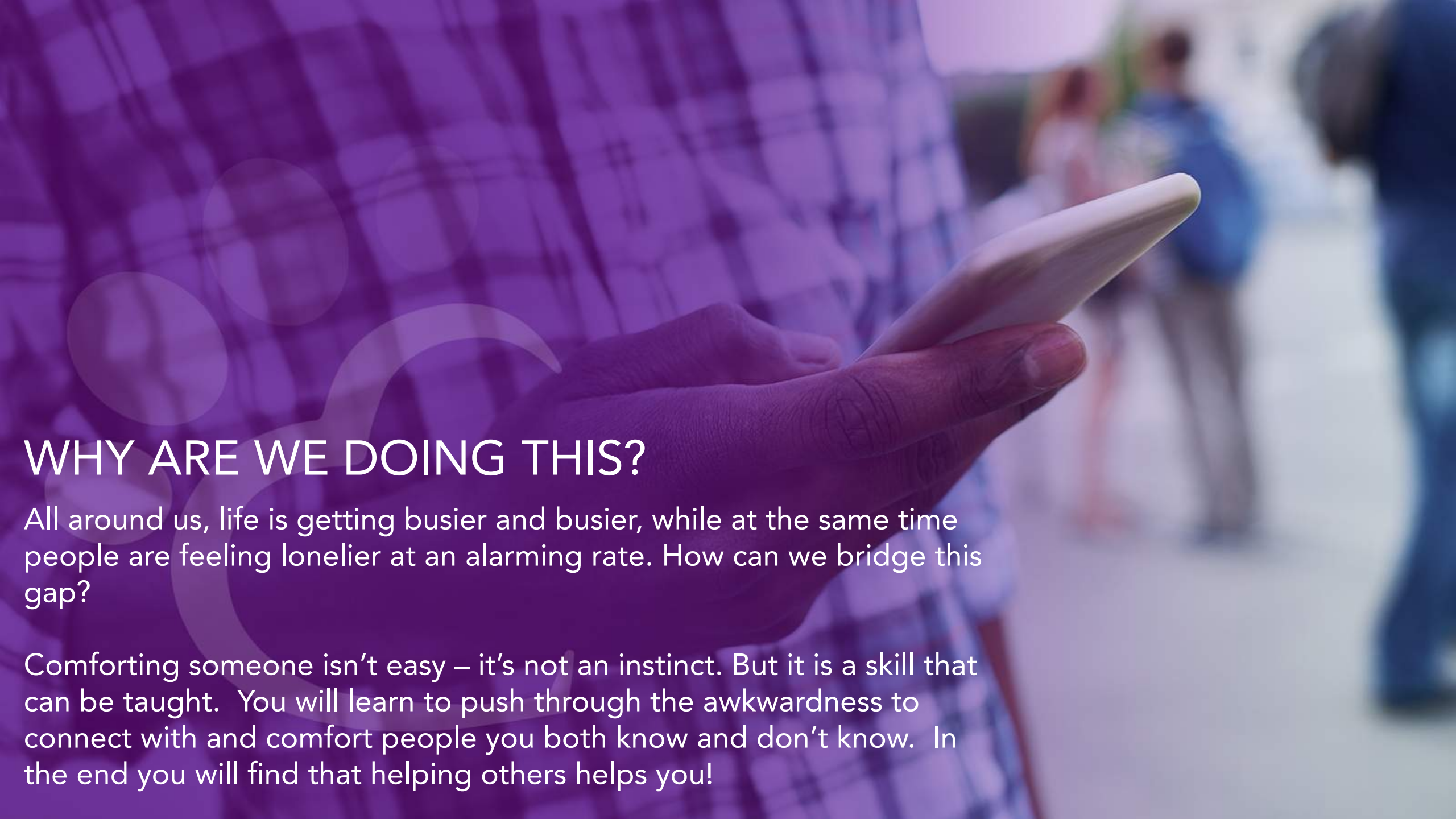




TEACHING COMFORT, CONNECTING LIVES

TEAM BONDING



WHY ARE WE DOING THIS?

All around us, life is getting busier and busier, while at the same time people are feeling lonelier at an alarming rate. How can we bridge this gap?

Comforting someone isn't easy – it's not an instinct. But it is a skill that can be taught. You will learn to push through the awkwardness to connect with and comfort people you both know and don't know. In the end you will find that helping others helps you!

