



HEART TALKS

Leading Conversations that
Inspire Hope and Healing

TEENDIG
YOUTH
ADVOCATES
Toolkit

NEXUS



Heart Talks: Leading Conversations that Inspire Hope and Healing

A Training Module for Youth Advocates

Heart Talks equips youth advocates to engage young people in **compassionate, discerning, and biblically grounded conversations** that foster hope, healing, and agency. The training responds to the reality that many youth carry silent struggles and need **safe, wise, and steady presence** more than quick answers.

At its core is a guiding conviction:

Puso muna bago salita.

Conversations that heal begin with a formed heart, not advice or fixing.

Training Focus

Participants are formed to:

- Listen deeply without judgment or panic
- Create safe spaces for honest sharing
- Respond with empathy while honoring youth agency
- Discern appropriate action, referral, or continued presence



- Walk with youth over time without creating dependency

HEART Talks Framework

The training centers on five core skills:

- **H – Help, Not Solve**
- **E – Empathy That Heals**
- **A – Ask Questions That Open the Heart**
- **R – Reframe Stories with Hope and Truth**
- **T – Take Wise and Proportionate Action**

Training Structure

- **10 progressive lessons**
 - Heart and presence formation
 - Core conversational skills
 - Discernment, safety, and multiplication
- Each lesson includes biblical reflection, skills practice, and life application



Safety Commitment

Heart Talks integrates clear safeguarding guidance for:

- High-risk disclosures
- Proper referral and escalation
- Ethical and legal boundaries (Philippine context)

Intended Outcome

Heart Talks forms youth advocates who **do not rescue or control**, but walk with young people in **compassion, wisdom, and truth**, reflecting the heart of Christ in every conversation.

Contents

Heart Talks: Leading Conversations That Inspire Hope And Healing.....	1
Lesson 1 – Puso Muna Bago Salita	5
Lesson 2 – Holding Space	
Lesson 3 – H: Help, Not Solve	
Lesson 4 – E: Empathy That Heals	
Lesson 5 – A: Asking Questions That Open The Heart	
Lesson 6 – R: Reframing Stories With Hope and Truth.....	
Lesson 7 – T: Taking Wise and Proportionate Action	
Lesson 8 – Practicing Heart Talks With Discernment and Safety	
Lesson 9 – Walking With Youth Over Time	
Lesson 10 – Multiplying Heart Talks Through Youth Leaders	
Heart Talks Framework (<i>Courageous and Compassionate Conversations For Youth Advocacy</i>)	
Facilitator’s Guide	
Heart Talks In Action (<i>A Practical Guide For Courageous and Compassionate Conversations</i>)	
Heart Talks In Action (High-Risk Cases)	
Basic Guidelines For Youth Advocates.....	

Lesson 1 – PUSO MUNA BAGO SALITA

Forming the Heart for Courageous and Compassionate Conversations

*“Puso muna bago salita—
pusong may tapang at malasakit.”*

Introduction: Why Conversations Begin in the Heart

Many youth advocates want to help young people navigate difficult issues—identity, pain, failure, doubt, broken relationships. Naturally, we look for the right words, the right advice, the right response.

But HEART Talks begins with a deeper conviction:
How we speak is shaped by who we are becoming.

Before we learn how to help, empathize, ask questions, reframe stories, or take action, we must first ask:

Ano ang laman ng puso ko kapag may lumapit na kabataang nasasaktan?

Without inner formation, even well-meaning words can:

- rush someone’s process
- silence pain instead of healing it
- turn conversations into correction sessions



This lesson reminds us that courageous and compassionate conversations do not start with techniques—they start with a formed heart.

Biblical Reflection: A God Who Forms Before Sending

1 Samuel 3:1–10

“Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.” (v. 10)

Brief Background to the Passage

Samuel was still young when God began calling him. He did not recognize God’s voice immediately. Instead of rebuking him, God patiently allowed Samuel to learn how to listen—with the help of Eli—before entrusting him with God’s message.

Samuel’s formation began not with speaking, but with **learning to listen**.

Key Insight from the Passage

God first forms discernment and obedience before assigning people to speak for Him.

This is the same pattern HEART Talks follows. Listening precedes speaking. Formation precedes action.

Lesson Big Idea

Youth advocacy is not primarily about saying the right thing.
It is about **becoming the right kind of presence.**

HEART Talks flows from a heart shaped by humility, courage, compassion, and dependence on the Holy Spirit.

This lesson prepares us to enter conversations:

- without fear
- without control
- without pretending we are the savior

Head – Heart – Hands Objectives

At the end of the lesson, the learners will have...

