



CARING FOR OUR CHURCH COMMUNITIES & COVID-19

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WHAT IS CHRISTIAN CARE?

Christ at the centre – he is the why and how of our love

Discipleship framework – in the midst of suffering

Strengthening a person's relationship with Jesus

3 P's – Pastoral, Practical & Prayerful

1. Pastoral – emotional and spiritual care, listening and empathy
2. Practical – specific to each situation
3. Prayerful – prayerfully dependent on God, praying with and for people

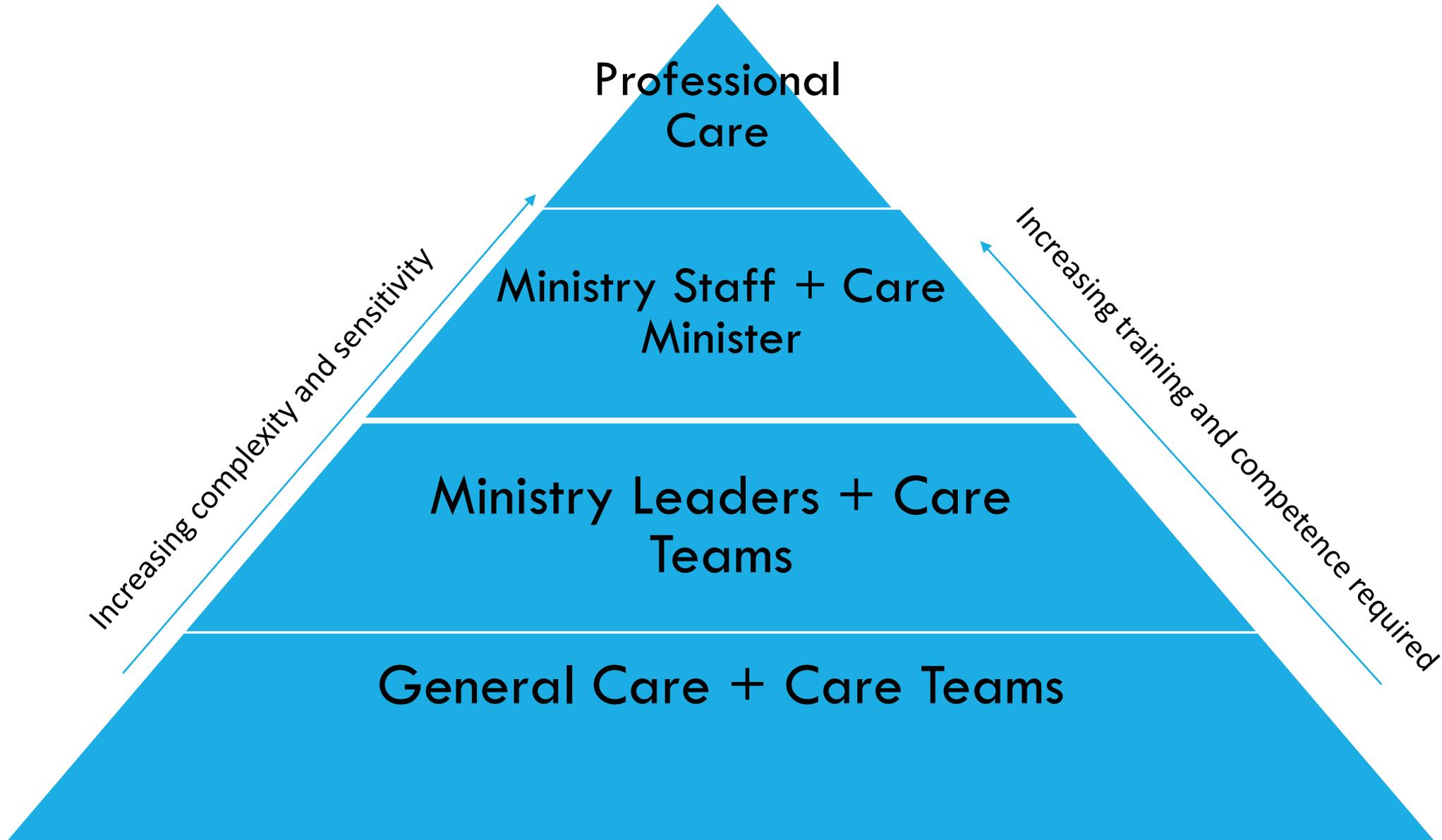
WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR CARE? HAS THIS CHANGED?