WHY ARE PAWS INVOLVED?

Comfort Dogs used in Crisis Response were the inspiration for the founding of this program. Dogs know how to comfort people when most humans don't know what to do. We've used these lessons as the foundation of everything we are doing. Not to mention, they are just plain adorable.





Introductions

Tell us who you are and something
we don't know about you



IS THERE A LONELINESS EPIDEMIC?



WHAT IS THIS DOING TO US?



No Phones Here.....



Loneliness &
the feeling of
being unwanted
is the most
terrible poverty.

- Mother Theresa



PAIN HURT & ISOLATION ARE EVERYWHERE





WE CAN REVERSE THIS TREND
ONE COMPASSIONATE CONNECTION AT A TIME

RULES FOR TODAY

Everyone Belongs Here

We have all made mistakes, here the slate is clean

We assume the best in each other

We support and care for each other

We will choose to make a difference in the lives of others

We will take ownership and be proud of what we are doing

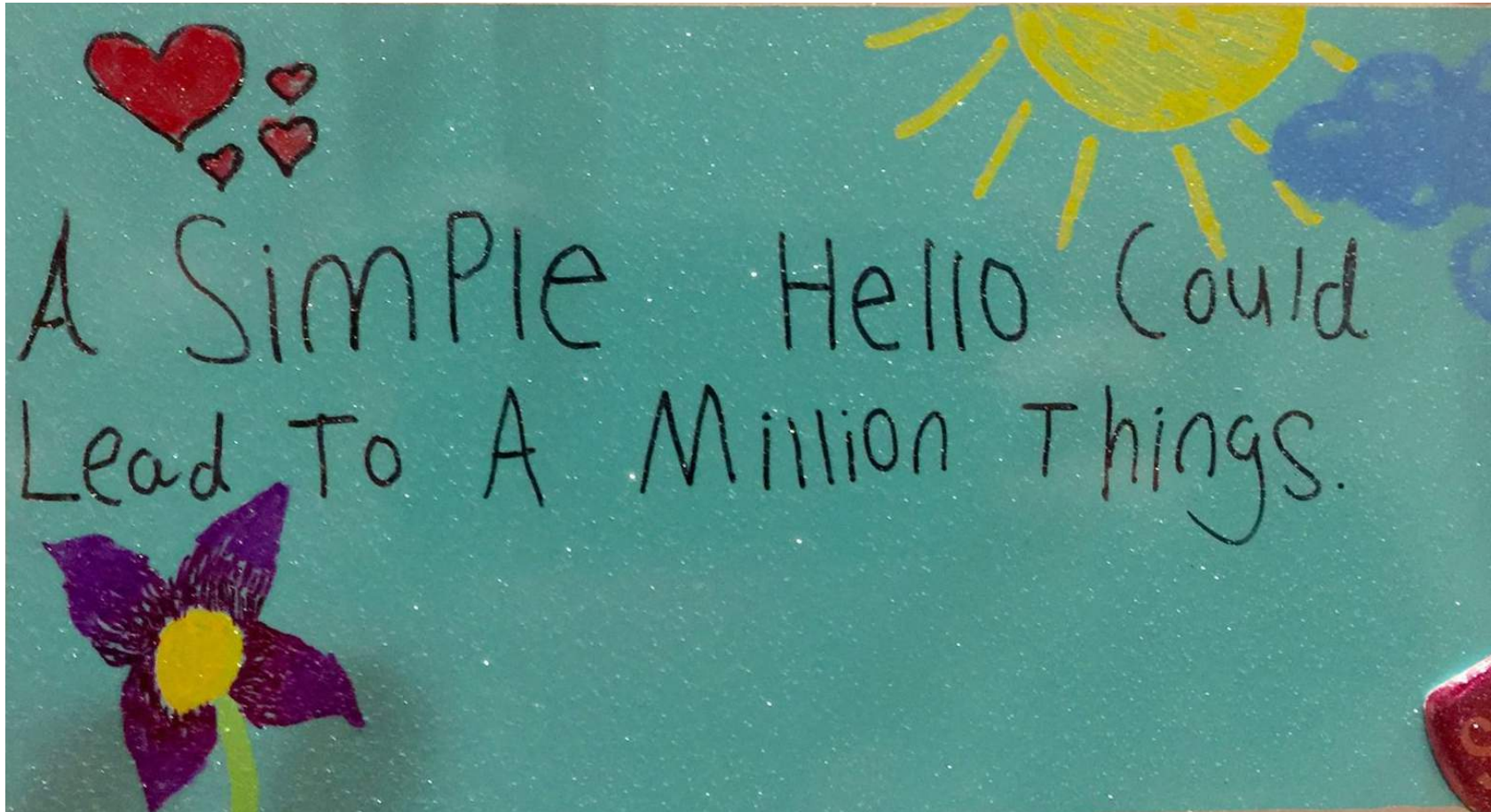








And never forget....





