

Recommendations

Welcome to the Good Grief Network's 10-Step Program to help build personal resilience and empowerment and strengthen community ties. Thank you for your willingness to organize a branch of the Step Program in your community. We have a number of recommendations for facilitation that might make the process easier.

Facilitation Talk:

We have recorded a Facilitation Talk. It is available on YouTube. Please watch the video to help resolve some questions: <https://youtu.be/XuOaHTAh7yQ>

Charging Money For Meetings:

You are welcome to offer the program at no cost. However, we recommended charging a nominal fee for the 10-Step program. We recommend \$100 for the session (\$10/meeting). People value services more if they have a financial stake in the process. We tend to offer a couple scholarships per session so that those with low incomes can still participate.

If you collect money for the sessions, please return 5% back to the Good Grief Network to help us grow and reach others:

<https://paypal.me/GoodGriefNetwork>

Set Up:

- Each step has been researched and formed using an interdisciplinary approach. The creators are not mental health experts, and you don't have to be either. Please be open with the folks attending meetings that program is not intended to focus on individual grief. Some people may need a therapist in addition to working the 10-Steps.
- Meet weekly for 1 1/2 -2 hours each time. Any less than that doesn't allow sufficient time for everyone to share. If the meetings are two hours, we recommend leaving some time at the end of the meeting to mingle and form connections amongst the group.
- Make time for a check in and check out each meeting. Have each person introduce themselves by their first name and use an ice-breaker for them to share. (Ex: Introduce yourself with your first name and one word of what you're bringing to the circle today.)

- Meet at the same location each week (or at least minimize the number of places you meet at). People get confused and won't come if the location changes each meeting.
- Limit each group to about 15 people. The sweet spot is between 8-12 people. Any more than that and authenticity is challenged. We desire to build community and create a safe space to work through tough feelings.
- Decide early on - Will you allow folks to drop into meetings? Will you open the meeting to a cohort folks and then no others? If you do allow drop-ins, promote each weekly meeting on social media and encourage members to invite friends and family.
- Feel free to add a component to the meetings that are unique. Yoga, meditation, poems, or weekly rituals can be good additions to weekly meetings.
- The first few steps can be difficult for participants. Especially because a rapport hasn't been formed yet. Some facilitators have a pre-meeting before starting the steps, which helps orient folks and start relationship-building. Please remind participants that it takes courage to show up for these conversations.
- Suggest participants identify a safe person (partner, friend, family member, therapist) they can reach out to between meetings if they are feeling emotionally charged up.

Meeting Process:

- Sit in a circle.
- [Optional] Open up the weekly leader position to anyone interested. Each week can have a different leader. The leader reads from the skip and the corresponding step for the week.
- Read the introduction and closing in each meeting. Ritual is important. The subject of the meeting changes weekly, but having the start and ending the same allows participants to ground themselves.
- After the leader opens the floor for sharing, have participants use a talking piece to encourage active listening. One person talks at a time. Interrupting is not tolerated.
- Praise members for showing up and for their courage, at least once a meeting.

- Create space for honesty and integrity. No one is forced to share (except to check in and out) and everyone who shares should limit their talking to a few minutes to create space for others.
- Do not try to fix others and do not allow participants to try fix each other. Cultivate a space for others to express lessons from their personal journey and experiences without feedback from others in the formal meeting.
- Minimize participants responding to or directly speaking to other participants while the meeting is in session. After each person shares, encourage all participants to respond to the sharer by saying things like “Thank you,” “I hear you,” or “I am with you.” This will usually happen in unison. This is ideal and prevents direct responses to what has been shared and allows the sharer to feel heard. If we are planning a response to a share, we are not practicing active listening.

Feedback:

Connect regularly to the Good Grief Network hub (via email: laura@goodgriefnetwork.org) to share insights and suggestions for improvement. This manual is an evolution-in-progress, a collaborative process. It’s not perfect, but the urgency of this work is more important than perfection. We know what worked for our meetings – but your gatherings will be different. Let us know how they’re going. What are obstacles you’re facing? What surprises you? Are members offering feedback?