



Group Updates

Please send us any group updates that you may have in the future.



Announcements and Events

CREATIVITY ON WHEELS

Do you long to connect to your creative spirit? Are you 60+ living independently in Champaign County? Join this free pilot program to receive monthly creativity boxes delivered to your door and monthly phone calls from a friendly volunteer. Boxes are themed and include art materials, art exercises designed by local artists, introspective crafts, affirmation cards, thought-provoking questions, and more. Call 217-352-5100 to register.

This program is partially supported by grants from URBANA ARTS AND CULTURE, ILLINOIS ARTS COUNCIL AGENCY, & EAST CENTRAL ILLINOIS AREA AGENCY ON AGING.

Fundraiser at Jarling’s Custard Cup – August 29th, 2022

Mention NAMI Champaign at the Jarling’s Custard Cup in Champaign, IL before purchasing and help fundraiser for NAMI Champaign! Jarling’s will donate 20% of the profits from orders that mention us at the window!

WHEN: Monday, August 29st, 2022; During Open Hours

WHERE: [Jarling’s Custard Cup](#) ; 309 W Kirby Ave, Champaign, IL 61820

HOW: Invite friends and Mention NAMI Champaign at the window while ordering

Mulligans for Mental Health Golf Outing 2022

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2022

ONE DAY FOUR PERSON SCRAMBLE

2560 STONE CREEK BLVD, URBANA, IL

ATKINS GOLF CLUB AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

9:00 AM – SHOTGUN START

\$125 PER PERSON / \$500 PER FOURSOME

PROCEEDS GO DIRECTLY TO SUPPORT LOCAL NAMI ACTIVITIES

- Training for New Facilitators
- Funding for Emergency Mental Health services
- Advocacy and Awareness
- Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) seminars
- Education Courses for Families

Join us for this wonderful event!

[Register Here: https://secure.givelively.org/event/nami-champaign-county-il/mulligans-for-mental-health-golf-outing-2022](https://secure.givelively.org/event/nami-champaign-county-il/mulligans-for-mental-health-golf-outing-2022)

STRESSBUSTING FOR CAREGIVERS OF PERSONS WITH DEMENTIA

THURSDAY AFTERNOONS JULY 21 – SEPTEMBER 8 2-3:30 FREE TO FAMILY CAREGIVERS

Caregiver Workshop The Stress-Busting Program for Family Caregivers™ is a program that provides support to family caregivers. Proven to: reduce caregiver stress, reduce anger/hostility, reduce anxiety & improve quality of life.

Reserve your spot today Call Stacie – 217 352-5100



The 2022 CU Pride Fest Parade and Fair will take place on Saturday, October 1st in downtown Urbana. Save the date for now and look for lots more info to come!

For over a decade, Uniting Pride of Champaign County has been organizing marches, rallies, parades, entertainment, education, and outreach to celebrate and advocate for the LGBTQ+ communities in Champaign County. We are well known for our annual Pride Fest and Parade (the second largest in Illinois), and are excited to bring it back in 2022!

Sponsor, Parade, Fair, and Program Ad Registration is NOW OPEN!

Email pride@unitingpride.org for more information.

We're looking for a small, dedicated, group of community members eager to take on leadership roles. No experience necessary! Just an interest in deep engagement in this process, and the time to help make a big impact! If you want to better understand what that means before making a commitment, feel free to get in touch and we'll get all your questions answered.

Or do you have ideas or suggestions for what Pride Fest 22 should include? Feel free to reach out by email with those as well!

Featured Self-Help Groups

Bereavement

Central Illinois

Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD Illinois)

This group provides phone support and victim court advocacy to people who are coping with the loss of a loved one from an alcohol-related crash. Contact MADD for meeting times. Meets at 2070 W. Munroe, Ste. B, Springfield, IL. MADD Illinois provides assistance with medical, emotional, and legal problems after an accident. Call: (217) 523-MADD (6233) or (888) MADD(6233)-HELP(4357) (24 hour helpline) Email: kristi.hosea@madd.org Local Website: madd.org/local-offices National Website: madd.org Write: MADD Illinois, 276 E. Deerpath Rd., Unit 405, Lake Forest, IL 60045

Champaign

Always Loved & Supported Bereavement Support Group

This is a specialized program to support those who have lost a loved one to ALS. The focus will be on helping those bereaved to cope with their loneliness, how to understand their new roles, and healing ways to manage their emotional pain. For questions regarding the program, please reach out to Jennifer Beckman, LCSW, CSW-G. Meets the 4th Wednesday of every month 7:00-8:30 PM over zoom. Call: (309) 261-7052 Email: jennifer@alschicago.org

