



What is a HUGG Suicide Bereavement Support Group

We provide peer support groups, where you can meet with other people who have been bereaved by suicide. They provide an opportunity to listen, to share, to ask questions and to connect with others. Groups are led by a small team of volunteers; all have been bereaved by suicide themselves. The groups meet around 2 hours. We provide a safe space to share our loss, without fear of being judged, criticized, contradicted or condemned for having these feelings. Groups also offer a small resource library and can share information about local sources of support.

We know it takes courage to come to a group. You won't have to talk if you don't want to, many people don't, particularly the first time that they come. You don't have to come again, you don't even have to stay for the whole session if you decide it's not for you. But most people return after their first meeting and find that over time, they gain the confidence to speak about themselves. After a while, they may also find they can offer support to others. If you come to a group but decide that it is not the right thing for you at this time, you are welcome to return later when you feel ready.

The first step is to contact us, and we can answer any questions, help you decide if it is the right thing for you to try, and give you the exact location of your nearest group. **We are free self-referral service, however, we do not allow walk-ins so please register in advance.** You can also attend a HUGG group virtually, if you prefer to do so. The Group Facilitators will look out for you when you arrive and make you feel welcome.

Unfortunately, we don't yet have enough groups to meet everyone's demands, so if you are unable to get to a group, we recommend that you email support@hugg.ie to let us know where there is a need for our suicide bereavement support groups or visit our [Suicide Bereavement Support Services](#) page to see if there are any other organisations working locally that can support you. We are always opening new groups, keep an eye on our website www.HUGG.ie and our social media pages for announcements of new HUGG suicide bereavement support groups.

Questions you may have

Who goes to groups?

T: (+353) 1 513 4048 E: info@hugg.ie W: www.hugg.ie



All sorts of people. Our only restriction is that you must be over 18 and have been bereaved by suicide. You will find a real mixture of people, some who may have been bereaved recently, others who may have been bereaved many years ago.

Is a group right for me?

Everyone and their grief are as different as a fingerprint so only you can decide if it is the right support for you right now. Support groups are not right for everyone – and we are not all ready to attend them at the same time. When you contact us we will be able to answer any questions you may have and will help you to understand if it this would be beneficial for you. If you don't find our support group helpful, you don't have to stay or return. Or, you could also find that the group might be more helpful for you to revisit later in your grieving process.

What do you talk about?

The topics discussed vary from each meeting but often includes people sharing their story, how they are feeling, what has happened since their last group visit, questions about inquests and the shared experiences and emotional challenges such as flashbacks, supporting children or facing holidays and anniversaries. There is healing in talking, listening and knowing that we are not alone in our grief and in sharing our own experiences.

I don't know if I can face a group of people.

Most of us are nervous when we attend our first group meeting, it can take a lot of courage. But remember, you don't have to talk at all if you don't want to – many find that they can't at their first session. Remember, everyone in the room will have experienced bereavement(s) by suicide – so, it is a place where you can know that others have some understanding of what you are experiencing and that they are not judging you.

Is it a counselling session?

No – groups are about peer support, connecting people who have been bereaved so that they can support and share with each other. Some people attend groups as well as counselling sessions. If you want to find out more about counselling services, talk with your GP or have a look at other organisations on our website.

Who leads the HUGG group meeting?

Our groups are led by our trained volunteers. We typically have a team of 3 volunteers supporting each group. All our group volunteers have been bereaved by suicide themselves, not less than 3 years previously and have been full trained by HUGG in how to facilitate a HUGG group.

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Do I have to pay?

No. All groups are free to attend. As a charity, donations are always welcome, but there is no expectation or obligation to do so.

Is there a waiting list?

We do not have waiting lists for our existing HUGG groups. Simply complete the **Join A Group** form on www.HUGG.ie or email support@HUGG.ie or you can call 01 513 4048 and we can assist you.

How many times can I attend a HUGG group?

You can come as often as you wish. There is no timeline on grief. Some people come more frequently initially and then attend less regularly over time. Others attend every meeting and others come sporadically. Some people stop coming but after a time something changes or happens which gives rise to feelings that they would like to talk about. Some people return even though they are feeling much stronger because they want support newer group members and want share their experiences and hope for softer times.

Does it matter that my bereavement happened a long time ago?

We know that the impact of a bereavement by suicide is long lasting and that many people do not find an opportunity to talk about it until many years after their loss. You are welcome to attend our groups regardless of how long it has been since your bereavement occurred.

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