Session 1

It all starts with ***you!***



Everyone you
know has a
problem that you
don't know
about. Fact.



Think About You

Work Independently to fill out
your questionnaire

Answer the questions honestly

Turn your paper over when you
are completed



Name _____ Date _____

1. If you could be anywhere else today, where would you be?
2. Rate your happiness on a scale of 1-10
3. Rate your stress level on a scale of 1-10
4. List 3 things that make you happy.
5. What situation are you facing right now that you wish you could wake up and it would be gone?
6. What are some personal goals you have that always seem just out of your reach?
7. What words of wisdom would you pass on to your childhood self?
8. What is something that makes you unique. Are you proud of it?
9. What is the hardest part of your typical day?
10. What 3 words do you think most describe you?



Really Listen to
Each Other



PLAQUE CREATION

- You will now create your plaque for the person you were just paired with.
- You've shared a lot with each other. You should be able to make this plaque very special.
- Think of a specific mantra word that would mean something to this person.
- Here are some steps for the plaque creation:

Paws for Thought

Front of the Plaque

What can we do to bring comfort to the person we've selected?

What message would this person like to hear?

Each situation is different. These are not random crafts.

Pick an appropriate design & message for the situation.

Think of it like a personal greeting card.

Name: _____ Date: _____



1. Who is this plaque for? _____

2. Why do they need comfort? _____

3. Identify things that would make the plaque special for them:
(i.e., quotes/hobbies/colors/themes): _____

4. How will the plaque be delivered? _____

3 Rules of Plaque Creation

1. Front
Inspirational
Message
2. Border around
the plaque
3. Personal
Message on the
back

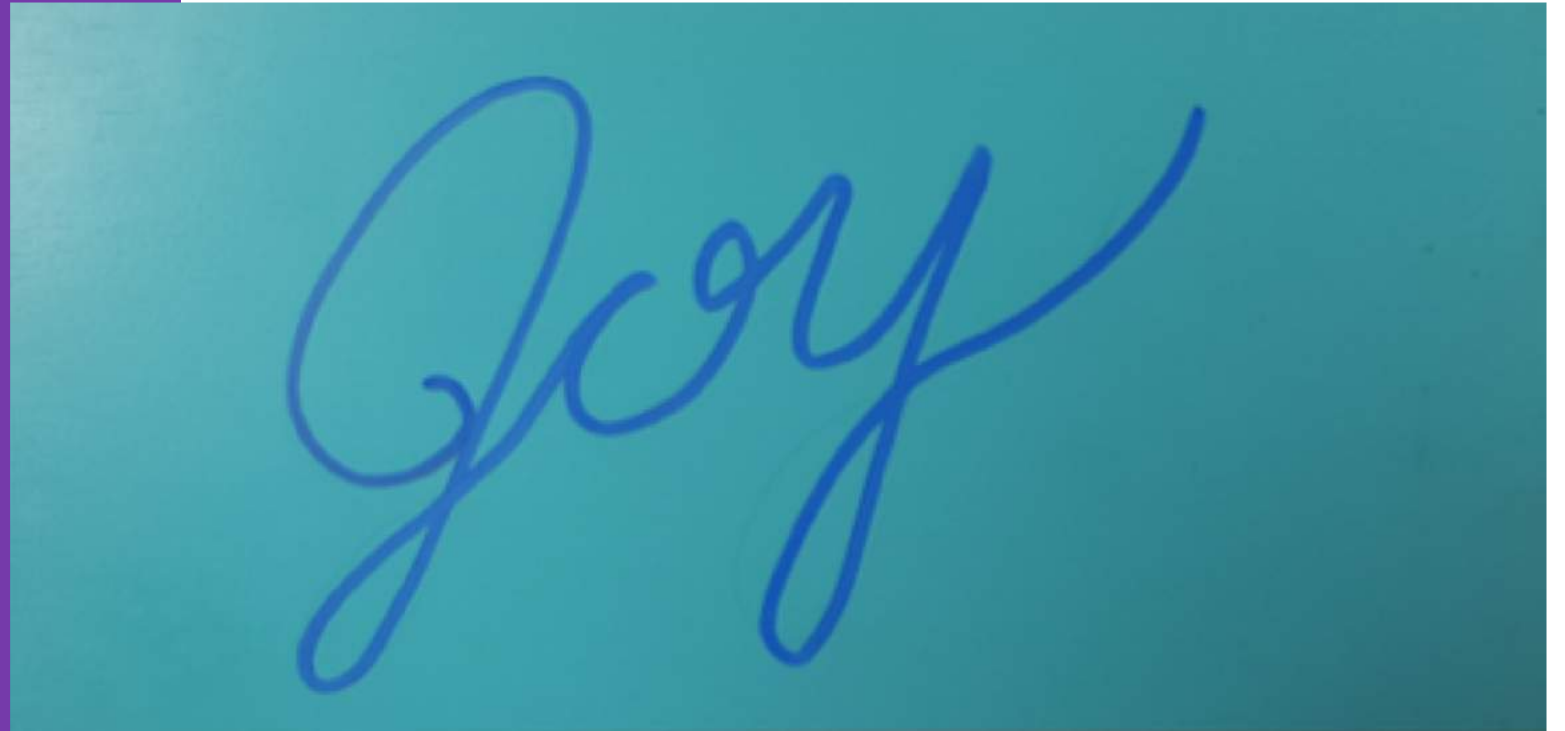


How to make a plaque

1. Design idea on
your Paws for
Thought
worksheet
2. Sketch on the
plaque with a
pencil



Start
with a
Simple
Line



Add
Thickness
to your
Letters



Fill in with
any
additional
words



Fill in the Letters



Add a Border & Some Glitz

And Don't forget a
motivational message
on the back



Back of the Plaque

Write a personal message on the back of the plaque.

Show your care and concern

Use their first name and sign your name.

Add a date and maybe location if you want.

Participant should pick an appropriate design & message for the situation.



BACK OF THE PLAQUE

