

## Small Group Guidance for Walking Alongside:

### DEPRESSION

A small group can be a huge source of support and strength to a friend struggling with depression. By learning to express care in ways that will be received well by the person who is depressed, you can share the burden of depression with your friend, and he or she will begin to feel the weight of depression lift.

#### DO:

- **TALK ABOUT IT.** As a group, talk about and research the dynamics of depression. Ask your depressed friend to share how he or she is feeling. Encourage others to share their own experiences with depression. Promote compassion, empathy and knowledge. This will foster understanding, which can help the person feel a sense of control over their emotions instead of feeling controlled by their emotions.
- **PRAY TOGETHER.** Encourage your friend to share specific prayer requests during the group time. Pray together as a group, and also ask group members to pray daily for their friend.
- **SHOW SUPPORT.** Affirm your friend with fun cards, notes, verses, verse images, care baskets, music, movies and other fun things tailored to your friend's liking. Check-in with texts, phone calls and coffee dates or walks. A different group member can check-in daily. These will serve as reminders of your love and support. Once the friend is seeing a counselor and stabilized the frequency can be decreased to once or twice a week.
- **SHARE THESE VERSES:** Psalm 31, Psalm 42:1-5, Psalm 139, Isaiah 40:29-31, Jeremiah 17:5-8, Romans 15:13, 2 Cor 1:3-11, 2 Cor 4:8-9, Eph 6:10-18, Phil 4:4-8

#### DO SAY:

- "God is with you in this."
- How can I pray for you?
- I love you.
- If you ever need anything, I'm here for you. I'll call you on Friday to see how you're doing.
- I've been thinking about you today.
- You're doing a great job with...

#### DON'T SAY:

- "As Christians, we should show the joy of the Lord."
- "Stop being so negative and look at the positive."
- "I know you're better and stronger than this - don't give in!"

Find more detail and information in the Small Group Emergency Response Handbook. Need a copy? Email [groups@acfellowship.org](mailto:groups@acfellowship.org) for your free copy.