How to Develop and Manage Virtual Grief Support Groups
March 26, 2020

Pamela Gabbay, EdD, FT, The Satori Group

Please note: The information provided on this program is intended for educational purposes only.
If you or a loved one needs professional support, please contact the Hospice Foundation of America at 800-854-3402.

Speaker Bio
Pamela Gabbay, EdD, FT, is the co-founder of the Satori Group, which provides education, management and consulting. She is co-author, along with Andy McKeel, of Understanding and Supporting Bereaved Children: A Practical Guide for Professionals. Dr. Gabbay has worked with grieving families for the past 20 years. She has conducted grief groups, worked one-on-one with grieving children, and worked extensively with bereaved adults. Additionally, Dr. Gabbay has conducted nationwide presentations and webinars for numerous organizations, including the National Alliance for Grieving Children and Hospice Foundation of America.
These Changing and Unpredictable Times

- Life as we know it has changed, at least for now
- At this time, we cannot meet face-to-face with our groups
- Physical versus social distancing
- Important to continue to offer support and care

This presentation is in the Zoom webinar format, not in the actual Zoom meeting format that you will use for your support groups.

Moving from In Person to Online

This presentation will discuss:
- How to use Zoom video technology for your groups
- How to facilitate and manage an online grief support group
- How to prepare your group members for a virtual group

Zoom Video Technology

Covered in this section:
- Various price plans and options
  - Techsup offers a discount
- Creating an account
  - Desktop
  - Mobile app
- Scheduling a meeting
- Sending out an email invitation
- Hosting a meeting
- Breakout rooms
Assigning participants to rooms

To assign participants to your rooms, select Assign next to the room you wish to assign participants to and select participants you want to assign to that room. Repeat this for each room.

Preparing Breakout Rooms

When assigning participants to rooms, you can rearrange the participants. If you prefer, click the arrows in the corner of the room to rearrange the participants. You can also rearrange the breakout rooms and rearrange the participants.
Zoom Training Videos and Resources

- For more detailed information about Zoom, please visit: https://zoom.us
- Live Zoom trainings: https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/36003927202
- Creating and using breakout rooms: https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/360029527911-Managing-Video-Breakout-Rooms
- Using Zoom in-meeting chat: https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/206476313-
- Zoom Help Center: https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us

Things to Consider

- Test your technology before using it (audio and video)
- Practice using Zoom before you host a meeting or support group
- Practice with other people (your co-facilitator, friends, family)
- Practice being the host of a group
- If possible, have a tech person to help with every group
- Pay attention to your camera position and lighting
- Don’t get too close to the screen
- Practice looking at the camera when speaking
- Might want to record yourself and watch the playback
Preparing Your Group Participants

- Contact group members
- Send online group information
  - There is no charge to have a Zoom account to join meetings
  - How to download Zoom on a computer or device
  - How to get help if they are having issues setting up Zoom
- Informed consent for online support groups
- Recommend putting together a How-To Tip Sheet for your group members
- Information about virtual group norms (cameras, confidentiality)
- This is new for most people, it will take getting accustomed to

Group Leaders and Group Facilitators

- Treat these virtual group meetings just as you would an in-person meeting
- Very important to have a co-facilitator
- Logistics of ensuring confidentiality; be cognizant of privacy so that no one outside of the meeting can hear you
  - Be aware of noise in your home (family members, pets, phones)
- Think about your background and your setting
- Put yourself on mute when you are not speaking

Virtual Meeting Etiquette – Group Members

- To ensure confidentiality, encourage members to be in a private space or separate room
- Background and setting
  - Noise (family members, pets, TV, other devices)
  - Have participants put themselves on mute when they are not speaking (phone and/or video)
- Try to minimize multitasking
Tips about Names

- You can replace a participant’s phone number with their name (if they are calling in on the phone and are not on video)
- Important to use group members’ names when speaking to them
- During the group, encourage each person to say their name before they speak; this will help with group cohesion and connectivity

Facilitating an Online Grief Support Group

- Requires a greater level of facilitation than in-person meetings
- Realize that it might feel a bit awkward at first because you are not accustomed to holding a grief support group in this way
- Facilitator/Group Leader will need to be very active to ensure everyone has a chance to speak up and to be heard
- Move the conversation along if you need to
- Might need to actively invite participation
- Create space for everyone to share
- Begin and end on time

Meeting Opening

- Welcome everyone
- Open with talking about these uncertain times that can produce anxiety and fear of the unknown
- Offer virtual comfort
- Have introductions and a go round just as you would in an in-person meeting
- Do a check-in with each person
Meeting Sharing

- Open it up for conversation
- How is everyone coping with the uncertainty?
- How is their grief being impacted by what is going on in the world?
- What type of support do they have in their family or community?
- Are they able to get the supplies they need?
- How are they staying connected in this time of physical distancing?
- Have plenty of discussion topics ready
- Realize that you might share more than you normally would in your role as a facilitator

Meeting Closing

- Discuss the next online meeting date and time
- Encourage group members to reach out between groups if they need to
- Remind everyone to take good care of themselves during these trying and difficult times
- Encourage group members to stay connected to family and friends via the phone, video chat, or social media
- Have a closing ritual that signifies connection and comfort

Questions?

Pamela Gabbay, EdD, FT
The Saton Group
www.thesatorigroup.org
Pamela.gabbay@thesatorigroup.org
Please note: The information provided on this program is intended for educational purposes only.

If you or a loved one needs professional support, please contact Hospice Foundation of America at 800-854-3402.

Upcoming HFA Webinars
Noon—1:30pm ET
April 3: Funerals During COVID-19 (free webinar, 1.5 CEs will be available)
Kenneth J. Doka, PhD, MDiv
April 21: Using the Dual Process Model of Coping with Bereavement to Improve Your Practice
Maggie Stroebe, PhD and Henk Schut, PhD
moderated by Kenneth J. Doka, PhD, MDiv
June 16: The Evolving Role of the Trained Death Doula in End of Life Care
Alua Arthur, JD

For more information, visit: hospicefoundation.org/Education/UpcomingPrograms

Online Bereavement Support Resource
Journeys Newsletter is now available electronically

The April and May issues of Journeys is available as a PDF for unlimited use for $250 per issue. This online version makes it easy for you to forward these issues to your email distribution lists.
HFA's 2020 Living with Grief® Program
Intimacy and Sexuality During Illness and Loss
Live broadcast: September 24, 2020, 1:00pm to 3:00pm ET

Expert Panelists: Carrie Arnold, PhD, FT, M.Ed., RSW, CCC; Alua Arthur, JD; John G. Cagle, PhD, MSW; Kenneth J. Doka, PhD, M.Div.

Copyright © 2020 Hospice Foundation of America. All rights reserved.