Please use the space below to write out a personal message for this person.
When thinking about what to say consider these points:

- What do you think they are thinking?
- How does life look from their eyes?
- What are your favorite things about this person?
- Do they need comfort or encouragement?
- How can you make them feel better understood?

Here are some sample lines for your message:

- I can't even imagine what you are going through, but I want you to know that I care.
- I will never forget the time we _____.
- You are a very special person in my life.
- I love when you _____
- I will always be here for you
- Sending you love and comfort. Know that I'm here praying for you.

DATE _____

Dear _____

Love (or Sincerely),
Your name


Paws to Create

Use this worksheet to walk yourself through the steps of making your plaque.

TAKE YOUR TIME – DON'T RUSH!

1. Refer to your completed Paws for Thought worksheets during this process.
2. Start by selecting your plaque – pick the perfect color.
3. Grab a pencil and a black Sharpie.
4. Start by **writing your message** on the back of the plaque with a Sharpie marker.
5. Next use a **pencil** to sketch out your design on the front of the plaque.
6. When you're ready, take a **black sharpie** to outline your design.
7. Select colored Paint Pens and Sharpies to complete your design. Try to **match the tip size** of the markers with how thick you need it. Little words are hard to write with thick tips.
8. Prepare paint pens on a separate piece of paper by pressing down on the tip until the ink comes out of the tip.
9. Finish off the plaque with **glued on gems**
10. Add a **border**
11. When completed – put your pens and supplies away and clean your area.
12. Pick up the wrapping supplies and put in an **insert card** in the bag. Please put the card on the side with the message. Don't cover up your design.
13. **To wrap** - one person should hold the corners of the bag while the other takes a blue and purple ribbon together and ties it shut.

THINGS TO AVOID WHILE MAKING YOUR PLAQUE

1. Please do NOT press down on paint pens when they are on your plaque! You could end up with a puddle of ink.
2. Please do not use any other glue than the one provided. Other glues don't dry in time. Glue sticks will not hold the gems over time.
3. Do not use pencil or paint pens on the back of the plaque for your message – use a black Sharpie.

Optional Worksheet

Paws to Pray

For our Faith based Clubs, take this worksheet with you to fill out, remember this person and pray for them every day.



