

Group Members Who Need Too Much Care



As a Group leader, you help to shepherd the members of your group during a season of life. But there's a common tension: some members of the group require more care than others. There's a tipping point at which certain members need too much care.

I'm not talking about a group member with a need that the group is equipped to meet, but a group member whose needs consistently dominate the group dynamic. Your goal is to provide a healthy group experience for *all* members while providing appropriate support for those who have real issues of care.

So what are the warning signs that a group member needs more care than you can provide?

Does the member constantly talk about being alone or lonely?

This is the best question you can ask if you're a leader trying to identify whether a

member needs a level of care you can't provide. Constant talk of loneliness is a major warning sign of needs too substantial to be addressed in Life Group.

Is the member making a lot of requests of the group?

Needy members tend to behave as though everything is about them. Conversations are driven by them or led back to them. Their issues dominate the group experience. To draw attention to themselves, they request a lot of the group—socially, financially, or otherwise. Though a person's needs may be legitimate, this kind of behavior is a sign that he or she is using the group experience for purposes other than creating the kind of intentional community that fosters spiritual growth. That's a problem.

Does the member celebrate other group members' wins?

Needy group members don't celebrate other members in the group. They draw attention to the fact they have little to celebrate.

Do the same issues keep occurring?

Needy members are often unwilling to act on the wise counsel given by the other group members. As a result, the same problems arise again and again.

Is the member participating and growing?

This is a more subtle sign, but needy group member frequently arrive late and show up unprepared. These may be signs that the member is not committed to growing or changing, but is using the group as a crutch or an outlet for venting.

Group members who exhibit these behaviors are typically dealing with significant issues and without a lot self-awareness. Community Group isn't the ideal place for them to work through those issues. But as a group leader, there's something you can do to help: talk to Nate, Shauna, or Tina about the Care Ministry options that might best serve your group member.