

A Guide to Rebuilding Shattered Lives

Guidelines for Participants / Mourner's Bill of Rights

Guidelines for Participants

1. As survivors of homicide victims, we are here to help not hurt each other, and in that vein we ask that our conduct is one of respect for each participant's personal beliefs, religious beliefs and opinions, and that we refrain from using offensive or inappropriate language.
2. We will respect the rights of all to confidentiality. Thoughts, feelings and experiences shared by the group will stay within the group, which means that members have the freedom and confidence to share their thoughts and feelings.
3. We will recognise that feelings are neither right nor wrong.
4. We will not be judgemental or critical of other members, and will show acceptance.
5. We have the right to/or not to share our grief and/or feelings. We should make some spoken contribution to the meeting, but if we wish just to "be there" at times the group will accept that.
6. We come to the group with empathy (comprehending the impact having experienced the situation), not sympathy (sharing another persons' thoughts or emotions).
7. We appreciate that each person's grief is unique to that person. We will respect and accept what members have in common and what is particular to each individual.
8. We respect the right of all the members to have equal time to express themselves and to do so without interruption.
9. We acknowledge that each person is the authority on their own experience.
10. We will refrain from asking questions or cross-talking when other participants are sharing their stories, thoughts, or feelings while in the circle respecting that each participant has the right to share as much, or as little, as they want to say about each week's topic.

The Mourner's Bill of Rights

By Alan D. Wolfelt, Ph.D.

1. You have the right to experience your own unique grief.
2. You have the right to talk about your grief.
3. You have the right to feel a multitude of emotions.
4. You have the right to be tolerant of your physical and emotional limits.
5. You have the right to experience "grief-bursts."
6. You have the right to make use of ritual.
7. You have the right to embrace your spirituality.
8. You have the right to search for meaning.
9. You have the right to treasure your memories.
10. You have the right to move toward your grief and heal.

CPOMC – Canadian Parents of Murdered Children and Survivors of Homicide Victims