Bereaved Parents of the USA, Champaign-Urbana Chapter

This group provides support for any adults who have lost a child, grandchild, or sibling. The group is the local chapter of the national nonprofit organization, Bereaved Parents of the USA. Meets 2nd Sun., 3:30-5:00 p.m., Stephens Family YMCA, 2501 Fields South Dr., Champaign. Call: Jane and Jerry Pica (217) 373-1321 National Website: bereavedparentsusa.org Write: Jane Pica, 2521 Pinehurst Dr., Champaign, IL 61822

Carle Hospice Bereavement Grief Support Group

This support group provides a place to connect with others who are also going through loss, share memories of the person who died, learn about the grief process, and explore new ideas to help you cope and heal. Articles and resources are used from authors who specialize in grief. A packet of information will be provided to you to help facilitate discussion. This group is open to all grieving adults in the community who have experienced a loss through death and led by a trained facilitator. Call: (217) 383-3151 Email: jean.oliver-holder@carle.com

GriefShare (First United Methodist Church)

This group provides a 13-week, grief recovery seminar and support group. The program is nondenominational but does feature biblical teachings for recovery. The focus is on healing. There is a fee

for a workbook. Meets at First United Methodist Church. Call: Michelle Clayton (217) 493-8765 Email: Maprvil@aol.com National Website: griefshare.org

Life After Loss Support Group

This support group is for adults who are experiencing grief after the death of a loved one. Members share experiences and participate in activities allowing them to remember their loved one and to move on in their lives. Call for meeting schedule, location, and to preregister. Call: Rita Manning (217) 383-3151 or (800) 239-3620 Email: rita.manning@carle.com Local Website: <https://carle.org/Events/category/Support-Groups> Write: Carle Home Health, 206 W. Anthony Dr., Champaign, IL 61822

Presence Grief Support Group

Facilitated through Presence Covenant Spiritual Care, this six-week program offers those grieving the loss of a loved one time to share stories, support, and hope with others who are grieving. The group meets in the Fall and Spring; contact Vera Duncanson for more information and to register Call: Vera Duncanson (217) 337-2487 Email: vera.duncanson@presencehealth.org Write: Vera Duncanson, Presence Covenant Pastoral Care, 1400 W. Park St., Urbana, IL 61801

Rainbows For All Children

This program offers groups to help children who are grieving the loss of a parent or guardian due to death, divorce, deployment or other loss. Contact Rainbows to find groups. Call: (847) 952-1770 Email: info@rainbows.org National Website: rainbows.org Write: Rainbows for All Children, 614 Dempster St., Ste. C, Evanston, IL 60202

Coles

Hopeful Horizons

This group provides support for anyone grieving the loss of a loved one due to death. Meets 3rd Thurs., 1:00-2:30 p.m., Sarah Bush Lincoln Health Center, Prairie Pavilion Bldg. II, 2nd Floor, Hospice conference rm. Call: Dawn Sexton, Bereavement Counselor (800) 454-4055 Email: dsexton@sblhs.org Write: Dawn Sexton, Lincolnland Hospice of SBLHC, 1000 Health Center Dr., Mattoon, IL 61938

Pathways Through Grief

This group provides education and support for anyone experiencing a loss through death. Meets 1st Wed., 7:00-9:00 p.m., Sarah Bush Lincoln Health Center Education Center, 1000 Health Center Dr., Mattoon, Entrance C, Madison Room (first room on right). Call: Dawn Sexton, Bereavement Counselor (800) 454-4055 Email: dsexton@sblhs.org Local Website: sarahbush.org Write: Dawn Macke, Lincolnland Hospice of SBLHC, 1000 Health Center Dr., Mattoon, IL 61938

Macon

Hidden Victims Phone Support

This program provides phone support to people who have survived the death of a significant other from a homicide or DUI fatality. The service is provided by the Victim Services Coordinator of the State's Attorney's Office. The service also provides survivors with individual therapy by a licensed therapist. Survivors must be referred to therapy by the services coordinator. Therapy is provided through grant funds. There is no cost. The incident must have occurred in Macon County. Survivors must cooperate in the prosecution of a case. Survivors who reside outside of Macon County may participate in individual therapy if they are able to come to the program. Call: Melanie Long, Certified Advocate, Victim Services Coordinator (217) 424-1419 Email: mlong@sa-macon-il.us Write: Melanie Long, Macon County State's Attorney's Office, 4th Fl., 253 E. Wood St., Decatur, IL 62523

