

5/27/20

Dear Faith Family,

Last week we continued our series learning about the BLESS Method. Once again, let me remind you this is a training made available by the Humanitarian Disaster Institute and can be found at www.spiritualfirstaidhub.com.

As a review, last week we discussed a four-step process detailing how to approach a situation where we think someone may be struggling due to the COVID-19 crisis (or any crisis). This includes **Attend&Observe, Ask, Act, Repeat**. Specifically, we are looking for signs of distress in the five areas of need: **Belonging, Livelihood, Emotional, Safety, and Spiritual** (B.L.E.S.S.). Last week we looked at attending to a person's belonging needs. This week we look at attending to someone's livelihood needs.

In times of crisis, it is common for a person's livelihood to be dramatically affected. All individuals need a safe place to live, a source of food, general income for every-day expenses, as well as having personal, medical needs. During this pandemic we have seen individuals lose their jobs; some are facing food insecurities; others struggle with being able to go out and get groceries at a safe time; people are facing unique health challenges including knowing how to discern if they have the virus but also knowing when it is safe to see a doctor for other medical reasons; and some simply have struggled to find essential items like soap and toilet paper. These challenges create livelihood needs that cause stress and anxiety in a person's life and may paralyze them from finding the help they need. In such situations, it may be necessary for us to step in and offer a helping hand. Once again, this doesn't mean we necessarily will solve all their problems for them, but we can at least point them in the right direction. So let us go through the four step process to see how we can help.

➤ Step 1: Attend and Observe

Once again it is important to be present with someone. Even if just virtually, through phone calls or emails, we can show up and show someone we care. Then be aware of and look for livelihood-need warning signs. These can include, but are not limited to:

_The person demonstrates or talks about physical health problems but hasn't been to the Dr.

_They mention they're taking extended time off from work or have nothing to do during the day.

_Their cupboards are bare and they haven't been to the grocery store in a while.

_They're worried about running out of their prescription medicine.

_Their bills are stacking up and they aren't sure how long they'll be able to stay in their current living situation.

_They look physically thin and worn out.

_They haven't bathed in a while and lack necessary hygiene products.

➤ Step 2: Ask

If you suspect the person may have unmet, livelihood needs, move on to asking certain questions to help you ascertain the depth of the need. Do this with humility and tact, remembering this person may feel embarrassed to share these needs with you. Do your best to preserve their dignity in this process.

Questions you may want to ask are:

_How is your health lately?

_Have you had any trouble getting stuff at the grocery store? When was the last time you went to the grocery store?

_Do you need any help running errands? Is there anything I can grab for you next time I'm out?

_How are things at work? Is your company facing any lay-offs or furloughs?

_Do you have the medicines you need?

_Do you have a mask you wear when you go out? Do you need me to get one for you?

_How has the Pandemic affected you financially?

_Do you have enough savings to keep you afloat?

_How are things in your home? Do you feel secure there? Is there any fear you might lose your home?

_What do you usually make for dinner? Are you eating the right kinds of foods to stay healthy?

➤ Step 3: Act

When you've gained enough information to determine a person's real needs, pitch-in and help in whatever way you are able. This may be simply showing them the community resources available to

them (see list below). It might mean helping them learn how to navigate proper technology: researching community resources together, showing them how to file for unemployment, teaching a person how to order groceries online, etc. It might be picking up groceries for them, or being on the look out for masks, hand sanitizer, T.P., etc. It might also mean giving them a gentle push to ask for help from family members, the church, or other community resource centers. You may need to encourage them to see a Dr. if they aren't feeling well, and offer to take them if necessary. Or, if showing symptoms, help them find a COVID testing site near them. In all of this, remember to stay present with the person (in a spirit of love and care, not necessarily in the same room), letting them know you're there to help and would be honored to provide any assistance you can. Please keep in mind, while you may want to provide financial assistance to those struggling financially, the best thing is to help them find a more sustainable form of help so that they don't become dependent on hand-outs. One-time monetary gifts are nice, but if they become a habit, it can actually cause more harm than good.

➤ Step 4: Repeat

Continue to check-in on the person and follow-through with any needs you have discovered. Keep them accountable to taking the steps they can perform to help themselves, while walking alongside the person to let them know someone is there for them.

In closing, I once again want to remind you, if you or someone you know has a need, please let us know. We may not be able to solve all problems, but we would like to help in any way we can.

God bless you and have a great week!

Pastor Andrew

(see resource list on next page)

Here is a short list of some of the community resources in our area:

www.wahealthplanfinder.org to apply for free or reduced-cost, health insurance programs.

www.lynnwoodfoodbank.org

www.westgatechapel.com under the tab “serve,” find emergency services for low-income families.

Local school districts for free kids’ meals (even for kids not in district):

www.edmonds.wednet.edu

www.shorelineschools.org

www.visionhouse.org for housing needs (also a good place to connect a person to other resources).

www.lahai.org Medical and Dental vans/clinics for low-income/underserved individuals.

www.Anthem.com to find local testing facilities for COVID-19.

www.snohd.org (the Snohomish Health District) for general info on the virus, resources in our county, as well as drive-in testing facility information.