We are all called to pray for one another. Use this guide to make prayer an easy conversation with God

Heavenly Father,

I thank you for this day and am grateful for so many things in my life, including:

Today, I am praying for _____

Because:

I ask you to please be close and let _____ feel your love and comfort for today and the days and weeks ahead.

Thank you Lord, for loving me and loving _____.

In the name of your son Jesus, I pray.

Amen.

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer... with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. -Philippians 4:6



Session 2+

It all starts with a "Paws"

Practice the Paws

- Paws to Look See Remember and identify someone hurting
- Paws to think about what they would like to hear
- Paws to make and deliver a heartfelt gift
- Paws to reflect on what more you can do



Paws to Look See & Remember

We **look** up & take note of those around us.
We put our phones down and watch for
social cues.

We see/**observe** who is hurting.

We **remember** those we *already know* are hurting. Who did we click a “sad face emoji” to? To whom did we say, “wow I’m so sorry to hear that”?

Capture these names on this worksheet.
These are the people in our lives who we can
comfort.

Continue to add names to this sheet -
comforting never stops.



Paws to LOOK, SEE AND REMEMBER

*Taking the time to look for, see and then remember those around you who are hurting
can make all of the difference.*

Think of these types of hurt:

- Grieving/loss
- Marital problems/divorce
- Veterans/families
- Addiction/recovery
- First responders
- Injury illness
- Aging parents/memory loss
- Abusive relationship
- Loss of pet
- Severe stress
- Isolation/lonely
- Loss of job/financial
- Legal issues
- Empty nest
- Trauma/crisis
- Anxiety/depression
- Moving/moved
- Widow/widower
- Caregiver
- Mental health

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Paws to Give

Take this worksheet with you and refer to it as you prepare to deliver your plaque!

Breaking Through the AWKWARD ZONE™

PAWS BEFORE YOU GO

This is all about the person you are giving the plaque to – not you.

- Think back to the times you have spent with this person so you have some memories in your head
- You have 2 ears and one mouth – **prepare to listen** twice as much as you talk
- Be prepared to share a little about what's going on in your life - **just a little**
- Put your phone away and do not use it during your visit except to take a picture.

GREETING

Be genuinely happy to see them and smile.

- Greet them with "It's so good to see you" or "I'm so happy to see you"
- Give a hug if you can – people need lots of **hugs**.
- **Watch** so see their mood. If they are happy, keep the mood happy. If they are sad, do not try to cheer them up.

WHILE YOU ARE WITH THEM.

You can start by saying - "I am so sorry. This must be very hard for you."

- Before you give them the plaque, tell them why you picked the message on the front of the plaque.
- Read the back of the plaque to them and then give it to them. Capture the moment with a picture if you can.
- When they talk about things, **ask questions** about what they talked about.
- Share a memory with them.
- Look around or ask to see if there are specific things that they need **help** with. (ie cooking, cleaning, yard work, laundry, errands run etc..).
- For people of faith, ask them what they need prayers for.

AFTER YOU LEAVE

- Send them a text or email or note saying how good it was to see them and that you promise to **always be there for them**.
- Plan the next thing you can do for them. Be Specific. Refer to the Paws to Reflect worksheet and checklist for ideas.



