

## ‘Healing Our Losses’ Group Therapy: Frequently Asked Questions

“I would like to join a group as soon as possible. When can I begin attending your groups?”

We do not currently have ongoing “drop-in” groups. Rather, the Center provides six-session groups with definitive start dates and end dates. Once a six-week group starts, there are no new participants introduced into the group. If you are interested in potentially participating, we find it helpful to schedule a one-on-one intake appointment with our group therapist, Meg Eifrig, so that you and the therapist can ensure that group will meet your expectations and therapeutic needs. You would then be invited to participate in the next group once it is ready to start.

“How frequently do group sessions meet once they begin?”

Once a 6-week group begins, sessions meet weekly for six consecutive weeks.

“What day and time are groups held?”

Groups are 90 minutes in duration and are usually held on weekday evenings from 7:00pm-8:30pm, CST. There is currently no specific day of the week in which groups take place. The day of the week is variable from group to group, but stays consistent once a new six-week group begins. That is, if the next six-week group begins on Thursday evening, all six sessions will be on consecutive Thursday evenings until the group’s completion.

“Do you accept health insurance?”

Yes. All therapists at The Center are in network with BCBS-PPO, and BCBS often covers half of the costs (see below for details). Other insurance carriers may be of assistance depending on your plan’s “out-of-network” benefits.

“How much does it cost to attend group?”

The fee for participation in groups is \$50 for each appointment, totaling \$300 for the entire 6-week group. The intake appointment mentioned above is a separate \$50.

There are a few options available that may help with costs for those who are not using health insurance and paying for services “out of pocket.” First, if you are able to pay for all six group appointments in advance, a discount of approximately 10% is offered, reducing the total fee to \$270 (\$30 savings). Second, we offer assistance through scholarships that may reduce the cost of group services, leaving the potential group participant responsible for only a portion of the fee; this is to be negotiated with the group therapist, no later than during the one-on-one intake appointment.

“Who typically participates in your groups?”

We only provide group services to adults at this time. We do not have groups catering specifically to males or females, and so groups consist of both men and women. Age of participants varies widely, from adults in their 20s and upward.

“How many participants attend groups?”

Groups consist of anywhere from four to seven adults, depending on the amount of interested individuals at the time a new group starts.

“Are participants coming to talk about a specific type of loss?”

Although The Center appreciates the important differences between different types of loss (e.g. loss of a sibling as opposed to loss of a parent, loss related to a terminal illness as opposed to sudden and unexpected loss, etc.), participants attend groups to cope with grief stemming from varied circumstances. For example, a typical group may consist of four individuals mourning the loss of a parent, one who is mourning the loss of a sibling, and two mourning the loss of a spouse.

Some bereaved individuals, understandably, may worry that they’d be uncomfortable talking in a group about their unique experiences of loss if participants have no direct way of relating. In such instances, other options for therapy and support, such as individual therapy with a grief counselor, can be considered at the time of intake.

“What will we be doing in groups? What are the goals?”

Although challenging and painful at times, grieving and mourning are natural, self-restorative processes of recovery that rely upon social support, emotional expression, and healthy adaptation to the many resulting changes in day-to-day life. Our groups aim to facilitate this process by implementing aspects of mourning that may be absent at the time of participation.

First, mourning is most ideal when it is a social experience, and group participation provides an opportunity for social support from other bereaved individuals who can relate to the struggles of loss. Many participants report benefiting from both the chance to share their stories and to listen to others' journeys. Second, group therapists regularly encourage identification of feelings and emotional expression as a crucial part of the healing process. Third, group participants can help each other identify helpful coping strategies as well as attempts at feeling better that have “backfired” and proven to be unhelpful or even harmful. Finally, the group hopes to inspire healthy and creative means by which to remember those who have been lost; some examples include story-telling, artwork, or bringing in keepsakes reminiscent of important relationships that have been lost.

“Who will be leading the groups at The Center?”

Meg Eifrig, one of the therapists at The Center for Grief Recovery, will be leading our groups. She will also be conducting one-on-one intake appointments for those potentially interested in participating in group. Meg is a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor (LCPC) who has much experience leading a variety of group psychotherapies. In addition to leading groups, she also runs her own practice within The Center. You can learn more about her and her work by visiting the Therapists section of our website at the following link: <http://www.griefcounselor.org/counselors-psychotherapists.html>