

The Benefits of Introducing our Walk & Talk Bereavement Group and Grief Cafe

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Background

Grief Café's and similar peer-based support have emotional benefits, improving mental health and wellbeing if people attend regularly and help to build community connection (Laranjeira et al, 2023). St Francis Hospice introduced two monthly drop-in bereavement groups in September 2024: a Grief Café and a Walk & Talk Bereavement Group. From January 2025, both groups were opened to any bereaved adult in the community. Access to the wider bereavement service remained limited to those with a hospice connection.

Setting up our groups

May 2024 – we reviewed literature around the positive impact of social support on bereavement

June 2024 – we liaised with colleagues in other hospices who developed similar peer support-based groups

July 2024 – we developed a project plan for the development and pilot of a Grief Café and Walk and Talk Bereavement support Group

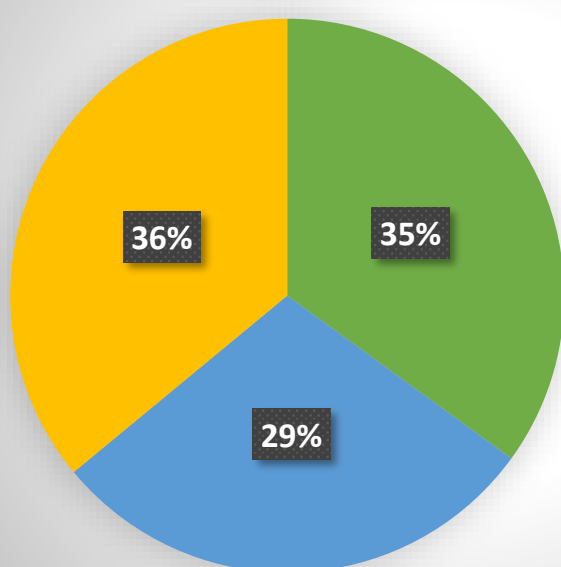
September 2024 – both groups were advertised across our social media and website and started this month

January 2025 – After successful pilot, both groups opened to all bereaved adults in the community



Review and feedback

Attendees



■ Support group was only part of service clients engaged with

■ Attend while on waiting list for individual support

■ Began to attend as part of finishing earlier with individual support

I wasn't going to come today, but I'm glad I pushed myself. I like how everyone looks out for each other and listens to each other. One minute we're laughing together and the next we're crying.

'Meeting others who understood what I was going through was such a relief.'



'A very welcoming and safe space to speak about our experiences. It was a lovely peaceful place with lots of support'

Conclusion

The review demonstrates the value of accessible, community-based peer support for bereaved adults. They provide support while people are waiting for individual services, offer an alternative for those who do not engage with one-to-one support, and provide ongoing connection as individual support ends. They have become an important part of the bereavement service, extending support beyond traditional one-to-one interventions and helping bereaved people build sustainable networks of peer support.