

Spring CG

Leader

Gathering

May 17, 2022



CG Coaching List

Leaders	Coach
Eric Muire and Molly Church (college group)	Ben Snow
Andrew and Tracy Hayes, Daniel and Amanda Stidham	Eric Spivey
Mark Woodwell & Hannah Dedmon	Eric Spivey
Susan Donaldson, Trent and Haley Forshey	Eric Spivey
Bob & Sonya Hennessy	Eric Spivey
Bryan Covington	Eric Spivey
Chris Gottberg	Eric Spivey
Josh and Cassie Lowry	Eric Spivey
Micah and Megan McCool	Eric Spivey
Win & Tracy Pratt, Tyler & Kayla Pleasants	Eric Spivey
Eric & Annika Spivey	Eric Spivey
Tony & Carol Filomena	Eric Spivey
Upcoming group: Mike Shillinglaw	Eric Spivey
Eric and Conner Carboni	Jordan Penley
Jennifer and Michael Murphy	Jordan Penley
Kelly Vine, Drew Lynch, Olivia Yarborough	Jordan Penley
Luke and Ginger Jones	Jordan Penley
Sean & Anna Murphy	Jordan Penley
Greg & Mary Cols	Kayla Pleasants
Jon & Brandy Thompson	Kayla Pleasants
Austin & Ali Howe	Matt Nickerson
Sara & Nick Scanlon	Matt Nickerson
Kyle and Lauren McKay	Matt Nickerson
Matt and Amy Crouch	Matt Stevens
Anna and Angel Martinez & Jessica and Tim Knesnik	Mike Shillinglaw
Ralph & Cat Gillikin	Mike Shillinglaw
McLean & Lauren Lucas	Stephen Shingler
Andrew & Natalie Carmen	Tony & Carol Filomena
Mark & Katherine Quakenbush and Andrea Pratt	Tony & Carol Filomena



What do I do if someone sounds suicidal?

Sep 23, 2021 | **Resources**

By Andrea Pratt, LCSM, MSW

→ Related resource: **[Recommendations for Biblical Counselors](#)**

Intro

Thoughts of suicide can be a jarring thing to talk about. Yet, it is more of a common human experience than we may realize—**National Institutes of Health ranks it as the 10th leading cause of death in the United States.**

In my own experience as a mental health professional, suicide is something I assess with patients almost daily. Among the patients who disclose feeling suicidal at one time or another, I have noticed a common theme; it's a feeling that comes alongside depression, the stinging, gutted feeling of hopelessness that one can't shake. It's a hopelessness that leads the individual into a holding pattern where they feel there is no relief and nowhere to turn.

In my own practice, discussing suicide with patients has led me to wrestle with this dark and weighty topic. How does someone get to the point of wanting to kill themselves?

Maybe you've experienced this feeling yourself. Maybe you know someone who has attempted or even committed suicide. You know there is no short answer, or quick fix

here. While I haven't found the magic thing to do or say to "cure" patients from thoughts of suicide, I have found some relief in the Bible, like when Job wishes he was never born (Job 3:3). I've found some connection to the topic when Rebecca cries out in pain, "Why go on living?" (Gen. 27:46), or a little more understanding as Moses exclaims, "This burden is too heavy...if this is how you are going to treat me just go ahead and kill me."(Num. 11:15) The honest cries of hopelessness continue with Jonah, Elijah, and Jeremiah.

Their hopelessness gives me courage to consider my own hopelessness, that I am weak, a sinner in need of a savior with limitations in a broken world. Through that lens I sit with patients soberly in their raw honesty as they share about their own thoughts of suicide.

As you may be aware, many of our own church members walk in bouts of depression and anxiety, most likely with varying thoughts of suicide. As their community group leader, you may be the best person in the best possible position to recognize warning signs of suicide.

First, we must be willing to recognize our own reluctance, fear, denial, shock, and anger towards the idea that someone would consider suicide or harming themselves. Suicide is complex and difficult to understand. Today's conversation is less about the how and why, and more about identifying warning signs and linking a person in crisis to immediate help through a strategy called QPR.

Warning signs

Research shows the majority of people who attempt suicide give some type of verbal warning of their intent to kill themselves.

This may look like someone saying:

- I wish I were dead.
- I'm so tired of it all.
- What's the point of going on?
- My family would be better off without me.
- Soon you won't have to worry about me any longer.

If you are concerned about someone, your best bet is to ask them clearly and directly about it. Below I share **the suicide prevention method from QPR Institute**, created by Paul Quinnett, PhD, to provide a guide on how to ask about suicide and what to do if someone acknowledges it.

QPR focuses on these 3 life-saving actions:

1. Question the person about suicide
2. Persuade the person to get help
3. Refer the person to the appropriate resource

Question

The most important step is asking the question. Though it might seem counterintuitive, asking about suicide does not increase the risk of it.

