SUPPORT GROUP GUIDELINES

MAINTAIN CONFIDENTIALITY

- It is essential that we create and maintain a safe space for group members to share personal thoughts, experiences, and opinions. What is said in the group, stays in the group. This includes not repeating what was said in group or talking about members in places where others may overhear.
- For virtual groups, facilitators will explain the confidentiality protections the group will follow. These may include keeping Zoom video on and audio connected, using headphones to ensure audio is only heard by participants, and not recording group sessions. There may be options for participants who want anonymity.

RESPECT BOUNDARIES

- Actively listen to what others say. Speak with compassion and without judgment.
- Allow space for others to speak. This includes letting one person speak at a time, holding silence to give a speaker time to think and share, not interrupting, and allowing everyone to have a turn to share.
- Support others without trying to "fix." This includes not giving advice and not rescuing (like giving a tissue or hug, supplying an answer for someone, etc.). These can interfere with their healing process.
- When sharing your opinion, refrain from trying to persuade others to agree with your opinion. Differences of opinion are welcome and respected.
- Keep your sharing focused on your own thoughts and feelings. Use "I" or "me" statements.
- Do not discuss members who are absent.

COMMIT TO YOUR HEALING & TO THE GROUP

- Attend each session, show up on time, complete all homework and journaling, and participate in the group discussion. Share from your heart and let down walls. This takes time and trust and may be easier for some people and more challenging for others.
- Trust in the process. Don't compare your progress to someone else's.
- Please note that this support group does not replace professional therapy. If you are currently in therapy, we recommend that you notify your therapist and that they support your participation in this support group.
- Each group session is valuable to your personal healing and to the group support. Your facilitator will inform the group of the number of allowed absences. If you will miss a session, notify your facilitator ahead of time and follow your group's protocol, which may include scheduling a make up.
- Do not use alcohol or drugs while preparing for and participating in the group sessions. These can interfere with your ability to feel and grieve and can create an unsafe space for others. If you need help in this area, please contact your facilitator outside of the group. Your facilitator can connect you to the help you deserve.

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