## **Safety Guidelines for Suicide Bereavement Support Groups**

We strive to provide a safe place for people who have experienced a suicide death to share their loss, find ways to understand and make meaning of the suicide death, and express whatever emotions they are feeling, without judgment or criticism. The group can help people feel less isolated and able to share difficult thoughts and ideas with others who understand. In order to help the group provide a safe place the following guidelines are suggested.

1. **Confidentiality**: We want to talk openly about our grief without the concern that our stories will be shared with others. Outside of group, we agree to only talk about our own experiences, not those of the other group members.
2. **Punctuality:** We want our group to start and end on time. We will do our best to arrive on time and will allow for the last few minutes in each group to do a closing ritual.
3. **Listening:** We realize the healing power of being heard. We will listen without interrupting, commenting or interpreting what others are saying.
4. **Sharing:** We are here to share about the suicide death of a significant person(s) and the impact on our lives. We will allow time for each person who wants to share. At times the facilitators may ask us to stop so others will have time to share as well.
5. **Silence:** “I pass” is a safe way for all participants to let the group know they do not wish to share. Each person has the right to pass without questioning. There may be silent times during the group, which can be uncomfortable for some. The quiet time allows for group members to collect their thoughts and process what has been said.
6. **Advising:** We value sharing without people trying to solve our problems or fix it. If we want advice, we’ll ask. We will not give advice unless asked.
7. **Laughter:** We recognize that laughter and humor can be a part of grief. If you are new to the group, you might find it difficult or be irritated by others laughing. We support all genuine emotions and feelings shared in a safe manner.
8. **Alcohol/Drugs:** We agree to not drink alcohol or do drugs before or during the group.
9. **Attendance:** Often our first group is scary, challenging, or does not feel helpful and is not always representative of our grief experience. It is suggested that we attend 2 – 3 groups before making a decision about continuing.
10. **Electronic Devices (cell phones, I-Pods, cameras):** We will turn our phones and I-Pods off or set them to silent during group. If we need to keep them on because we are expecting an important call, we will let the group know ahead of time.