YOU ARE LOVED

You Are Loved Bereavement Support Groups
What to Expect

What is a Bereavement Group?

When you lose a loved one suddenly and unexpectedly, the grieving period can be particularly tough. For LGBTQ+ people, mainstream bereavement services often fall short in understanding the nuances and sometimes unique circumstances of the LGBTQ+ community. We are providing a free, weekly, LGBTQ+ led and judgement-free space to support each other through the grief of having lost a loved one to suicide or drugs (or other sudden death).

We will collaborate to create a secure group, providing you with a safe space to share your experiences and discuss relevant issues. The group will be led by experienced bereavement therapists who will offer resources and insights to foster emotional resilience and growth, with support from a network of You Are Loved volunteers. The groups will comprise bereaved people at different stages of their grief journey. By connecting with this kind of peer support, the groups can reduce the isolation that can be caused by bereavement, as well as alleviate emotional distress and suffering.

Who Can Attend?

All people from across the LGBTQ+ community going through the grief of having lost a loved one to suicide or drugs (or other sudden death).

We appreciate the strong need to share what has happened, particularly in the early months and years of our loss. However, to ensure we keep our groups as safe and supportive as possible, we ask that everyone share time equally during the sessions. We also request that no graphic details be shared, as these can be triggering and traumatising for everyone.

When are the Groups?

We will be running two groups a week. The groups are ongoing, and participants can join at any point and attend as many groups as they wish. The groups will follow the same format, with different topics and weekly sharing time.

Location	Online via Zoom	In Person in London
Day	Tuesdays	Wednesdays
Time	19:30 to 21:00	19:00 to 21:00
Facilitator	Octavia or Shane	Octavia or Shane

How large will the groups be?

It will depend on the demand each week. The maximum capacity for each group is 12 people. In addition to the group facilitator, each group will also be attended by 1 or 2 You Are Loved volunteers. Each volunteer will have had lived experiences of losing a loved one themselves and their role is to support both the group facilitator and the group members.

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How Can I Attend?

If you are interested in attending one of our groups, please fill out the registration form. We will then contact you to arrange a short interview to explore your expectations, resilience, and readiness to join a group. **It is generally advised that there should be a diminishment of trauma and a capacity to listen to others before attending any bereavement support group.**

You will be asked to consent that a member of You Are Loved can contact you in the following circumstances and for your preferred method of contact (email, text, phone etc);

- If a session needs to be cancelled for any reason.
- To ensure your safety, if you left a session quickly or appeared distressed.
- If we have not seen or heard from you for two weeks.
- To contact relevant services in the event of a serious concern about the risk of harm to self or others.

Once confirmed to join the group, you will receive a group member agreement for signature and the location information or the link for a Zoom. You must read this agreement carefully, sign it, and return it to confirm that you understand the agreement and are comfortable with our proposed way of working. If you have any questions about this agreement, please don't hesitate to contact the office or facilitators.

What Happens in a Group?

Each group will follow the draft structure below, although the facilitators reserve the right to follow a different schedule if appropriate. The below is for an in-person group; the online groups will be 30 minutes shorter.

Time	Activity	Info
6:45pm	**Arrivals & Refreshments**	Facilitators and volunteers will be available to welcome people as they arrive.
7.00pm	**Group Starts**	Introductions and welcome to any new members. Opening statement of the group as a safe, supportive space created for LGBTQ+ individuals to share and process the profound experience of sudden loss and reminding the group of the ground rules.
7.05pm	**Weekly Topic**	Each week, we focus on a specific aspect of grief using a psychoeducation model that combines learning, mutual support, and coping skills development, helping us better understand bereavement while creating space to express, validate, and normalise our experiences together.
7.45pm	**Break**	15 min break in the room for In Person. (10 mins comfort break for online group)
8.00pm	**Return to Group**	Group resets and facilitators open the space for sharing and ensure that each group member who would like to speak, has time to share their story.
8.40pm	**Check Outs**	Sharing time ends and facilitators invite the group to 'check out', naming how people have experienced the group. Endings are important, particularly as the themes discussed can be very emotive. Those who have not had an opportunity to speak have a chance to do so if they wish.

8.55pm	**Closing the Group**	The facilitator or a group member will offer a reading. A poem, or short piece followed by the group sharing a breathing exercise or movement of the body 'ground' participants and preparing them to return to the 'outside world'.
9.00pm	**End**	

You should join the online groups using a desktop computer, laptop, or tablet to ensure the best experience. If you use a mobile phone, you may not be able to see all other participants in the session, which can detract from the group experience for you and other attendees. Please keep your video on throughout the session and your mic muted unless you speak to the group.

Professional Ethics
The facilitators are members of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) and adhere to its code of ethics.

Your data - UK GDPR

We use a cloud-based, secure database to store your data and your clinical notes. Please refer to the UK GDPR regulations on our website.

Evaluation of Service

As part of our quality assurance process and for funding purposes, we monitor and evaluate the service we provide to our clients. You will be sent a feedback form, which we kindly request that you complete after your final group session. Your co-operation and views are greatly appreciated.

Complaints Procedure
If you are dissatisfied or have any concerns about your group work, please discuss this with your facilitator first. If this issue remains unresolved, please contact the Director (using the number provided above or by email to bereavementsupport@youareloved.org.uk) to discuss your concerns.

Please note that You Are Loved is not a crisis service. If you are feeling suicidal or need urgent support, please contact;
- your GP or your local A&E department
- NHS Crisis Line on 0800 917 3333
- Samaritans on 116 123.

You Are Loved Bereavement Group Guidelines

These are the basic "rules" or guidelines for how our groups will run and what is expected.

Abusive Behaviour: All attendees must respect the rest of the group, staff and volunteers. Any abusive behaviour will not be tolerated, and you will be asked to leave.

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Confidentiality: All information shared within the group is kept confidential. Thoughts, feelings, and experiences shared in this group will remain within this group. Please respect others' right to confidentiality and refrain from using the names of fellow participants in discussions outside the group.

Facilitators are professionally required to attend regular supervision and will share anonymised accounts of sessions to ensure appropriate working practice.

If a risk of serious harm or criminality is perceived to you or anyone else, breaking confidentiality and informing the relevant authority may become necessary. When practical, we will always inform you before any break in confidentiality.

Respect: It is essential to respect both your own grief and that of others. Every relationship and loss is unique, and people respond differently.

Freedom of speech: You may choose to share or remain silent. If you feel pressured to talk but don't want to, say so. The group will respect your right to quiet contemplation.

Feelings: Feelings are neither right nor wrong; they just are.

Interrupting: Please make every effort to avoid interrupting when someone else is speaking. We will endeavour to ensure everyone has equal time to express themselves.

Attendance: Please arrive on time. If you decide to leave the group before the session is complete, please be willing to discuss your decision with the group or notify one of the You Are Loved team members.

Avoid "advice giving": Unless a group member requests it explicitly, don't offer advice. If a group member poses a question, share ideas that have helped you in similar situations.

Non-judgement: Recognise that thoughts and feelings are neither right nor wrong. Enter into the thoughts and feelings of other group members without trying to change them.

Drugs and Alcohol: We kindly ask that you do not use drugs or alcohol during group sessions. These substances can impact safety and wellbeing. Disruptive behaviour may result in being asked to leave the group.

Safety & Safeguarding

All facilitators and coordinators of the You Are Loved support groups have undertaken basic safeguarding training to recognise risk and know how to report concerns.

Group members will be provided with signposting for other services, such as the Samaritans' freephone number, should they require further support.