Vermilion

GriefShare (Southside Church of the Nazarene)

This group provides a 13-week, grief recovery seminar and support group. The program is nondenominational, but does feature biblical teachings for recovery. The focus is on healing. There is a fee for a workbook. Meets Thurs., 6:00-7:30 p.m., fall and spring, Grace Community Church, Fellowship Hall, 1629 King St., Tilton. Call: Diane (217) 274-5349 or church office (217) 446-7876 National Website: griefshare.org Write: Diane Smith, Grace Community Church, 1629 King St., Tilton, IL 61833

DEATH OF A CHILD OR UNBORN CHILD

Champaign

Bereaved Parents of the USA, Champaign-Urbana Chapter

This group provides support for any adults who have lost a child, grandchild, or sibling. The group is the local chapter of the national nonprofit organization, Bereaved Parents of the USA. Meets 2nd Sun., 4:30-6:00 p.m., Stephens Family YMCA, 2501 Fields South Dr., Champaign. Call: Jane and Jerry Pica (217) 373-1321 National Website: bereavedparentsusa.org Write: Jane Pica, 2521 Pinehurst Dr., Champaign, IL 61822

Empty Arms

This grief support network was established by two mothers who experienced the loss of their infants. The group provides understanding and compassion to parents who have suffered the loss of a baby through miscarriage, stillbirth, or infant death at any time in the past. Grieving parents, adult family members, and their friends are invited to learn more about the grief process, to grow through the experience, and to share in each other's lives. Meets 1st Thurs., 6:00-7:30 p.m., Windsor Road Christian Church, 2501 W. Windsor Rd., Champaign. Can be found on Facebook as Empty Arms (Champaign, IL Support Group). Call: Stephanie Helfrich (217) 493-6749 Email: EmptyArms@windsorroad.org

Share Support Group – Presence Covenant

This group is for those experiencing perinatal loss (the loss of an infant during pregnancy, at birth or shortly following birth). There will be brief presentations, but mainly it is a time for parents to discuss

their own experiences of grief and their coping strategies. Meets 3rd Weds. 5:00-6:00 p.m. alternating each month between Presence Covenant Medical Center in Urbana and Presence United Samaritans Medical Center in Danville. Please call for more information and to register. Call: Dorey Riegel (217) 337-4712 Urbana or Andrew Martin (217) 443-5265 Danville Email: vera.duncanson@presencehealth.org

McLean

Compassionate Friends – Bloomington/Normal Chapter

This group is a national, self-help support organization offering friendship, understanding, and hope to families grieving the death of a child of any age, from any cause. There is no religious affiliation and no fees are charged. All bereaved family members are welcome. Contact The Compassionate Friends national office for current local meeting information. Call: National Office of The Compassionate Friends (877) 969-0010 Email: nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org National Website: compassionatefriends.org

SURVIVORS OF SUICIDE

Champaign

Survivors of Suicide Loss Support Group

The purpose of this group is to come together to share our unique, yet common, experience as people who have a common story of losing a friend or loved one to death by suicide. Facilitators are trained by American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, and attendance is ongoing for as long as is helpful. There is no fee, however, an initial orientation interview is required before joining. MEETS: 2nd Monday of each month, from 6:00-7:30 PM. Currently the group meets online. A Zoom link will be sent by email after the initial interview. Email: Diane Fall at survivorsofsuicideloss.cu@gmail.com

Peoria

Survivors of Suicide Grief Support Group (Peoria)

This group provides support to anyone who is grieving over a death by suicide. It does not provide support for those who have attempted suicide. The group is not for children or adolescents. Group literature is available. Call: Rev. Eimo Hinrichs (309) 697-3342 Email: eimopat@aol.com Write: Rev. Eimo Hinrichs, 5032 W. Burns Ave., Bartonville, IL 61607

Good News!

Family Service conducted a workshop on “Methods to Enhance your Communication Skills” on June 22, 2022. Here is some of the feedback that we have received so far:

“It helped me with the refresh of the seven basic steps of interacting with those we serve”.

“The “real life” mock scenarios presented were really good.”

“It helped me get feedback when I volunteered. It was awesome.”

“Thank you for a great presentation. It helped me enhance my communication in communicating with others.”

“It will help me to better assist consumers that come into our organization.”

“Peter was awesome (as usual). Love his experience stories and his application in those situations.”

