



SAMPLE OPENING AND CLOSING STATEMENTS AND SUPPORT GROUP GUIDELINES

SAMPLE OPENING STATEMENT (Adapted from Omega Emotional Support Services)

Each of us comes to this group with a common sorrow. Our pain can feel quite intense at times, especially when it seems there is no one to help us carry it. Perhaps the other people we love are carrying their own burdens and aren't always available to help. Or perhaps we feel we have to be strong in order to help someone else carry on. Today, let us use our time together to share our concerns, feelings, and experiences. We come to this group to look to one another for support.

At different times, each of us will need something from the group, and each of us will have something to give. One member may need a safe place to open up, perhaps even to cry. Someone else may want silence to formulate thoughts or to make sense of their feelings. Still another may need encouragement to tell their own story. We can help one another by listening without judging, by asking questions without giving advice, and by sharing our own experiences. And we agree to hold in confidence the many things that are shared here.

Each of us has a different way of handling our grief, and our goal is to give and receive support for our unique journey. With this support, we believe that we can pick up the pieces ourselves and even live more richly because of the gift of compassionate hearts.

SAMPLE CLOSING STATEMENT

We have come together with open hearts and open minds to compassionately share our grief. We know that life is irrevocably different since our loved one has died. We also know that no one can replace our loved one. We struggle to accept this pain, and we seek the courage to face this tragedy. Knowing that we are not alone, we believe that together we can find help in healing our wounded hearts and in rebuilding our lives. Until we meet again, we send each other thoughts of courage, strength, and peace.



SAMPLE GUIDELINES

The following guidelines are meant to help our group feel emotionally safe and productive.

1. Please arrive on time (if you arrive late, just come in, and please do your best to join the group without interrupting the flow of conversation or mood of the group).
2. Remember the primary rule of support groups: adults learn best by hearing the experiences of others, rather than by giving or receiving advice. Our goal is to support each individual as they find their own way of dealing with their loss.
3. Try not to assume that you know what someone else is thinking or feeling. Instead, just ask.
4. Share the airtime of the group.
5. In order for everyone to feel safe, we need to trust that whatever is shared in the group will be kept confidential. It's fine to discuss your thoughts and feelings about the group with someone who is not a member, but please don't reveal the details of what any individual has shared or disclose the names of people who have attended the group.
6. Bear in mind that being in the group may feel awkward or even painful at times, particularly in the beginning. This is natural. Be patient and gentle with yourself and your fellow group members.
7. May you feel seen, heard, and understood. May you find warmth, comfort, and understanding here. Grieve fully. Heal well.