



What is a Support Group?

Support Groups aim to empower individuals who share common issues and have similar life experiences. People affected by genetic health conditions, as well as their friends and families may find support groups to be a valuable resource. It can be a place where people can share medical information, normalise their experiences, educate themselves and others, advocate as a group, or just let off steam.

Support groups can be aimed at, among other possibilities:

- Individuals affected by a specific genetic condition.
- People with a specific relationship to an individual touched by a condition; siblings, spouses, or children.
- People looking for services such as short-term help for caregivers, rehabilitation services, or financial and estate planning
- People dealing with grief and loss
- Advocating as a group
- Social connectedness.

When choosing a support group it is important to think about your own needs and try to find a group that meets these.

Why join a support group?

Support groups are made of people with common interests and experiences. Many people find the most valuable aspect is connecting with someone "in the same boat" as themselves. By coming together, people can provide mutual support and take the steps necessary to make positive changes in their lives. Sharing knowledge and experience enables people to:

- Cope and solve problems
- Increase feelings of self worth
- Reduce isolation
- Enhance optimism
- Allow opportunities to arise
- Create change.

Support groups also provide an important community service by raising awareness through education, advocacy and campaigning for changes to laws and policies. They can also be a great place to find practical tips and resources.

References

Support Groups What They Are and What They Do - by Mary Carol Randall, MA.

http://www.genetichealth.com/Resources_Support_Groups_What_They_Are_and_What_They_Do.shtml

<http://www.mbmpc.org/healthgate/GetHGContent.aspx?token=9c315661-83b7-472d-a7ab-bc8582171f86&chunkiid=24805>