HEAD (Understanding)

- identified key biblical insights showing that God forms the heart before the voice
- explained why inner formation is essential before engaging in HEART Talks
- analyzed how unformed speech can unintentionally harm rather than heal

HEART (Being)

- demonstrated openness to being formed by God before helping others
 - expressed humility in acknowledging personal limits and tendencies
-

	• affirmed dependence on the Holy Spirit in difficult conversations
HANDS (Doing)	• articulated a personal posture for entering youth conversations • practiced pausing before responding to emotionally charged sharing • committed to forming the heart before applying HEART skills

Accountability Check-In (Starting the Journey)

Ang pagsasanay ay nagsisimula with being aware.

For personal use:

- What kind of conversations usually make me anxious?
- Do I tend to rush, withdraw, or over-spiritualize?

For group use:

- Invite participants to share (voluntary):
 - one fear
 - one hope
 - one reason they joined this training

This sets a culture of **honesty and safety** from the beginning.

Why “Puso Muna” Matters in Youth Conversations

When youth open up, they often test one thing first:

“Ligtas ba ako dito?”

They are listening not just to words, but to:

- tone
- pace
- facial expression
- patience

If our hearts are:

- hurried → conversations feel unsafe
- defensive → youth shut down
- controlling → trust erodes

*Hindi lang salita ang naririnig ng kabataan—
nararamdaman nila ang puso.*

Skills Formation: Practicing the Inner Pause Personal or Group Exercise

Imagine a youth says:

“Pagod na ako sa lahat. Ayoko na.”

Before responding:

1. Pause silently for 5 seconds
2. Take one slow breath
3. Ask yourself:
 - *Ano ang nararamdaman ko ngayon?*



- *Ano ang kailangan ng batang ito—sagot o presensya?*

This pause trains the heart **before** the mouth speaks.

Skill being formed:

Self-awareness and Spirit-attentiveness

HEART Talks Is Not About Being the Savior

One of the most important shifts in this module is this truth:

The Holy Spirit is the primary Shepherd.

We are attentive companions.

We do not:

- change hearts
- force healing
- control outcomes

We cooperate with what God is already doing.

*Kapag alam nating hindi tayo ang tagapagligtas,
mas nagiging maingat, mapagpakumbaba, at mapagmahal tayo.*

Reflection and Discussion

For Personal Reflection

- What usually happens inside me when someone shares pain?



- What kind of heart do I want God to form in me?
- What fears do I need to surrender to the Holy Spirit?

For Group Discussion

- Why is it tempting to focus on techniques first?
- How does heart formation protect both youth and advocates?
- What happens when we speak without listening first?

Closing Prayer

Lord,

*bago Mo kami turuang magsalita,
hubugin Mo muna ang aming mga puso.*

*Alisin Mo ang takot,
ang pagmamabilis,
at ang pag-aakalang kami ang sagot.*

*Turuan Mo kaming makinig
bago magsalita,
at sumunod bago manguna.*

Amen.



Weekly Life Application Assignment

Practicing “Puso Muna” in Daily Conversations

This week:

1. Notice **one conversation** where you feel the urge to respond quickly.
2. Practice the **inner pause** before speaking.
3. Journal briefly:
 - What did I feel?
 - What did I choose to do differently?
 - What did I notice about the other person?

Be ready to share **one learning** in the next session.

HEART TALKS FRAMEWORK

Courageous and Compassionate Conversations for Youth Advocacy

“Puso muna bago salita—
pusong may tapang at malasakit.”

The **HEART Talks Framework** is a simple, Spirit-dependent way of walking with young people through honest, difficult, and life-shaping conversations.

It is **not counseling, not fixing, and not preaching.**

It is **pastoral presence**, practiced with wisdom, boundaries, and love.

THE FLOW OF HEART TALKS

HEART Talks follow a **natural, relational movement.**

You do not rush it.

You do not force it.

You walk through it **as the Spirit leads.**

H – HELP, NOT SOLVE

“Samahan, hindi ayusin.”

What this means:

You walk with the young person without taking over their responsibility or journey.

Key posture:

Presence over pressure

What it looks like:

- Staying with their struggle
- Resisting the urge to fix
- Respecting their agency

What to avoid:

- Rescuing
- Giving quick advice
- Making decisions for them

E – EMPATHY THAT HEALS

“Unawain muna ang nararamdaman.”

FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

TeenDIG HEART Talks

Courageous and Compassionate Conversations for Youth Advocacy

1. PURPOSE OF THE TRAINING

This training equips youth pastors and advocates to:

- Form the **inner posture** needed for courageous and compassionate conversations
- Practice the **HEART Talks framework** (H-E-A-R-T) skillfully and safely
- Walk with young people without fixing, rescuing, or controlling
- Multiply HEART Talks through youth leaders and peer spaces

Important:

This training is **not counseling certification**.

It is **pastoral formation and relational skill-building**, grounded in dependence on the Holy Spirit.

