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## Benefits of Therapeutic Grief Support Groups

Because we live in a death-dying society, we are generally unprepared to deal with grief. This lack of knowledge leads to fears among the bereaved that something is terribly wrong with them or they are not coping well, when, in fact, their grief responses are quite normal.

### Participation in a support group helps participants chart the unfamiliar course of grief.

1. Children, teens, and parents find a safe space to talk about the difficult feelings of grief with people who understand.
2. The grieving process is normalized as children, teens, and parents interact with others experiencing similar losses.
3. Group members no longer feel isolated as they meet others experiencing similar loss and sadness.
4. Group members have a shared bond of understanding, requiring no lengthy explanations.
5. Participants gain hope as they meet others who are further along in the process.
6. Group members learn about typical grief responses and effective coping skills.
7. Parents/caregivers learn about grief responses in children and how to respond to support their children.
8. Group members feel accepted, supported, and validated by members of their group.
9. Communication between children and parents is enhanced as the entire family learns how to express their feelings more openly.
10. Behavior problems are lessened as teens and children get their needs met and learn more effective ways of communicating their needs.