3 Optional Lessons

Add these to your sessions for advanced learning



Lesson 1

Lessons We
Learn from Dogs

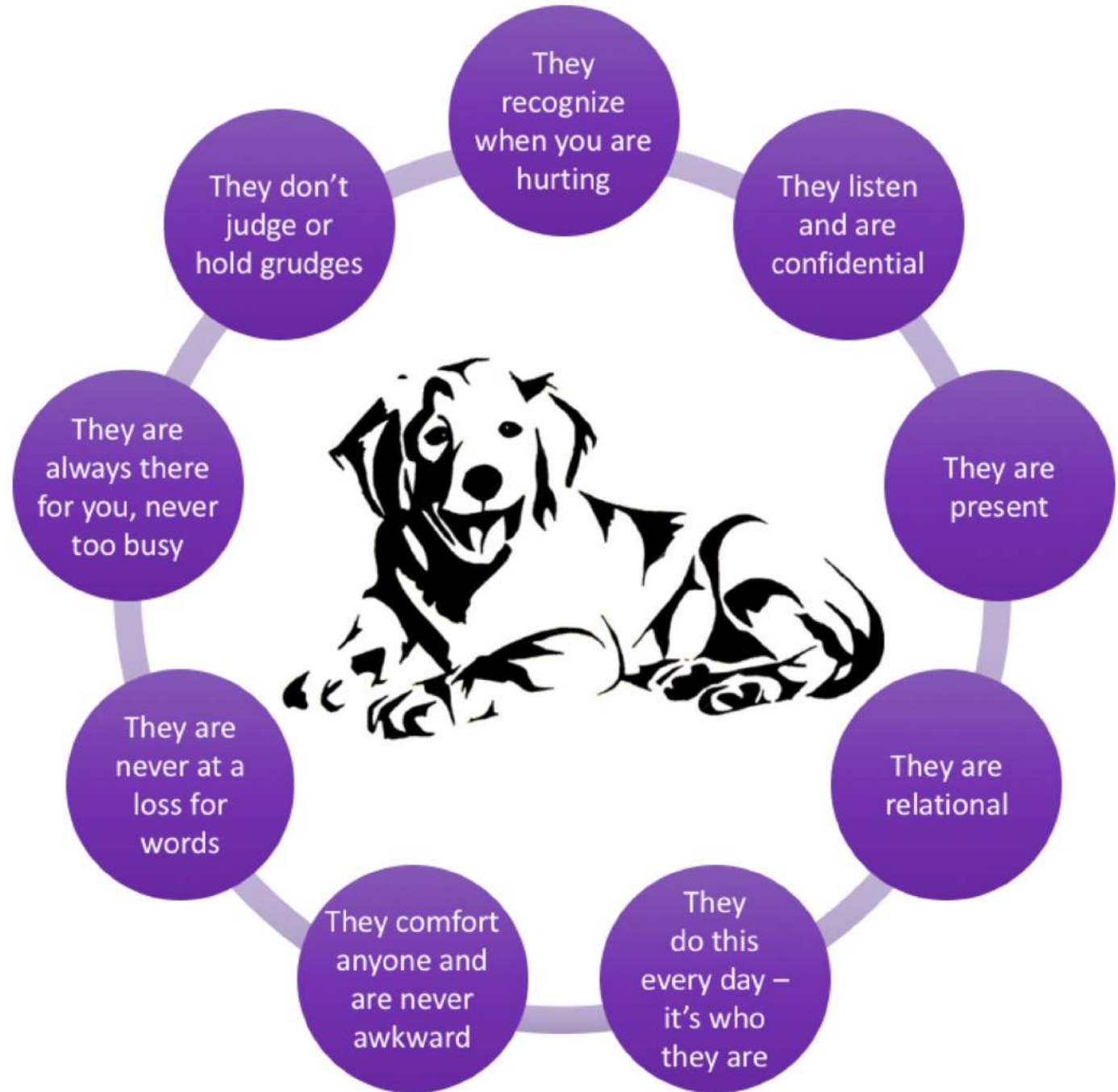


HOW MANY OF YOU OWN A DOG?





Lessons We Learn from Dogs



#1

THEY DON'T
JUDGE OR
HOLD GRUDGES



#2

THEY
RECOGNIZE
WHEN YOU ARE
HURTING



#3

THEY ARE ALWAYS
THERE FOR YOU

THEY ARE NEVER
TOO BUSY



#4

THEY LISTEN
& ARE
CONFIDENTIAL



#5

THEY ARE NEVER
AT A LOSS FOR
WORDS



#6

THEY COMFORT YOU
EVEN IF THEY DON'T
KNOW YOU

THEY DON'T GET
AWKWARD



#7

THEY ARE
PRESENT



#8

THEY ARE
RELATIONAL



#9

THEY DO THIS
EVERYDAY
IT'S WHO THEY
ARE





WHEN IN DOUBT – THINK OF WHAT A DOG WOULD DO



Lesson 2

Learning Comfort
As a Skill



Keep remembering to
add names to this list!

WHY IS IT AWKWARD?



PROJECT
COMFORT[®]
The Awkward Zone



Busy schedules, and barriers like uncertainty and second-guessing – what we call the Awkward Zone™ – prevent us from recognizing who around us is hurting; and keep us stuck in a cycle where we don't comfort.



AWKWARD ZONE

"I don't want to make things worse."

"I think somebody else is better at this."

"I think they're probably over it."

"I just don't know what to say."





Lesson 3

The Barriers
To Giving Comfort



WHY IS IT SO HARD?