Not changed – just in the forefront of people's minds

All Christians responsible for care and concern of those around us

However, we all have different roles and levels of responsibilities

Having a structure to meet peoples needs based on the level of complexity is crucial at a time like this



PASTORAL CARE

In summary -

- All involved in pastoral care to some degree
- Need structures to ensure appropriate care is given by competent and skilled people as level of complexity increases
- Important to ensure training and support for pastoral care is provided
- One source of support for pastoral care workers is Sydney Christian Care Network closed Facebook page

ELEMENTS OF GOOD CARE

- Prayerfully reflect the love of God in Christ
- Use and strengthen existing care structures
- Facilitate and coordinate care to build mutual concern
- Be proactive as well as reactive; equip people
- Be prayerfully dependent upon God
- Reach out by phone, listen well!
- Pray with one another and bring God's Word
- Practice safe ministry and know when and how to refer

CARING FOR OUR CHURCHES DURING COVID-19

CONNECT: help members to stay connected

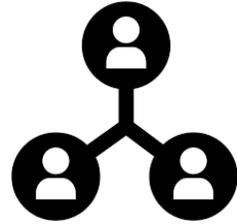
ENCOURAGE: encourage members spiritually

SUPPORT:

- a. offer emotional support
- b. offer practical support

EQUIP: train and equip for care

CONNECT



Small groups and ministry team to keep connected with members via regular phone calls, email, text and video meetings

Staff and Care Ministry to call those who are not in Small Groups and those who are vulnerable (eg. 70+) and need extra care

Provide tech support for those who need help to connect with church online

Post sermon notes and letters to those who do not have technology

Online “Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner” event

ENCOURAGE



Online services, youth and kids' ministry, weekly online
Small Group meetings

Pray and bring God's word during conversations on the
phone

1 to 1 Bible reading via phone or online video

Videos and podcasts on Church social media including
devotional messages from Ministers mid-week

SUPPORT – EMOTIONAL



Offer regular emotional support via phone and other media as appropriate

Buddy system in Growth Groups for group members and also leaders

Online Refreshment Nights for Growth Group leaders to support them and identify more complex pastoral needs that arise

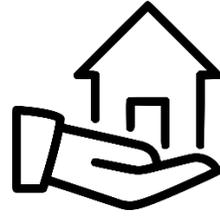
Care minister or those responsible for care on call for complex needs

Phone ministry guidelines including suggestions of open questions to ask

Inform members who to contact if people need extra or crisis care, or have tested positive for COVID-19

List of counsellors/resources for leaders and staff

SUPPORT — PRACTICAL



Offer practical support as appropriate, adhering to COVID-19 health directives

Shopping support and care packages (basic food and for Year 12s)

Set up Church pantry

Set up a specific discretionary fund for those in difficult financial circumstances

Donations of shopping vouchers

List of external providers of food and financial assistance

Accommodation register – emergency accommodation, shelters and low-budget accommodation – particularly for those escaping domestic abuse

EQUIP



Train and equip for care via Church communications and E-news

Short videos and webinars via Zoom and social media on care skills, mental health, self-care etc

Age specific care plans – kids, youth, young adults

PHONE MINISTRY GUIDELINES

Christ Church St Ives: Guidelines for Phone Ministry during COVID-19

Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in love. Honour one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervour, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality. (Romans 12:9-13)

During the COVID-19 outbreak, everyone has a role to play in reaching out to others with the love of Jesus. However, now that face-to-face contact has become more restricted, the majority of our care and support will need to take place over the phone. **Here are some principles to bear in mind as you call others:**

1. Make a list

- Make a list of people (18 years and over) who you plan to contact over the coming days, weeks and months.
- These may be members of your Growth Group; people at church you know or who you've been asked to call; people in your networks or neighbours in your street.
- Be sensitive about the use of Face Time or video calls, and only use if you have asked the person first.