Here are some examples; choose a phrase that sounds most like you:

- Have you been unhappy lately? So unhappy that you wished you were dead?
- As your community group leader, I am concerned about you. Are you thinking about suicide?
- You look pretty withdrawn. Are you thinking about killing yourself?
- Do you have thoughts, feelings or plans to kill yourself?

Persuade

This step looks to move the person's mindset towards finding help. First, listen and acknowledge the person's pain, since listening is crucial to this entire process. Then, persuade them to get help from a professional.

Here are some options for initiating this step in the conversation:

- Will you go with me to the emergency department or call 911?
- Will you call the crisis line with me?
- Will you promise to contact your counselor?
- I want you to live. Will you please stay alive until we can get you some help?

What if they refuse to get help?

If a person refuses help and you think they are a danger to themselves, **contact crisis services for immediate assistance**. Services vary by county in North Carolina. A mental health professional will respond to your call and provide you with support.

Refer

The final step is assisting the person with receiving professional help. Here are some things to think through in this step:

- The best referral is when you go with the suicidal individual to an emergency room, crisis center, or meeting with a mental health professional.
- In the immediate context, this can look like making a phone call together to the crisis center, suicide hotline, or to schedule an appointment with their counselor.
- And finally, even if you don't get to immediately accompany them to professional help, this step includes getting the individual to agree to accept help, even if it's in the future.

Whether or not they are interested in contacting a professional, getting others involved is important. This can look like asking, "Who else would you like to know that you're feeling this bad?" Working with the person to identify a friend or family member and then calling or meeting with that person to share what is going on will increase the patient's proverbial safety net. Not everyone will want to involve their whole community group, but your group can provide an excellent support network if they are willing. Keep in mind, when they let your group in on their suicidal thinking it might elicit default problem solving responses from your group members (ex. "well just stop thinking about it"), so you'll need to lead your group in listening to the person, acknowledging their pain, and persuading them to seek professional help (or asking how that help is going, if they've already sought it).

Who else needs to know?

As a community group leader, you'll want to keep your coach aware as you assist this person in seeking help (note: groups are organized slightly differently across our multiple locations, so for those leaders who don't have a CG coach, substitute whomever you report to). Obviously, confidentiality is an important aspect to this conversation, so the best way to do this is to let the person know by including it in the referral step above with, "Is it okay with you if I also let my community group coach know?" Feel free to explain what a coach is, that your coach is there to support you and your group, and that your coach will join you in praying for them. Also, the coach wouldn't reach out to the person, or have a Vintage pastor reach out to the person, unless the individual requests it. If they express discomfort with the idea then you can always offer to keep their name confidential.

Asking about suicide brings hope

I've regularly noticed that an individual who feels suicidal is unaware of the severity of their state of hopelessness. As a bystander it can be easy to deny, minimize, or avoid stepping into their hopelessness and asking if they are thinking about killing themselves. Yet, it can be the greatest way to step in and help the person. Research has consistently shown that once a person has been asked if they are considering suicide, they feel relief, not distress. Their anxiety decreases while hope increases. By asking this question, we can bring a sense of hope into a place where the person feels entirely alone and numb. I can't help but think of Jesus stepping into my own story of darkness, and pray that as community group leaders he would enable us to notice, support, and point our church members towards him in this way as well.

Emergency Contacts

- Suicide Prevention Lifeline **1-800-273-TALK (8255)**
 - Hopeline NC Crisis Line: Call or Text **919-231-4525**
 - UNC Healthcare at Wakebrook: **919-250-1260**
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Andrea Pratt, LCSW, MSW is a licensed clinical social worker currently providing individual and group therapy at Duke University Health System. She is a passionate practitioner who desires to help patients make new connections between their substance addiction, mental health, stress management, and habit loops in a nonjudgmental and collaborative space. Outside of work, she enjoys spending time with friends and family, participating in her church community, and exercise, including running, biking, and yoga. She has served as a community leader at Vintage Church since 2018.

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VINTAGE**CHURCH**

Wedding Guide Engaged Couples

4/27/22

CONGRATULATIONS!

Engagement is an exciting time where you begin to look forward to both your wedding day and a life together as husband and wife.

Marriage was created by God to be one of the most rewarding relational experiences a man and woman coming together, uniting as one, submitting to one another, and serving each other in the presence of God for the glory of God. Marriage is the institution that most tangibly enables us to see God's grace at work in our lives. See Ephesians 5 where the Bible tells us to "be imitators of God. . . walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us." Christ-Centered married couples have the opportunity to know, love, and accept each other deeply as they learn that placing the other first isn't natural nor does it come easily. When a husband and wife understand the importance of serving one another we see the practical and holy acts of selflessness and grace that Christ has shown us.

