



## FAQ – HOPE AND HEALING GRIEF

### Is Hope and Healing Grief a 12-Step Program?

No. Hope and Healing Grief [HHG] is not affiliated with Alcoholics Anonymous [AA] or any other 12-Step Program. HHG is not built on the 12 Steps of AA, but on the 12 Truths of Hope and Healing Grief.

### What are primary differences between Alcoholics Anonymous and Hope and Healing Grief?

- In AA, the focus is on the problem. The first letter in “AA” stands for “Alcoholics.” The First Step is about powerlessness and unmanageability.
- In HHG, the focus is on the solutions, as noted in the first two letters of HHG – Hope and Healing. We are not addicted to grief; we are healing from it. The First Truth is about becoming honest with our grief and its impact on our lives.
- In short, recognizing that healing from grief is different from recovery from addiction, the 12 Truths are a gentler path to personal renewal and spiritual growth.

### What are other differences between the 12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous and the 12 Truths of Hope and Healing Grief?

Category	12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous	12 Truths of Hope and Healing Grief
<b>Primary Purpose</b>	To achieve sobriety and personal recovery from alcoholism.	To heal from grief and loss, restore hope, and reconnect to life.
<b>Starting Point</b>	Admitting powerlessness over alcohol and life’s unmanageability.	Acknowledging the pain of grief and its impact on life.
<b>Focus</b>	Recovery from harmful behaviors and their consequences.	Emotional and spiritual healing after loss.
<b>Approach to Responsibility</b>	Moral inventory, admission of defects, and making amends.	Honest reflection, self-compassion, and gentle reconnection.
<b>Tone and Language</b>	Direct, accountability-based, focused on surrender and restitution.	Compassionate, tender, focused on presence, healing, and resilience.
<b>View of a Higher Power</b>	A caring all-powerful force to restore sanity and guide recovery.	A caring force greater than ourselves to help us connect with ourselves, others, and all we experience.
<b>Type of Spirituality</b>	Surrender-based, sometimes monotheistic, but adaptable.	Gentle, inclusive, spiritual-but-not-religious, transcendent.
<b>Definition of Progress</b>	The 12 Steps are a sequential program of recovery; the steps are worked in order.	The 12 Truths are sequential, but are guideposts rather than boxes that must be checked.



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Category	12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous	12 Truths of Hope and Healing Grief
Outcome Goal	Lifelong sobriety, transformation, and service to others.	Ongoing healing, restored hope, connection, and shared support.
Audience	Individuals with alcoholism (addiction) seeking sobriety.	Anyone experiencing grief, loss, or profound life changes.

### **In the First Truth of Hope and Healing Grief, what does “pain was shaping our lives” mean?**

“Pain was shaping our lives” means that our lives were no longer our own. Rather than choosing how to live our life, much of it was lived in reaction to the pain from our grief. The pain may be as “benign” as distancing ourselves from others or as existentially challenging as self-destructive behavior committed in an effort to mute, ignore, or forget the pain created by our loss. While our lives may function very similarly after our grief experience compared to before our loss, there is no mistaking that pain was now shaping our lives in a manner that impacted us negatively. And regardless of the cause of our grief or the way it shaped our lives, the pain each of us feels from our grief is something shared by everyone seeking relief in Hope and Healing Grief.

### **Do I have to go through each of the 12 Truths to achieve healing from grief?**

No, not at all. Each of the 12 Truths of Hope and Healing Grief underscores a unique tool to address our pain. While there is a progression through all 12 Truths, it is not necessary to address them all to achieve hope and healing. Some may find relief from their pain through a cursory exploration of just some of the 12 of the Truths of Hope and Healing. Others find great value in doing a “deeper dive” into each and all of them.

### **What kinds of grief does Hope and Healing Grief address?**

Hope and Healing Grief welcomes anyone who is grieving loss of any kind. There are as many different things that we grieve as there are people in HHG recovery. While our stories may be different, the pain we share is very much the same. We may grieve the loss of a loved one, a relationship that has ended, or the pain over an ongoing relationship. Some of us have been carrying the pain of our grief since childhood. Others grieve the loss of a pet, a job, a business opportunity, finances, a home, a friend, a past time in their life, or the loss of an imagined future.

### **Is Hope and Healing Grief an “Anonymous” Fellowship?**

Yes. As noted in the 12 Foundations of Fellowship: “10. Anonymity and confidentiality, individually and as a group, create safety for all.” The reason for anonymity is because it may be that some are grieving things they don’t want to share with others – a failed affair, addictive behavior, or the results of that behavior. The anonymity of those attending HHG meetings ensure that we may speak freely and from our heart.



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### **Why is sharing my grief with others fundamental to my healing?**

The phrase “You are not alone” is never more powerful when healing from grief. Grief prompts isolation. Sharing inspires recovery.

### **Will I be welcome at a Hope and Healing Grief meeting?**

Yes. The only requirement for participation is a desire for hope and healing from grief.

### **I’m not grieving anything, but I am generally sad and depressed. Is Hope and Healing Grief for me?**

Grief is a response to loss. Ongoing depression and sadness may be mood disorders. A professional health expert would be most qualified to clarify, categorize, and diagnose what you are feeling. It may be that ongoing sadness and depression are a reaction to loss of some kind. If this is the case, Hope and Healing Grief is certainly a recovery tool to consider.

### **How do I know if I belong at a Hope and Healing Grief meeting?**

Try a meeting. See if the stories you hear and the topics discussed resonate with you. Chances are if what you are feeling has inspired you to attend, they will. Additionally, please look at the “40 Questions for Self-Assessment.”

