

Name

**Do I Really Want to Attend a Support Group?**

***by Sherry Williams White***

There are many local and national support groups that can help you not feel so isolated and alone. While no one’s grief is exactly the same, gathering with people who share a common experience can help you to learn and to grow. And to be comforted. Group members may cry with you but they can also help you to recognize that you can laugh again, too.

There is no set time to begin attending meetings. Some people attend right away. Others don’t feel comfortable about going until months after the death. This decision is as individual as your grief. If you attend a group and can’t decide if it is right for you, attend at least three meetings before you rule the group out. On any given night, your needs and the needs of the group may not be the same or you could just be having a bad day.

Programs can include group discussion and sharing, study groups, visiting speakers and other planned activities. There is an atmosphere of friendship, compassion and acceptance. Participation is voluntary but everyone is given the opportunity to draw on the strength of the group as needed or to extend strength when possible. A support group can provide just the glimmer of hope that you need when you’re feeling your lowest.

You will know when you are ready to reach out for support. Listen to yourself. To help you get started, we have included the national listings of some of the major support organizations on the next two pages. We encourage you to contact one of these.

You also may call your local funeral director or church for information on groups in your area.