A godly marriage requires planning, commitment and hard work. We are thrilled to have the opportunity walk with you through this time of preparation of what is to come. Our prayer is that we will equip and prepare you for a lifetime of Christ-Centered marriage. We ask you to prayerfully consider requirements associated with having a Vintage Church pastor marry you, which are outlined in this packet.

Again, congratulations on this exciting adventure you have begun. It is an honor to share in this time with you. We love you and will be praying for you.

Vintage Church



Wedding Process Timeline

Below, please find the ideal sequence of events for Vintage members walking toward marriage:

1. Get Engaged!
2. Email weddings@vintagenc.com to learn information about the Pre-Marriage Class, requesting a pastor to marry you, and using the building (if needed).
3. Sign up for the Pre-Marriage Class through online form
4. Request a pastor through Wedding Coordinator
5. If wanting to use the building request use through our Wedding Coordinator. We will share more information about cost and other logistics for using the building at this time.
6. Once the pastor is confirmed, sign the Pastor/Couple Commitment.
7. Meet with Wedding Coordinator to sign the Facility Use Agreement if using the building for your ceremony.

Pre-Marriage Class

Vintage Church asks that all engaged couples interested in having a Vintage pastor marry them attend the class.

Our Pre-Marriage class is offered approximately once each quarter. The class is hosted and led by a Downtown Elder.

The Pre-Marriage Class will equip couples with a biblical understanding of marriage and tools for developing a healthy marriage. Couples will be guided in discussion on the meaning and purpose of marriage, the qualities necessary to have a healthy marriage, the true nature of love and how to effectively express it, communication and conflict resolution, role relationships, and sexuality in marriage. To get information about the Pre-Marriage Class, email weddings@vintagenc.com.



Vintage Pastor Involvement

Our wedding coordinator will work with you to request a Vintage Pastor to marry you! Please find the requirements below:

PASTOR/COUPLE COMMITMENT

Vintage pastors will commit to marry couples who sign the Pastor/Couple Commitment Form, found at the end of this document.

CEREMONY PLANNING

The Vintage pastor marrying you will help you think through the aspects of your wedding ceremony.

Please note, all weddings officiated by a Vintage pastor will include the following:

1. Prayer (by the pastor over the couple)
2. Homily (a biblical explanation of what marriage is)
3. Binding Vows (vows are the same for both the bride and groom)

PASTOR'S FEE

The Vintage Couples must agree to pay the Pastor's Fee (\$500), which covers the 2-hour pre-wedding meeting, up to two hours of rehearsal time, and up to two hours the day of the ceremony (the pastor will arrive one hour before the ceremony start time).

If your wedding requires travel (10 miles or farther more than the distance from the officiating elder's home to their Vintage location) and/or accommodations expenses, these expenses will be paid by the couple. The amount will be agreed to prior to the pastor committing to officiate the wedding.

Regretfully, because of family and the busyness of schedules, the pastor performing your wedding may not be able to attend your rehearsal dinner (and sometimes the wedding reception). We ask that any desired photos with the pastor be taken directly after the ceremony. We hope that such inability is not taken as an offense.

If you are getting married at Vintage's building, the pastor's fee will be collected in the building fee and given to the pastor. If you are being married elsewhere, the pastor's fee is due 30 days prior to your wedding rehearsal, please mail your check in.

Checks should be made out to the pastor marrying you and mailed to:

Vintage Church
 Attn. "*pastor's name*"
 P.O. Box 27887
 Raleigh, NC 27611



PASTOR / COUPLE COMMITMENT

The marriage equipping process involves a significant commitment from all concerned. It is understood in this process that the pastor officiating the wedding reserves the right to not proceed with the wedding ceremony should he deem this necessary based on Scriptural principles and practical implications regarding the dynamic of the couple's relationship.

Vintage Church and the pastor marrying you are responsible before God to marry only those people who a) have God's blessing for their marriage and who b) are prepared for the demands and responsibilities of this relationship. Marriage is a contract job and so there are qualifications.

By signing this commitment form, the engaged couple affirms the following as true:

- The couple has a similar commitment to Christ (2 Corinthians 6:14).
- The couple is willing to build a marriage based on the principles of God's Word.
- The couple has attended the Pre-Marriage Class.
- The couple does not currently live together.
- The couple will meet with the pastor for 2 hours prior to the wedding.
- The couple will pay the pastor's fee on time.

By signing this commitment form, the pastor officiating the wedding affirms the following as true:

- He will prepare for meeting times with the engaged couple.
- He will prepare for the wedding ceremony.
- He will meet with the engaged couple for 2 hours prior to the wedding.

BRIDE _____ DATE _____

GROOM _____ DATE _____

PASTOR _____ DATE _____