### **Are Hope and Healing Grief meetings open to anyone?**

HHG meetings are open only to those who identify as seeking healing from grief or are curious if HHG meetings are right for them. In other words, meetings are open if you need them or think you might. They are closed to casual observers, like those from the press, family / friends of those grieving but who are not personally seeking healing from grief, or those seeking inspiration for a creative project (book, movie, song, etc.). So, in short, HHG meetings are “closed.”

### **What can I share at a Hope and Healing Grief meeting? Will it remain confidential?**

Every meeting is autonomous and creates its own format for the meeting and guidelines for sharing. Regardless, the expectation at any and every HHG meeting is that whatever is shared in a meeting is to remain confidential and not shared outside of the meeting.

### **Do I have to use my name at meetings?**

No. We do suggest people share a first name, but that name can be whatever one chooses. Most attendees do use a first name so others can know them a bit better, but it’s not a requirement. You can attend a meeting without stating your real name and use it later if you’d like.

### **What does Hope and Healing Grief cost to join? How much do meetings cost?**

- There is no “joining” Hope and Healing Grief. To experience the fellowship, one simply attends a meeting.
- While conference approved literature is available for purchase, there is no cost to participate in Hope and Healing Grief.



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- There is no fee to attend any Hope and Healing Grief meeting. Ever. Each meeting is funded solely by voluntary contributions.
- There is no donation requirement. Any money donated during a meeting is spent specifically on program related expenses – rent (if in person), Zoom fees (if online), conference approved literature, etc. – as that meeting sees fit.

### **What will I experience at a Hope and Healing Grief meeting?**

Meetings are places where those working on healing their grief share their experiences both before recovery and after starting it. There is no one format that all meetings follow, but most include some brief program readings. Some meetings follow the Hope and Healing Grief Recovery Workbook. Others are lead and topic meetings. Some meetings may choose to be open only to a specific gender or have a recovery focus unique to that meeting, i.e., those recovering from the loss of a life partner. Because each meeting is autonomous, it will define who may attend, where it meets, for how long, the frequency of meetings, and the format / content of each meeting. Typically, meetings have once a month “business meetings” where any of these things may be amended by group conscience.

### **Who runs a Hope and Healing Grief meeting?**

- No one person or group “runs” HHG meetings. All decisions affecting the group are made by group conscience, a vote of the meeting’s members.
- Every HHG meeting is chaired by one of the meeting’s attendees. Each meeting may set its own requirements for chairing a meeting, which often includes regular attendance.
- While the chair may be a different person at each meeting, it is common that someone will serve as the chair – and in other service positions like treasurer – for a three-month term, creating consistency and stability within a meeting.
- If it happens that the chairperson is a professional mental health care professional outside of the meeting, this has no bearing on if they are a chair or how they chair. Chairs typically follow a previously agreed upon written format. And professional mental health care professionals, as well as anyone with a career outside of the meeting, are not allowed to use meetings to create business or for profit.

### **Do I have to talk at meetings?**

No. You can sit and listen and not say a word. You don’t have to speak or say why you are attending the meeting. Sharing during the meeting is a choice and not an obligation. Everyone at an HHG meeting is there for the same reason – to work on recovering from their personal grief and loss. Your attendance says all that anyone needs to know.

### **Is attendance taken or do I need to fill out any forms?**

No. Meetings are anonymous. No forms are filled out and no one takes attendance.



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### **Is Hope and Healing Grief religious based? Do I have to believe in God?**

No, Hope and Healing Grief is not religious based. There is no requirement to believe in God or any Higher Power. HHG is open to people of any religion or spiritual belief as well as atheists and agnostics. It is a program of spiritual healing however one defines that term.

### **But the 12 Truths does mention Higher Power**

Yes. As part of the healing process, it is suggested that we share our “realizations and understandings with ourselves, another person, and our Higher Power.” Sharing is important for healing. The concept of a loving, caring Higher Power is one many people recovering from grief find invaluable as an always available source of support. Regardless, each of us defines Higher Power as it works best for us. Some choose a theistic being. Others don’t. Some choose the group of those in recovery as their Higher Power, believing that the wisdom of the group is a source of support they can always turn to. Still others consider the Universe or Nature as their Higher Power.

### **Do I have to have a sponsor?**

No. But the benefits of having a Sponsor, or Grief Work Companion (GWC) as they are sometimes called in Hope and Healing Grief, can’t be overstated. Just some of the literally priceless (sponsors work for free, getting as much from the sponsorship as the sponsee) advantages to working with a Sponsor/GWC, someone who has successfully traveled a path of healing their grief similar to the one you’re starting, are:

- **Support:** Sponsors/GWCs, offer support, guidance, and suggestions for which recovery tools might work best for you and how to use them.
- **Accountability:** Having someone to whom we allow ourselves to be accountable is a tremendous recovery asset.
- **Experience, Strength, and Hope:** A Sponsor/GWC has found relief from their grief and loss on a journey much like the one begun by all in Hope and Healing Grief. The challenges and successes they experienced and share with you will be invaluable in helping you create success on your healing path.

To get a Sponsor/Grief Work Companion, all you have to do is ask. Find someone whose journey of recovery you appreciate and respect. The commitment to your Sponsor/GWC is only as long as both of you agree to it continuing. You can end the relationship at any time. The 12 Truths can be worked alone, but it is typically more difficult, less effective, and simply not as satisfying. A Sponsor/GWC is a spiritual ally.

### **Is Hope and Healing Grief a place to meet people for dating?**

Absolutely not. Meetings are safe spaces for healing. If someone interacts with you in or out of the meeting in a way that makes you uncomfortable, we encourage you to share this with another meeting attendee for assistance in addressing what you experienced. While it is not uncommon that those in Hope and Healing Grief form friendships with those with whom they share meetings and their recovery, HHG is neither a social club nor a place to find someone to date. Its purpose is singular: a space to heal grief and connect with hope.