2. Call and check they are ok to talk

- Call and if you don't know the person well, say something like: *"Hi it's here from Christ Church, St Ives/our Street, I'm ringing to say hello and to see how you're going. Have I caught you at a good time?"*
- The person may not want to talk right now, in which case, let them know it's ok and ask if you can call them back some other time.
- If they would prefer not to receive any calls, say something like *"That's ok, no problem all. If you change your mind we'd love to hear from you and help you if we can."*
- Keep a note in your diary of when you called and when you plan to call again. If you've been asked to call a number of people at church, follow up your calls with an email to the appropriate staff member, to let them know the type of help needed and where things were left but don't share personal or confidential details. Staff, please update Elvanto.

2. Be attentive, listen well and give people space to tell you how they're going

- In the first instance, listen well and let the person tell you how they're going. Resist the impulse to jump in or interrupt before they've finished.
- In order to determine unmet needs and provide appropriate support, ask open questions (which don't require a yes or no response). Start with the current support they have, and progress to spiritual matters.

3. Listen for social, emotional, financial and spiritual needs. Respond with empathy, and offer prayer, spiritual encouragement and practical help as appropriate

a. Social needs

CARING FOR THOSE OVER 70

- Need to incorporate an age appropriate approach
- Need to be extra sensitive – their world and options have shrunk dramatically
- Current situation can be overwhelming
- Practically
 - Clear and simple communication
 - Technology may be new and overwhelming – include setting up online shopping/banking plus church
 - Remember their style of worship e.g. prayer book/ formal liturgy
 - Care packs & shopping & deliveries
- Pastorally
 - Work out most appropriate way to connect – handwritten card; phone; email
 - Give them more time and space to respond
 - Consider specific spiritual needs
- Take your time to work out what is the best plan for each individual

CARING FOR PEOPLE IN FINANCIAL DIFFICULTY

Listen with empathy, provide prayer support and bring God's word

Direct people to Centre Link (new Job seeker and Job Keeper payments)

Government job search site 'Jobs Hub' <https://www.dese.gov.au>

Direct people to other agencies eg. Anglicare, Salvos, community and Church pantries

Set up a specific Discretionary Fund?

Provide information about confidential and free financial counseling services eg. Catholic Care; LifeLine; National Debt helpline

Professional help for those who are at increased risk of self harm, substance abuse or DFV due to financial pressures

CARING FOR PEOPLE IN DOMESTIC ABUSE

Good resources –

- Anglicare Family and Domestic Violence Advisor – Lynda Dunstan
- Know Domestic Abuse - Online training through Safe Ministry website
- Sydney Diocese Domestic Abuse Policy

A number of factors may increase domestic abuse during this time – increased stress, financial difficulties and social isolation

Continue to provide support but be careful - potential of increased monitoring

Continue to listen and believe if someone discloses abuse

Include key contact numbers in your COVID-19 resources

Phone support – include a question – “What are you most worried about at the moment?”

CARING FOR PEOPLE IN DOMESTIC ABUSE

Training for Small Group leaders

Get advice from experts in this area

If the person is able to talk to you about what's happening:

Check that they have access to basic food and supplies

Help them set up a safety plan or safety bag

Let them know leaving is considered 'essential' travel under COVID-19 legislation

Let them know police will come and enter the house if called

Provide contact numbers for services

DOMESTIC ABUSE HELPLINES

Call 000 if in immediate danger

Domestic Violence Hotline - 1800 65 64 63 – 24/7 telephone crisis counselling and referral service for women

1800 RESPECT – 24/7 confidential information, counselling and support service for domestic abuse

NSW Link2home – NSW Crisis Accommodation Phone Line – 1800 152 152

Men's Line – 1300 78 99 78 - telephone and online counselling service for men with emotional health and relationship concerns