

CCNW Support Groups

An Overview

What is a support group? CCNW support groups are nonjudgmental, caring and supportive community meetings focused on the shared experience of managing life with cancer. Simply by listening and supporting each other we gain hope, a feeling of empowerment and a sense of community. What makes this different from a therapy group or a casual friend discussion is our focus on being supportive listeners and allowing each individual to control what they share with the group. Therefore, we refrain from asking probing questions to satisfy our own curiosity, and we don't focus on making suggestions, problem solving or giving advice.

Facilitators: All CCNW support groups are facilitated by one of our oncology counselors, who is licensed in Clinical Social Work (LICSW). Their role is to help everyone feel comfortable and to manage time and the flow of the group by utilizing the group guidelines. These guidelines are all based on helping people feel as safe and respected as possible.

Confidentiality: For privacy, we ask you to keep all the personal details that people share to yourself. It is okay to share resources, ideas and your "take-aways," but we want to protect people's privacy. Please remain in our group meeting area and do not wander around the clinic before or after our meeting to protect the privacy of patients in the clinic.

Respect: Please remember we come from a wide range of backgrounds and life experiences. Be mindful of things that others may find offensive, including profanity. Please refrain from giving advice, telling people what they "should" do or judging the choices of others.

Minimizing Distractions: Please silence your cell phone; our support group is a phone-free time. If you need to take a call, it's okay to step out of the group. Please refrain from using your phone, including texting, during the group as this can make others feel you're not listening. Additionally, there are privacy concerns about being photographed or recorded with a cell phone.

Welcoming new members: Every time we have a first-time member, you'll be asked to introduce yourself at the start of your turn by sharing your first name and the type of cancer you're dealing with as a patient or caregiver. We do this to help break the ice, give everyone a frame of reference, and to help members feel comfortable sharing their story. To avoid overwhelming new members, please refrain from focusing your introduction on all the worst highlights of your experience.

Time Management: We encourage members to arrive on time to minimize interruptions and distractions while people are sharing. We close the group to new arrivals 15 minutes after our start time. We divide the amount of time each person has to talk as evenly as possible. You don't have to share; it's okay to "pass" on your turn. When it is someone's turn, they have the floor. During this time, avoid interrupting or asking probing questions that may put them on the spot. If a member says something that really resonates with you or you'd like to share what you found helpful in a similar situation, feel free comment on that when it's your turn. For meetings with very small turnout, we will generally give each person 10-15 minutes and then adjourn early. If you need to leave early, please let your facilitator know so that we can be sure you get time to share if you'd like before you must leave.

Challenges with medical providers: It is important to talk about challenges you've had with medical providers, however, if you've had problems or negative experiences with a doctor or clinic we ask you not to name them to avoid generating fear with other patients.

When you're sick: We understand there will be times you will be unable to attend due to your current health condition. If there is any chance you have a contagious illness please stay home to recover. If you are having any active cold symptoms, please wear a mask when you come to the clinic. We want to protect others with a weakened immune system.

Adherence to guidelines: If you are having a day when you don't feel able to follow the group guidelines, please consider staying home. The facilitator will interject as respectfully as possible if our guidelines are not being followed. Members who are continuously unable to follow these guidelines may be asked to not attend.

Helpful Information and Contacts: Individual counseling is available through CCNW even if you are not receiving any other care at CCNW. We accept most insurance plans, including Medicare and Medicaid. To make an appointment please call (509) 228-1000.

*Questions? Please contact
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