



The Grieving Journey

from Greene County Council on Aging Spring 2023

A Few Things to Know About Grief Support Groups

Grief support groups can be very helpful to many people who are grieving a significant loss in their lives. However, not all people have positive experiences at grief support groups. Based on the article *Grief Support Groups: Positives and Pitfalls* by Eleanor Haley, here are a few pros and cons to consider.

Instillation of Hope

In a support group, people in the acute phase of grief have contact with those who are much further along in their healing. In fact, groups are often led by people who have been through a loss themselves. Group members who are doing well and finding new ways to heal can provide hope to those who are new to grief and show that it's possible to feel joy again (among other things).

Also, not only might hope be instilled in general, but in some instances, more senior group members might prove the group's efficacy and provide reassurance to others that the support group itself is a positive and helpful tool.

Universality

One of the best things about attending a grief support group is the reminder that you are not alone. Grief can feel very lonely and isolating, especially when no one else around you seems to be grieving. Although no two people experience grief

in the exact same way, by attending a support group you may find that other people have experiences, feelings, and struggles that are similar to your own. When you feel totally alone and misunderstood by the world, the support group community can provide you with a haven of understanding.

Overwhelming

It is important to consider if it is too soon to attend a group. Some people feel overwhelmed by going to a grief support group too soon in their grieving journey. Although it is often helpful to be in the presence of others who are grieving, sometimes the weight of the emotions can be too much when one's own loss is so new. When in a very vulnerable state, one may not be able to experience another person's emotional expressions of anger, sadness, regret, guilt, etc. Keep an eye on how you're feeling in response to others; maybe you'll find it's too soon



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for you or maybe you'll realize you're just having an off day. Some grief experts feel one might wait 3 months before attending a grief support group.

Discouraged

People often think that a grief group will help them through their grief quickly. It's common for people to attend support groups looking for guidance, hope, and reassurance—all of which can be found at some point or another. Those early on in their grief may be looking for evidence that things get easier. Attending a group with this expectation may lead to feelings of hopelessness when others in the group, especially those further along in their grief, are still expressing pain, frustration, and negativity. Realize there are no quick fixes when it comes to grieving the loss of a loved one. Feeling discouraged after attending a support group may indicate that the bereaved isn't ready for such a

group. Individual grief counseling might be more helpful at this time.

What people need to keep in mind is bad days can still happen years later. Also, people who are generally doing well in other areas of their life may use the support group as the one place where they can still talk about their pain and their loss.

To read the entire article by Eleanor Haley, go to: whatsyourgrief.com/grief-support-groups-positives-and-pitfalls/

GCCOA Grief Support Group

Group meetings are open to all those who have lost a loved one. Meetings are on the 2nd Monday of the month, 10am until noon, Peace Lutheran Church, 3530 Dayton Xenia Road, Beavercreek (lower level). Participation is limited and advance registration is required. Please call the Council to learn more.

Separation

*Your absence has gone through me
Like thread through a needle.
Everything I do is stitched with its color.*

W.S. Merwin

The Window

*Your body is away from me
but there is a window open
from my heart to yours.
From this window, like the moon
I keep sending news secretly.*

Rumi

We hope you find this publication helpful, and welcome your comments and ideas for future issues. Let us know if you no longer wish to receive this newsletter.

The Grieving Journey is a Greene County Council on Aging quarterly publication to accompany you in your time of bereavement after the loss of a significant person in your life.