



Thursdays with Bob - Caregiving and Self Care Programs

Intended Audience - Open to the Public

For all members including people living with cancer, family members and significant caregivers. Also open to the public.

Program Description

Thursdays with Bob is a monthly session at Wellspring Calgary where participants gather to reflect on their experiences and share ways to transcend the inevitable times of loss and suffering. Guided by Reverend Bob Glasgow, former Chaplain of the Rockyview Hospital and founder of the Alberta Health Services 'Grief Support Program', this program is designed to stimulate thought and create a safe haven for the expression of emotions that suffering often brings. Participation is optional, but for those who engage, Thursdays with Bob are deeply moving and transformative in nature.

Benefits and Impact

After years of providing grief support and counseling, Bob has come to recognize vital impacts that result when individuals gather together to recognize, name and release emotions commonly associated with loss and suffering. He attests to the following:

- When people gather and share they don't feel as alone in their suffering.
- People draw hope from witnessing each other's courage.
- The expression of emotional pain leads to healthier cognitions.
- Healthier core beliefs about suffering leads to less emotional turmoil and more energy for other aspects of life.

What to Expect at a Session

Bob begins each session by presenting psycho-educational material on a chosen topic related to grieving. He then proceeds to encourage sharing, guiding the conversations by illuminating meaningful insights and ensuring all contributions are honoured. When particularly difficult emotions emerge, they are guided to the surface – and the way is cleared for healthy release. At Thursdays with Bob, hope is ever present and healing is within reach.

Participant Comments

"A topic so often avoided, but so important to address."

"Great to have a place of acceptance here."

"An encouragement that I'm learning to befriend my grief."

"I felt 'fine-tuned', rebalanced to a healthy perspective. It felt pleasant to talk openly about suffering."

What the Research Says:

In a recent study of 188 caregivers who had experienced a loss of their loved one, researchers found that certain factors increased the probability of a caregiver experiencing depression and complicated grief (grief involving significant and functional impairment due to prolonged grief). Such factors included a low education level, a high degree of impairment of the loved one whom they were caring for, and a weak or low social support network. Notably, the weakness or absence of a social support network for the caregiver was associated with increased levels of grief. As such, the authors of the article recommend that caregivers utilize bereavement services such as support groups or bereavement counselling as a means of decreasing grief and preventing complicated grief. (Allen JY, Haley WE, Small BJ, Schonwetter RS, McMillan SC. 2013. Bereavement among Hospice Caregivers of Cancer Patients One year following Loss: Predictors of Grief, Complicated Grief, and Symptoms of Depression. Journal of Palliative Medicine. 16(7):745-751).

Program Frequency:

1 program per month
4 programs per session
Winter, spring/summer, fall

Optimum class size: 12

Related Programs:

Book Discussion Group
Chaplain in Residence
Finding Sanctuary
For Caregivers Only
Men's Group
Tea Group
The Healing Journey
Women's Interest Group