowledge that they haven’t seen the member in a while and will follow-up.
- Encourage group members to reach out with texts, emails and phone calls to reiterate that they miss the member
- Remind the group to not speak negatively about the member.
- If the member decides to commit to the group, have them acknowledge their absences, seek forgiveness from the group, express their re-commitment to the group, and ask for encouragement and accountability.
- If the member decides to leave the group, encourage them to come to group one more time to leave well.
- If the member decides to not return for one more meeting, leader can share with the group what they talked about.

One-on-one:

- “Hey, we’ve really missed you at our group meetings these past several weeks. I noticed it’s been hard for you to be there. Help me understand what’s going on.”
- “I’m concerned about it and how it affects our group. When you aren’t at group, it can communicate that group is not important to you. This might not be what you are trying to communicate, but wanted to share how it can come across.”
- Let them share so that you both can reach a level of understanding.
- Figure out what is going to be best for this member. Can they re-commit to the group? Is it best for them to step out of this group and wait for a season where they can fully commit?
- Key Verses: Ephesians 4:29; 1 Thessalonians 2:8

THE “OVER GRACE” MEMBER

In the group:

- Affirm the value of grace and acceptance.
- Let them know how thankful you are for their heart.
- Remind the group of our need to communicate with both grace and truth.
- Ask the person or the entire group where they would go in Scripture to speak to this topic.

One-on-one:

- Encourage that they’ve been doing a great job at grace and that they need that in group.
- Remind them there is a balance of grace and truth.
- We are shepherding towards holiness, so we want to be informed towards that, we don’t want to be accepting at the expense of growing/holiness, we want to continue to encourage each other towards truth.
- Key Verses: 2 Timothy 3:16, 4:2

THE “SHIFT BLAME” MEMBER

In the group:

- Thank them for sharing.
- Gently acknowledge that you feel like you have been hearing some of the same things over and over and the group wants to help.
- How can we help you? How can we encourage you? How can we hold you accountable? This helps them begin to ownership of their own growth.
- Can we come up with a couple things that would help you from now to our next group meeting? Be specific.

One-on-one:

- Encourage them to continue attending group time.
- Share what you’ve been observing and how you want to help.
- Is there anything we can be doing better to encourage you?
- Ask, “How are you contributing to your situation right now? Can you focus on taking the log out of your own eye?”
- Ask questions, begin to peel back the layers and come up with a plan.
- Reminder you can seek help from your Coach/Director.
- Key Verses: Matthew 7:3-5; 1 Thessalonians 5:14-15

THE “NO GRACE” MEMBER

In the group:

- Affirm the value of Scripture.
- Share that you are encouraged by what they’re sharing while also reminding them of grace.
- Remind them we are not trying to fix each other, we are trying to remind each other of truth in a way that’s not hurtful and that’s done in love.

One-on-one:

- Affirm that they know the Word; encourage them to pray and serve the other guys in the group.
- Let them know what you have been observing.
- Remind them that while truth is important, the way we share is just as important.
- Key Verses: 1 Timothy 1:5; Colossians 4:6; 1 Corinthians 16:14