2. TARGET PARTICIPANTS

This training is designed for:

- Youth pastors and coordinators



- Youth advocates and mentors
- Campus and community youth workers
- Small group facilitators
- Selected youth leaders (especially for Lessons 9–10)

Recommended group size:

- 15–30 participants (ideal for discussion and practice)
- Can be adapted for smaller or larger groups

3. TRAINING POSTURE FOR FACILITATORS

Before facilitating, internalize this:

You are not the expert with all the answers.

You are a guide forming a safe learning space.

Facilitator stance:

- Calm, grounded, non-reactive
- Willing to model vulnerability
- Clear about boundaries and safety

Avoid:

- Over-teaching
- Preaching at participants
- Fixing participant stories

HEART TALKS IN ACTION

A Practical Reference Sheet for Courageous and Compassionate Conversations

This section gives real-life cases and step-by-step HEART Talk responses, showing what to say, when to say it, and why it matters.

Use this as a **quick reference** during trainings, TeenDIG Circles, or debriefs.

CASE 1: MINISTRY BURNOUT

Scenario

A 19-year-old youth leader says:

“Pagod na ako. Parang wala namang silbi ginagawa ko sa ministry. Kahit anong effort ko, parang hindi sapat.”

You sense discouragement, burnout, and wounded identity.

HEART TALKS RESPONSE TABLE

HEART	Sample Question / Instruction	Why This Step Is Used
H – Help, Not Solve	<i>“Salamat sa pag-share. Nandito lang ako.”</i>	Establishes safety and presence; removes

HEART	Sample Question / Instruction	Why This Step Is Used
		pressure to perform or be fixed.
E – Empathy	<i>“Mukhang sobrang bigat nito para sa’yo.”</i>	Names emotion; helps the youth feel seen and validated.
A – Ask Questions	<i>“Ano ang pinaka-nakakapagod sa ngayon?”</i>	Draws out the deeper issue rather than assuming the cause.
R – Reframe	<i>“Pwede bang pagod ito, hindi kawalan ng saysay?”</i>	Gently challenges a fixed negative narrative without denying pain.
T – Take Action	<i>“Ano ang makakatulong ngayon—pahinga, kausap, o next step?”</i>	Invites collaboration and respects agency; avoids taking over.

CASE 2: FAMILY PRESSURE AND IDENTITY CONFUSION

Scenario

A 17-year-old shares quietly:

“Hindi ko na alam kung sino ako.

Sa bahay, parang hindi ako sapat kahit anong gawin ko.”

You sense shame, pressure, and fragile identity.

HEART TALKS RESPONSE TABLE

HEART	Sample Question / Instruction	Why This Step Is Used
H – Help, Not Solve	<i>“Salamat sa pagtitiwala mo.”</i>	Communicates safety and respect; lowers defensiveness.
E – Empathy	<i>“Masakit ‘yan—lalo na kapag pakiramdam mo kulang ka.”</i>	Validates emotional pain; reduces shame.
A – Ask Questions	<i>“Kailan mo unang naramdaman ‘yan sa bahay?”</i>	Helps locate the root of the struggle instead of surface symptoms.
R – Reframe	<i>“Posibleng hindi kawalan ng halaga—kundi sobrang bigat ng expectations.”</i>	Separates identity from performance; opens space for hope.
T – Take Action	<i>“Sino ang ligtas mong pwedeng makausap tungkol dito?”</i>	Encourages shared care and support beyond the facilitator.

HEART TALKS IN ACTION (HIGH-RISK CASES)

Practicing Courage and Compassion with Discernment and Safety

Reminder:

In high-risk conversations, HEART Talks **do not stop**—but **they widen** to include protection, referral, and shared responsibility.

CASE 4: SELF-HARM DISCLOSURE

Scenario

A 16-year-old whispers:

“Minsan sinasaktan ko sarili ko.

Hindi ko naman gustong mamatay...

pero parang ito lang ang paraan para gumaan.”

You sense immediate emotional risk.

HEART TALKS RESPONSE TABLE

HEART	Sample Question / Instruction	Why This Step Is Used
H – Help, Not Solve	<i>“Salamat sa tapang mong magsabi.”</i>	Stabilizes the moment; affirms courage without shock or judgment.
E – Empathy	<i>“Mukhang sobrang bigat ng dinadala mo.”</i>	Validates pain; reduces shame and isolation.
A – Ask Questions	<i>“Kailan kadalas nangyayari ito?”</i>	Assesses frequency and intensity without interrogation.
R – Reframe	<i>“Hindi ka mahina dahil nahihirapan ka.”</i>	Reframes struggle as pain, not failure; avoids minimizing harm.
T – Take Action	<i>“Mahalaga ang kaligtasan mo—kailangan nating humingi ng tulong together.”</i>	Prioritizes safety and shared care; models responsible referral.