

Joyce Monroe, is a Peer Facilitator with powerful experience in navigating grief and has been moved to create a space of support and compassion for those who need a place to process their journey and be supported.

A note from our facilitator:

I was born and raised in the Pacific Northwest and moved to Arizona in the 1980's, graduating from ASU in 1985 with a BAEd degree, biology major and psychology minor.

I have had an abundance of experience in dealing with the pain, suffering, and loneliness of grief. My husband was diagnosed with Lewy Body Dementia in late 2011, and over the following 2 years together we struggled with this incredibly cruel disease that takes a person's dignity and personhood resulting in death.

Our active participation in a dementia support group helped us both to cope with, and to accept, our lives and the futures we both faced. Our life changes were difficult and frightening, but the support group, our personal and church families, and God's loving hand helped us navigate this difficult time. When he died in early 2014, I faced a new set of challenges. After 48 years of marriage, it was very difficult to figure out how to live alone for the first time in my life while engulfed in this sadness, loneliness, and exhaustion.

Grief is different for everyone. Some are able to cope with their new lives; others struggle for years. I was fortunate to have the guidance of a grief counselor for the first year and his kindness and wise advice helped me learn to cope and prepared me for the years to come. Though grief can't be "cured", he helped me understand and acknowledge the fact that while the pain of this loss never goes away, I still have much to be thankful for. I have learned that there is life after death, my life after his death.

I believe God helped me through this experience so that, when the time came and with God's help, I would be able to help others find comfort and peace, and to work through their personal struggles. I feel called to do my best to provide the same loving care to others that I was blessed to receive and invite you to join me as I facilitate a peer grief group.