

Misery Loves Company?

These three words not only define why a grief support group is important, it also is one of the reasons people avoid going to a support group.

While it is true that being with people who are going through a similar experience can be very helpful, what happens during a meeting is not what most people expect. At most support groups people do not just “sit around and tell our sad story.” Instead time is spent with each person finding out how they are doing on their journey through grief, what challenges they may be experiencing and what recent successes they may have had. The facilitator weaves each story with others to gain wisdom and perspective. People laugh with one another, and yes, cry with one another as well.

Support can be shared at an in-person group or on the phone. It is the shared experience that informs the experience, not the way in which the group is held. It is through learning tools to make it through the tough times that healing can occur. From breathing techniques to ideas on how to handle loneliness, attendees are guided by the facilitator and by one another about ways to approach the common challenges that accompany the grieving process.

People find understanding and support that they may not be getting from some of their family members and friends who just can't understand what they are going through. It is a group filled with others who know how difficult it is to mourn the loss of someone who was loved so deeply. It is a sanctuary where all emotions and thoughts can be shared and each person feels that they have been heard and that they matter.

Grief can feel like a lonely journey. By joining with others the shared experience lessens that pain. By participating in a grief support group a special kind of magic can happen. It is the feeling that when the session ends, each person leaves knowing that there is an entire group of people who are carrying them in their hearts and in their prayers. No one should grieve alone. A grief support group allows the space for both grieving and healing to occur.

This article is offered as part of our funeral home's grief support program. The author, Nancy Weil, serves on the staff at the International Order of the Golden Rule (OGR) of which our funeral home is a proud member. She is a Certified Grief Management Specialist who has run grief support programs for over 13 years. You are invited to join our monthly telephone grief support group that Nancy facilitates. Please call our funeral home for more information.