

Let's talk about it...

Processing Feelings & Responding with Virtue

Life as we knew it changed in an instant. Youth and adults are trying to cope with these sudden changes, everyone in their own unique way. Talking about our feelings doesn't have to be difficult.

The following steps can be used in casual conversation between a youth minister and a teen, among family members, or between friends. It is a simple way to discuss what each person is feeling and help others respond in a virtuous way.

This process is relevant to people of all ages, parents and youth, and most helpful when each person shares their perspective. On the back you will find sample questions for each step.

STEP 1: Ask & Acknowledge

- **Ask open ended questions:** "Tell me more about that?" "What do you mean by...?"
- **Use reflective listening:** reflect back what you heard in your own words to confirm you understand what they're sharing – ask them to correct you if it is not what they meant
- **Give affirmations:** let the other person know you are listening and are present

STEP 2: Provide Support

- **Listening, not counseling:** help others share their experiences, express need, and get support from a larger community
- **Know your limits:** seek additional support and share community resources as needed

STEP 3: Empower Growth

- **Turning it into good:** challenge a new way of thinking like Christ when faced with hardships
- **Opportunities to act:** when looking back at this time, what do we want to remember doing?

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Questions to Ask

Keep it simple. Conversations can be in any setting and don't have to be planned out in advance. You don't have to ask every question – let conversation flow naturally, using the following questions to start talking.

Step 1: Ask and Acknowledge

- What have you experienced? What has this time looked like for your family?
- What has been challenging for you? For your family?
- Where have you seen joy or what surprised you?

Step 2: Provide Support

- What are your needs right now?
- What are your feelings on expectations not being met?
- What are you missing out on?

Step 3: Empower Growth

- What have you been learning during this time? About yourself? Your family?
- Where have you seen God working in your life?
- Was there ever a time in your life when you felt similar to how you are feeling now? How did you deal with that time?
- What has helped you during this time? What are some coping skills you found helpful?
- What are your next steps? How are you feeling about them?
- If you could tell an adult about how you are feeling right now, what would you want them to know?
- Who are your support people? Who has helped you during this time?
- You have been through a lot over the last few months. How do you feel like you have grown?