



THE WASHINGTON HOME & COMMUNITY HOSPICES

Ground Rules for Our Grief Support Groups

~ To be read and agreed to at the beginning of the group ~

This group is a drop-in group that meets every Tuesday at 7pm to 8:30pm. We will begin on time and end at 8:30pm. The facilitator is available to meet one-on-one with those who find they are uncomfortable in processing their grief in the group in any way.

The group leader's responsibility is to facilitate a safe place in which the group can support each other by sharing experiences, thoughts, and activities that have been helpful and sometimes not so helpful.

When appropriate, educational material on the topics of grief and loss, and death and dying will be provided to the group.

We know the support group setting can be very helpful for those experiencing grief. I hope that we can make this space a positive supportive experience for everyone involved.

The “making it safe” is based on a few ground rules:

- This is a place to meet and share with others, and experience support from others. While the results may be different for everyone, the general consensus is that a support group in community is a powerful part of healing from our loss.
- We ask that you share only as much as you feel able to share at any time.
- We all have a story and we ask for respect for others by being mindful of the time each of us takes to share our story. Please leave time for others to participate.
- As you share your experience others will benefit, but please do not include advice giving in comments. A good way to phrase your input might be “I” statements. For example, “If that was my experience”, or “in that situation, I would want to ...”
- We ask everyone to refrain from making judgments. Everyone is fighting the good fight, and we know not from whence they come.
- Many of us have the innate and unconscious urge to “fix.” Caregivers have this skill, and the urge to put things right is often a way to create comfort. HOWEVER, grief is not comfortable; grief is uncomfortable hard work, and the bittersweet side of loss and love. We suggest practicing the art of witnessing. Practice holding peace to make it safe for others to lighten the load and to walk their journey in the way that is uniquely theirs.
- Notice in the hours and day(s) after the group, feelings you may have that signal a “Grief Hangover.” This reaction and period of adjustment is normal. Drink lots of water, rest, write, take a walk...and allow the bits of the group that you have taken with you, to integrate (or dissipate) through non-judgmental awareness.

- Finally, CONFIDENTIALITY is an important part of keeping this group safe. What is said here stays here! Do not share other members' stories or names. Instead, practice releasing your own pain and discomfort with the group process by sharing your story and experience, and share newly discovered insights with others outside the group.