

Bereavement Support Group

Est.
2016

YORK ST JOHN
COMMUNITIES
CENTRE

Est.
1841

YORK
ST JOHN
UNIVERSITY

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What do the sessions involve?

In the group you will have the opportunity to talk about your feelings with others who have gone through a similar experiences and can relate to your experiences. It's a space for everyone to listen and mutually support each other. It won't take away the pain, but it can help to share it with people who want to listen.

How will my grief change in this group?

We have found that most people make a moderate adjustment to their loss. However, more importantly, people tell us what they got the most from is having others listen and understand, leading to strong friendships with others in the group. As we continue to research the effectiveness of these groups, you will be kindly asked to complete some questionnaires to help us measure how your grief may change during the group.

Tell me more about these groups.

The groups are held online via Zoom, and last 90 minutes. Sessions are facilitated by two experienced counsellors and there is usually a third support with relevant skills and experience.

Groups run for 20 weeks. You can leave the group at any point, but if you leave before the 20 weeks is completed, you are unable to re-enter the same group.

Who can join a support group?

If you have been bereaved or are experiencing grief, and are over the age of 18 years old, you are welcome in our free bereavement support group.

When and where are these groups?

Groups are held every week on Tuesdays, from 4.30 - 6.00pm, online via Zoom.

How do I join a group?

If you, or someone you know would like to join, you can self-refer using our portal www.yorks.ac.uk/ysjcc, and one of our group facilitators will be in touch.



Will counselling help me?

Like many newly bereaved people, you may feel that you need counselling, and friends may urge you to seek help. However, it's worth being aware that nearly half of bereaved people, given the right environment, manage grief on their own. A further third perhaps need the support of families, friends and maybe spiritual help from a church, temple, mosque, or synagogue. Dr John Wilson, Director of our bereavement service, has written a book, *The Plain Guide to Grief*, to support and reassure bereaved people without the need for counselling.

Research suggests that only 10 to 15% of bereaved people are effectively helped by formal counselling. To see if you are likely to be one of them, John suggests you ask yourself these questions:

- Are you able to talk in detail, about the death, without becoming overwhelmingly upset?
- Can you make sense of the death?
- Do you understand exactly what caused the death?
- Have any guilty feelings ended?
- Can you look at photographs of the person who died without getting too upset?
- Can you listen to music which reminds you of them?
- Have you stopped searching for them?
- Can you move comfortably between periods of sadness, and times when you get on with life?
- Is it okay to feel sad sometimes?
- It is okay to smile or laugh about things they did?
- Can you enjoy talking about them?
- Can you take time out from your loss without feeling guilty?
- Do you feel optimistic about your future?
- Are you beginning to find new meaning and purpose in your life?

If, six months after your loss, you can answer "yes" to every question, it's unlikely that you need counselling. If there are any answers that you're not sure about, or questions that you answered "No", then it might help to speak to a counsellor. The questions that are giving you difficulties can be the focus of your work together. For example, if there are still aspects of your lost loved one's life and death that you feel guilty about, it could help to talk to a counsellor.





The Course of Grief

Every person's grief is unique, but there is a typical pattern with individual variations. It isn't possible to put a time on how long each phase will last.

Soon after the loss you are likely to feel numb. There isn't much distress because it doesn't feel real. It's only when the reality sinks in that you can find yourself tearful. Many people try to extend the numb period by avoiding the reality, at least for some of the time. Some

people describe this as being 'in denial', as if it's a bad thing, but it can actually help to avoid reminders until you get used to the sad reality. Follow your instincts and grieve your way if you feel it helps. Some people are helped by talking about what happened, to make it more real.

Supporting the Centre

Your donation makes a great difference! It supports us to cover the costs of providing free services such as our community language school, bereavement group and café's, student suicide support group, and drop-ins. As our income grows, so too does our team of co-ordinators, assessors, supervisors, counsellors, coaches, and group facilitators. Anything that you are able to donate can help support the work we do and the services that we offer to our community.



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