

Common Chat Themes & Keys to Effective Chatting

Self-mutilation & Cutting: Self-mutilation and cutting are outward expressions of inner pain. These acts can be a way for the person to punish themselves for something they feel they have done wrong. They may have a feeling they are not in control or powerless and think this may be a way to gain that control. It can also be a release for them. Speak to their core issues, offer positive ways to vent emotions, and suggest they may need to talk to a pastor or counselor.

Abuse & Rape: Let the chatter know that this was a horrible travesty and no one deserves to be mistreated that way. Rape and abuse carry with them shame that says, "You deserved that on some level." Let them know that this is just not true. Encourage them to seek help from a pastor or a counselor.

Loneliness: An abnormal number of people live lonely and desperate lives in the midst of families that care and with crowds all around. They feel isolated and as if no one cares. If they don't understand their desire for connection comes from God and will only be fulfilled in a personal relationship with Him, they may make mistakes trying to alleviate their loneliness.

Hopeless: Many people feel that their life will never get better. They are trapped in their circumstances that are painful and don't have the ability to see a time when things will get better.

Pornography & Masturbation: These are sensitive subjects and because of the shame associated; this may be the only place that a person will open up and ask questions. It is important that we are able to give a biblical and practical response.

Obviously, pornography can create a distorted view of normal sexual activity and will only fuel the fire of lust. It can be difficult to separate the two as they are so closely intertwined.

While the Bible nowhere explicitly states that masturbation is a sin, some would argue that this means that it is permissible. The Bible does not list each sin individually. Instead, the Word of God gives us principles to live by and gives us direction in general terms. Masturbation is nearly always the result of lustful thoughts and pornographic images. It is these problems that need to be dealt with. If the sins of lust, immoral thoughts, and pornography are overcome, masturbation will become a non-issue.

The Bible instructs us to take captive our thoughts. We live in a sex-saturated society and are bombarded with images constantly. We are commanded to guard our hearts and minds, which means filtering out what we let influence us.

Rather than focus on the behavior of masturbation, perhaps a better approach is to direct the conversation toward the lustful thoughts.

Depression & Suicide: Suicide is a leading cause of death among young people. This is a serious issue requiring an immediate response on the part of the coach. At the same time, suicide is also frequently used falsely and manipulatively as a ploy to attract attention. Coaches must assess the situation to respond appropriately.

To determine the seriousness of the suicidal individual, you can ask a few questions that will help you gauge the ability to follow through with their threat. If you feel the chatter is serious, please contact a Team Lead or call the [emergency number](#) immediately. We address this more in the document, [Suicide Assessment and Emergency Procedure](#).

Homosexuality: This is a sensitive and hotly-debated subject. Over the past several decades, secular media has normalized this behavior. Groundwire can be a safe place for people to have open and honest questions regarding sexuality. Scripture clearly teaches that this is sinful behavior and not what God intended. A typical question in this arena is, “Can God love me if I am gay?” The answer to that is clear and strong, “YES!” If you struggle with giving that answer for any reason please talk to the Director of Coaching about your concerns. We discuss this in more detail in the document, [Dealing with Homosexuality & Sexual Identity Chats](#).

Keys to Effective Chatting

Be Christ-like: Be gentle, kind, patient, and loving. There is no excuse for losing your temper or becoming argumentative. If you feel that you are beginning to lose the ability to maintain a Christ-like attitude with chatter, make an excuse and leave the chat or transfer to another coach. Don't allow yourself to become a stumbling block to their salvation by allowing your frustration to be a poor witness for Christ's love. If the chatter is using lots of bad language or becomes personally abusive, continue to express a professional response but warn them if it continues, you will need to end the chat.

Do not get caught up in debates: You may find on occasion that a chatter will be intent on debating or arguing. Be kind and explain that this is not the proper forum for this.

Keep control and direct the chat: You may find chatters here merely because they are bored and are intent on getting a reaction out of you. Keep bringing the conversation back to spiritual issues.

When necessary, have their IP address blocked: You may block a chatter in the chat itself. You will click on the drop down arrow in the top right corner of the chat itself and select, “Block Seker.” This will block the IP address for 24 hours. There are situations when a chatter is masking their IP address using a VPN. Normally, there will not be any history and they will simply renew their IP address and log in again.

Dealing with Lengthy Chats: When dealing with a lengthier chat, you need to be led by the Holy Spirit regarding the ongoing value of the chat. Sometimes the Lord may want you to keep chatting, and other times it may be appropriate to let the chatter know that you need to go soon, offering to pray for them before you go. You may find that there are many people that are simply lonely and log on simply to have someone to talk to. There will be times when ending a long chat is the right thing to do - you don't need to feel bad about doing this, particularly if they are a regular chatter and other chats are coming in.