

Grief Services Group Leader Training

Group members' fears and hopes upon entering the group:

Fears

- anxious
- afraid I'll cry
- being misunderstood
- fear of judgments
- uncontrollable emotions - scary
- maybe this is a mistake
- who'll be there
- fear of exposure
- intense ambivalence
- I'll fall apart
- what's the pace going to be - will it be slow and gentle enough for me

Hopes

- hopeful for support
- a safe place for me to be with my feelings
- being understood
- able to notice my own self-judgments
- maybe it'll be cleansing and I'll get relief
- a place where there's no expectation that my grief will be complete when the group is over

Group members' expectations of group leaders:

- provide protection
- complete acceptance, regardless of my participation level
- they should have no agenda about how I process my grief, but trust in the process
- help me get grounded
- guidance
- provide a feeling of forward progress
- make the group more than just a place to air feelings
- set rules from the beginning that it's okay not to talk, it okay to be glad the person died, that the group will keep confidentiality
- help group members share time so everyone gets a chance to speak
- make space for quiet, listening, whatever needs to unfold
- provide a sacred space

Goals for the Group:

- a place where people can take the time they need to grieve without being rushed
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- members learn concrete tools for coping, both external and internal
- members find continuing supportive relationships
- members gain hope that someday they will feel better
- members gain understanding that grief is a natural, normal part of life
- members feel accepted exactly where they are
- members gain a better understanding of the grief process