We also got great feedback about how to use Zoom more effectively in the future.



Send us your news!

We would love to hear from group leaders and participants. Do you have a success story to share? Does your group have an upcoming event or anniversary? Would you like us to develop a workshop on a specific topic? Are you available as a workshop presenter? Please contact us at ppatton@familyservicecc.org.

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Education

5 Benefits of Grief and Bereavement Support Groups

“Why don’t you check out a grief support group,” is often offered as a suggestion to people after the loss of a loved one. And it’s not a bad suggestion. Grief and bereavement support groups offer many benefits to participants.

Grief support groups come in a variety of shapes and sizes. Sometimes they are specific to a type of loss or tragedy. They can be less specific, as well. Sometimes sessions are led by a licensed therapist or counselor, or by a religious leader. Sometimes a trained volunteer leads the group. Regardless, the loss of

a loved one is the shared experience that brings the group together. Here are five benefits of a grief support group:

1. Provides Hope

Grief is a journey, with detours and straightaways, starts and stops. While **no two experiences are the same**, there is a shared experience of loss. Gathering in a group allows people who are early in their journey to connect with those who are much further along. Meeting with and talking to others who have experienced a similar loss shows that it's possible to feel joy again. For those further along in their healing process, sharing such reassurance can provide important affirmation to themselves, and confirm that the group is a helpful resource for others.

2. You are not alone.

Perhaps the biggest benefit of a grief support group is the reminder that you are not alone. Grieving can be terribly lonely and isolating, especially when everyone around you seems to be “getting on with their lives.” By attending a support group, you may find that other people have experiences, feelings and struggles that are similar to your own. When your grief is overwhelming, the support group community says, “We’ve been there. We understand you.” This is a powerful statement at a critical time.

3. A Different Perspective

As we mentioned above – and cannot reiterate enough – **no two grieving journeys are the same**. However, those who have experienced a similar loss may have valuable advice and suggestions, critical insights, or a different outlook to share. By listening and learning, you may come away with some useful perspectives to help you move along on your grief journey.

4. Giving Back

Giving back to others grounds people with a sense of purpose and meaning. This altruism can serve as a helpful tool in the healing process. When you participate in a grief support group, you’ll receive advice, but you also share your story and inspire others, too. Often we don’t realize how far along on our own journey we truly are until we guide and support someone on her or his journey.

5. A Sense of Belonging

We, as humans, have an innate need to belong, to be part of a tribe or group. This survival instinct has served us well for thousands of years. Indeed, studies show that a sense of belonging can contribute to our overall happiness. Following a loss, you may feel alone or left out, and different than others because of your grief. Finding a group that understands and accepts you can be an important step in your healing. No one wants to be in the grief club, but once you’re in the club, you may find comfort in surrounding yourself with other members.

Grief Support Groups: Positives and Pitfalls

after the death of a loved one. People generally consider support groups to be a reliable and valid recommendation and many would claim they’ve been helpful to them in dealing with their grief. Grief support groups provide many potential benefits in addition to the reality that they’re available in many communities, usually have no associated cost, and require little commitment from attendees.

There are many people who attend a support group and quickly realize it's a bad fit and others who never even consider attending in the first place. Also, it's hard to know what types of support groups a person will have access to in their community. The following are just a few ways that support groups vary...

- Attitude and culture
- Structure
- Led by a peer vs. mental health professional.
- Attendance is good vs. spotty
- Members are consistent vs. changing
- Focused on specific loss vs. general
- Focused on advocacy and action vs. grief experience

Here is a non-exhaustive list of reasons why this sometimes happens. Note: If you make it to the end of the post you'll see that these negatives lie on a continuum. On the other side of the continuum, many of these negatives are actually positives.

Potential Pitfalls

Overwhelming:

It can be helpful to be in the presence of someone else's emotions, but sometimes it can be too much. When you're feeling vulnerable yourself, you might not be in a good place to experience another person's anger, sadness, regret, guilt, etc. Keep an eye on how you're feeling in response to others; maybe you'll find it's too soon for you or maybe you'll realize you're just having an off day,

Discouraging:

It is common for people to attend support groups looking for guidance, hope, and reassurance. Those early on in their grief especially may be looking for evidence that things get easier. Attending a group with this expectation may lead to feelings of hopelessness when others in the group, especially those further along in their grief, are still expressing pain, frustration, and negativity.

What people need to keep in mind is bad days can still happen years later. Also, people who are generally doing well in other areas of their life may use the support group as the one place where they *can* still talk about their pain and their loss.

