



DAYBREAK

In touch during a time of grief

Make Every Day Count

*In **Make Every Day Count**, persons who have lost a loved one will share their experiences. This month, Mary B., whose husband died after a lengthy illness, tells why she decided to join a support group for widows...*

“My husband was sick for a long time, and so most of my efforts for the past few years revolved around him. When he died, I was so sad and lost... we had been married for 47 years. Most of all, I felt alone. My friends tried to be helpful, but they were busy with their own husbands and families. My children live nearby and they were a help, too. Still I felt I couldn’t burden them with my own thoughts so much. My doctor recommended a support group. He thought it was a good way to share my feelings.

I joined a support group for women who had lost their husbands, and I met some wonderful people who knew what I was going through. It was great to be able to talk about my feelings and not feel pitied. Often, even after the group meeting was over, some of us would go for coffee and continue to talk. Being in the group made me feel like I was part of life again.”

Getting the Support You Need

Reaching Out to Family and Bereavement Groups to Share Feelings

The grief process can be lonely. During this period, you may feel like there is no one who can understand how you feel. You may feel isolated from others, wondering “how can they possibly know how I am feeling right now?” This is a normal reaction.

Many people find that grief heals best when it is shared with others. Have you talked to family members about your feelings of loss? Do you pick up the phone and call a friend when you’re lonely or sad?

Reaching out to those you love...
and those who love you...
can help make the grieving
process more tolerable.

In the early months after your loved one’s death, it is important to remember that you are not alone.

For many people, talking to friends and family members is not enough. Participation in a bereavement support group may be a helpful vehicle for sharing your feelings with others who are experiencing a loss. There are many benefits.



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In addition to giving you an outlet for expressing your feelings, participating in a bereavement support group will allow you to help others who are grieving.

For those who are experiencing a severe grief reaction, or who have what we call “complicated grief,” there are other options. Grief counseling, with a trained and experienced professional, can be helpful. A grief counselor will help you:

- Understand that there is a natural grief process that is experienced by most people
- Accept the reality of your loved one’s death
- Adjust to your loss
- Recognize common obstacles and learn how to handle them
- Identify and use effective ways to cope with your grief

Joining a Group Brings Numerous Benefits

Bereavement support groups provide the grieving person the opportunity to share their feelings. Joining a group during the grieving process has a number of benefits:

- It can be a step forward in efforts to help yourself and others. Your experiences with loss and grief might also comfort someone else.
- It’s a way to meet new people and cultivate a new social structure; friendships are often forged in bereavement support groups. Older adults, especially, who may have experienced the death of a spouse and the loss of long-time friends, often find this a good way to stay in touch with people who understand.
- It provides a way to avoid isolation, to “get dressed and get out of the house.” By joining a support group, you are making a commitment to attend at a specific day and time, giving structure to your week.

We Are Here To Help

It’s important to talk about your loss with compassionate friends and family. Many people also seek the comfort of support groups during this difficult time. The Daybreak Bereavement Program, provided by the hospice services of Advocate Aurora Health at Home, offers a wide range of opportunities for individual or group support. For more information, or talk to a bereavement counselor, please contact:

- Illinois 800-813-5185
- Wisconsin 800-862-2201