

## SINAI TEMPLE MENTAL HEALTH CENTER

### WHY A BEREAVEMENT GROUP?

We define *grief* as the experience of any combination of psychological, emotional, social, physical, and spiritual reactions to the perception of loss. We are *bereaved* when someone significant in our lives dies. A facilitated bereavement group assists *mourners*, individuals surviving the death of a significant person, in a healing process that addresses the conscious, and unconscious, ways they uniquely experience their grief.

One important factor that influences a mourner's grief reactions is the quality of the relationship the bereaved individual had with their deceased loved one. Many mourners express feeling "broken" or "torn" by their loss. Bereavement can leave mourners feeling "isolated" or "separate" from the world around them. Fundamentally, bereavement groups can ease this suffering by the presence and understanding of others who are experiencing the same distress.

#### BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUPS CAN HELP MOURNERS:

1. Decrease feelings of loneliness and isolation
2. "Normalize" the grief experience as a natural reaction to losing an important loved one
3. Authentically grieve without interference, even from well-intentioned others
4. Facilitate the expression of thoughts and feelings
5. Identify and implement healthy personal coping strategies
6. Individually work through the necessary tasks of mourning
7. Reenter the world with new connections and possible friendships

It is important to consider that "time" does not heal independently. Healing requires active attention to *specific tasks of mourning*, a process through which a mourner identifies and grieves the many nuances of the relationship shared with their loved one prior to death and moves forward in life with new meaning informed by memories and values.