Therapeutic Expectations:

It's important to remember that support groups are not the same as therapy. Although group leaders are sometimes mental health professionals, often they are not. If you're looking for a more formal therapeutic approach, you may want to consider talking to a mental health professional.

Incorrect Information/Bad Advice:

If it happens at the grocery store, why wouldn't it happen in a group where *everyone* is grieving? Although you'll see there is a benefit in the wisdom of others, there can also be a lot of bad information about what is normal, what to expect, and how to cope.

Alcoholics Anonymous has a good solution to this problem, in that they emphasize their collective experience, strength, and hope. Take advice with a grain of salt, if it seems to fit for you – great! If not, try and focus on learning from the experiences of others and finding hope and strength in their support.

Judgment:

I think most people attend support groups with the expectation that it will be a safe, judgment-free zone. In reality, even amongst people with similar types of losses, there can be a lot of negativity, insensitivity, judgment, and comparing.

Negative comments and judgments can be especially damaging when there isn't a strong leader to make sure the comments are addressed. Often if you look a little further you'll see that it's a person's grief talking, but when not addressed the comments may stay with the verbally assaulted. If this does happen, it may be left up to you to either address the comments or shrug them off.

People:

This sounds really harsh, but sometimes all it takes is one person to derail an entire group. The monopolizer, the know-it-all, the interrupter, the inconsiderate, and the excessively negative person can easily reduce a groups chances of ever being seen as a safe, open, non-judgmental, supportive and constructive environment. Unfortunately, all I have to say about this is that it happens and it can take extreme tact to work with certain personality types.

Culture:

Lastly, it does happen from time to time that a support group takes on a certain identity or chooses to identify with certain beliefs. New members may feel subtle pressure to identify with ways of thinking such as, *“ours is the worst kind of loss”*, *“life will never be normal”*, or *“no one else understands.”*

Although there is a benefit in having a group to identify with, be careful that you are not adopting outlooks that keep you stuck or cause you to close yourself off from people outside the group.

Potential Positives

Alright, now that that's out of the way let's talk about the positives related to grief support groups. As we've noted, support groups are all so unique and different and so are the people in them. For the purposes of this discussion, we'll borrow insight in Irvin Yalom's [The Theory and Practice of Group Psychotherapy](#).

Yalom's text focuses on therapeutic groups, which are different from support groups (group therapy is more structured and led by a therapist). But Yalom notes that even when groups look different, if they share similar goals, then they rely on the same “therapeutic factors” to effect change. Again, he was speaking within the context of group therapy, but we could argue that therapeutic groups and support groups share similar goals and the ideal support group would share a few (but not all) of the same “therapeutic factors”.

Instillation of Hope:

In a support group, people in the acute phase of grief have contact with those who are much further along in their healing. In fact, groups are often led by people who have been through a loss themselves. Group members who are doing well and finding new ways to heal can provide hope to those who are new to grief and show that it's possible to feel joy again (among other things). Also, not only might hope be instilled in general, but in some instances, more senior group members might prove the group's efficacy and provide reassurance to others that the support group itself is a positive and helpful tool.

Universality:

One of the best things about attending a grief support group is the reminder that you are not alone. Grief can feel very lonely and isolating, especially when no one else around you seems to be grieving. Although no two people experience grief in the exact same way, by attending a support group you may find that other people have experiences, feelings, and struggles that are similar to your own. When you feel totally alone and misunderstood by the world, the support group community can provide you with a haven of understanding.

Imparting Information:

Those who have been through experiences similar to your own may have great insight, direct advice, helpful suggestions, and understanding. Everyone has a different outlook and take on grief and, although you might not want to take all suggestions offered, they each help you to fine tune and better understand your outlook and approach.

Altruism:

There is healing in helping and giving. Support groups not only provide members with the opportunity to receive advice and support but to give it as well. You will learn a lot about yourself, life and other people in your grief; support groups provide you an opportunity to use your wisdom to help others. Often people don't realize how much they have learned or how well they're truly doing until they find themselves guiding and supporting someone else in their grief struggles.

Group Cohesiveness:

Humans have an inherent desire to belong. It feels good to be a part of a group and to feel accepted and validated. When you consider the idea that [belonging can impact your sense of happiness and well being](#) and then consider the reality that experiencing the death of a loved one can make you feel different, alone and isolated, you realize just how valuable the experience of belonging to a group can be. Grief is not a club anyone wants to belong to; once you're in it though, there is a great benefit in surrounding yourself with other members.

