



## How Do I Know if I am Ready for a Bereavement Group?

Nothing can prepare us for losing someone we love. The intensity of the emotions is not like anything we have ever experienced before. Shock, fear, anger, guilt, regret, sadness, isolation.... the list goes on.

Here at Catholic Cemeteries of the Diocese of Bridgeport in Connecticut, we offer programs to support those who ask the question, "How am I going to live with this grief?"

One program is the [New Day Bereavement Program](#), which is a nine-week, small-group, faith-based, closed program.

### **What exactly does that mean?**

- Everyone in this small group (fewer than 10 people) makes a commitment to attend every session.
- After the first week, the group is closed to any new members.
- Each week, we cover a chapter in the New Day Journal which asks very specific questions: What just happened to you? Who has died? What does it feel like right now? And as the weeks go on...How has your life changed? How are you going to live with these changes? How are you going to carry your loved one with you in your heart for the rest of your life?

### **How do I know if it's too soon to join a group?**

If you are in shock, you can't stop crying, and you keep reliving the last days of your loved one's life in your mind.... it's too soon. When you are in shock, you cannot process or reflect on what you have experienced.

This is a time to recognize your stress and be easy on yourself. Try to rest, eat foods that bring you comfort, and accept the offers of people who want to help you.

You may also be faced with legal and financial issues that are time-sensitive, time-consuming and emotionally draining.

The "accepted wisdom" is that most people are ready to join a group 3-6 months after a loss, but always listen to your heart if even that seems too soon for you.

### **Why would you make someone wait who is clearly in need of support?**

One reason: timing is everything.

Are you emotionally ready to reflect on your loss?

Are you able to share your insights with the group?

And very importantly, are you able to listen to other people's grief stories—or is their pain too much for you?

## Is it “too late” to grieve a loss that occurred years ago?

It's never too late if the pain is still there. We have had participants who were finally able to look at losses that took place decades ago, often in families who felt that remaining silent about a loss would make the pain go away. We all realize that does not work. We have had many participants who had the courage to look at losses that occurred decades ago and were finally able to come to a place of healing.

## Why do I have to make a commitment to attend for nine weeks?

*This program is a process, and one week builds on the next.* Don't sign up if you have a vacation planned, if you are preparing to put your house on the market, or if you are going to be distracted by other commitments. Sign up when you have the emotional time to devote to your healing journey.

## What is a faith-based bereavement program?

There are many terrific bereavement options available, but not many that welcome discussions on how our faith supports and comforts us during this terrible time. Although this program is based on Catholic teaching, everyone is welcome -- no matter where you are in your faith life or where you are on your personal grief journey.

During intense grief, we run toward God, or we run away from Him.

And we are OK with wherever you are now.

## What are some of the benefits for me?

The group will provide emotional support and offer empathy, respect and confidentiality.

Group members will learn coping strategies to manage triggers.

Participants will share their stories, which can help healing and reduce feelings of isolation.

This is a non-judgmental and safe environment, which fosters hope and helps to lift one's spirits and develop long-lasting relationships among participants.

The group will foster optimism and give you a vision for a brighter future.

**If you think this may be a good time for you to consider joining a bereavement group, please [visit our New Day Ministries page](#) to learn more and sign up.**