

Essential Skills for Gospel-Shaped Care to the Hurting and Suffering

Today, people in the West are enduring all kinds of suffering – despair, loneliness, sickness, fear, anger, doubt, war, poverty, injustice, loss. But how can we confidently walk alongside and care well for those God has placed in our lives? This workshop will help develop a vision for Gospel-shaped, disciple-making ministry as we explore how to better build connection, hold conversation, and bring biblical and prayerful content into our care for others.

Andrew Dickson lives by the sea on Northern Ireland’s world-famous Antrim Coast with his wife, Katherine, and their two young children. After spending over 13 years in local church and para-church ministry, Andrew now serves as the Congregational Life Development Officer for the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, where he holds the brief for the development of discipleship, leadership, and pastoral care across the denomination. Regularly speaking on and writing about these things, Andrew is passionate about equipping and empowering PCI congregations across Ireland today to follow Jesus closely, care biblically well for one another, and invest in raising up transformed, Spirit-filled leaders who play their part within the life of Christ’s church. Andrew is a graduate of Union Theological College, Belfast, and has a Master’s degree in Theology from the University of Cumbria. In life’s quieter moments, he loves to eat mint choc chip ice cream, build Lego with his kids, and take long, slow walks by the sea.

1. Confident to Care?

- A. We live in a broken world (Genesis 3)
- B. Responding with Gospel-shaped care is vital (Psalm 23; 2 Corinthians 1:3-7)
- C. What is gospel-shaped, disciple-making care?
- D. Caring biblically well must begin with a confidence in Jesus

2. Confidence to Connect

- A. The context for all Gospel-shaped care is a relationship (Genesis 3; Isaiah 53:6)
- B. Confidence to connect: Jesus’ life and example (John 1:14; Philippians 2:5-7)
- C. Taking initiative by moving toward others to form a personal connection
- D. Being open, approachable, and responsive to the initiative of others (Mark 5:21-42)
- E. Equipped and empowered to build connection

3. Confidence in Conversation

- A. Effective Gospel-shaped care requires that we get to know our sheep (John 10:14)
- B. The importance of listening (Luke 8:18; James 1:19)

- C. The need for empathy (John 11:33-35; Romans 12:15)
- D. The value of good questions (Luke 2:46-47)
- E. Helping hurting people feel seen, heard, and understood (Luke 19:1-10; John 4)
- F. Effective Gospel-shaped, disciple-making ministry and care takes time

4. Confidence in Content

- A. Effective Gospel-shaped care must go beyond connection and conversation
- B. Jesus' words of help, life, comfort, and hope (Matthew 11:28-30; John 10:10)
- C. Jesus' resurrection, ascension, and heavenly reign shapes our care (Revelation 21:1-5)
- D. Knowing the arc of the Bible's story (Genesis-Revelation)
- E. Equipped and empowered to share Scripture and pray thoughtfully
- F. Recognising that the journey with the person is > than spraying cheerful graffiti

5. Closing Reflection

- A. Psalm 23 and God's Gospel-shaped, disciple-making care to his people

Further Reading

Paul Coulter, *Keeping Care Pastoral: The Heart of Gospel-shaped Pastoral Care* (PESIOD)

David Gibson, *The Lord of Psalm 23: Jesus Our Shepherd, Companion and Host* (Crossway)

Peter Hicks, *What Could I Say?* (IVP)

Kelly Kapic, *Embodied Hope: A Theological Meditation on Pain and Suffering* (IVP)

Timothy Keller, *Walking with God Through Pain and Suffering* (Hodder and Stoughton)

Eugene Peterson, *Five Smooth Stones for Pastoral Work* (Eerdmans)

Helen Thorne, *Five Things to Pray for a Suffering Friend* (The Good Book Company)

Edward Welch, *Side by Side: Walking with Others in Wisdom and Love* (Crossway)