PACE OF LIFE



FEAR



UNAWARE

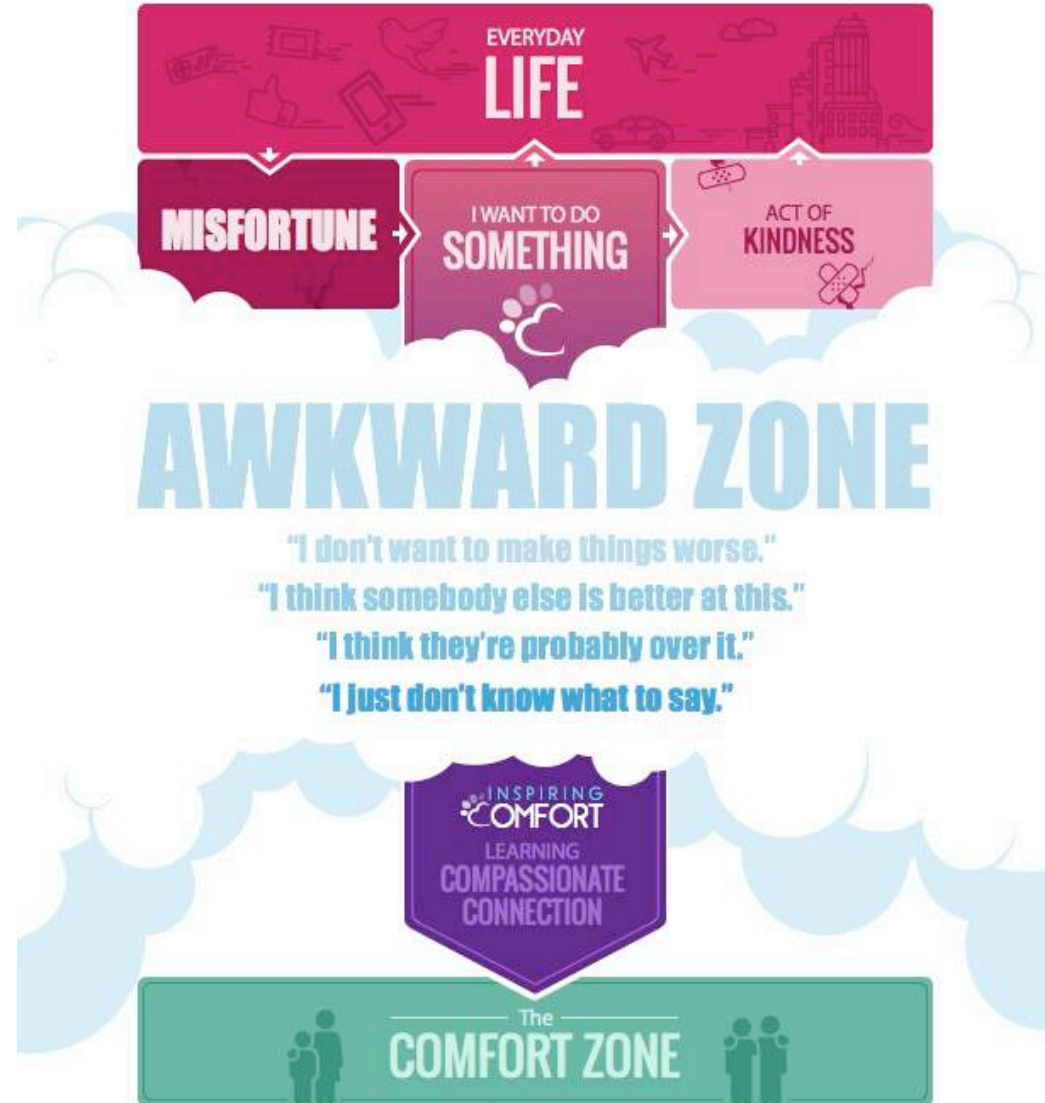


SMARTPHONES

PROJECT
COMFORT[®]
The Barriers To
Comfort



Busy schedules, and barriers like uncertainty and second-guessing – what we call the Awkward Zone™ – prevent us from recognizing who around us is hurting; and keep us stuck in a cycle where we don't comfort.



Review

Practice the Paws

- Paws to Look See Remember and identify someone hurting
- Paws to think about what they would like to hear
- Paws to make and deliver a heartfelt gift
- Paws to reflect on what more you can do





WHEN IN DOUBT – THINK OF WHAT A DOG WOULD DO



Lesson 4

The Circle
Of Comfort

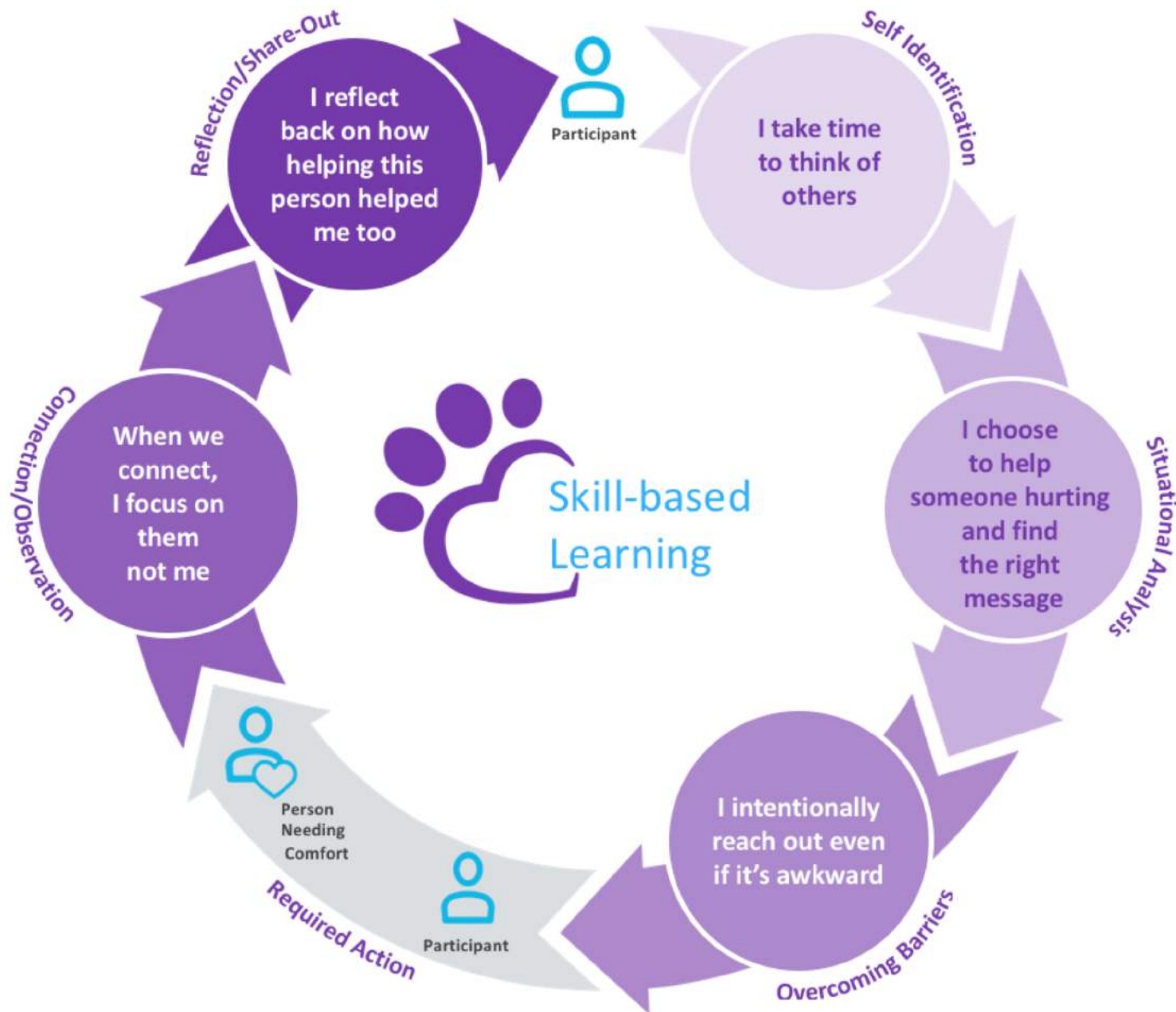


When my Dog
Makes *me*
Happy...
He's Happy Too





The Circle of Comfort



Keep remembering to
add names to this list!

NEVER FORGET TO PAWS

CONGRATULATIONS!

Celebrate the people you comforted and remember them! Stay in touch with them!

Keep Looking for people to comfort . When someone says “I don’t know what to do” show them how to comfort and connect.

Start a Club Comfort - Let the lessons from the comfort dogs be your inspiration!