Over the years we have seen several churches start, grow, and maintain an established GriefShare grief recovery ministry in their church and community. So, what does an established ministry look like?

- It’s consistent. Local community professionals such as hospices, hospitals, lawyers, doctors, counseling centers, funeral homes, and other non-GriefShare churches will refer people to a group when the ministry is consistent and established. They will not want to hunt for a group when it is sporadic.

- It’s listed on the GriefShare.org Find a Group listing. This is vital. Your church can receive between 70–80 percent more participants from outside of the church through this website. Participants need up-to-date information on when, where, and what time your group is being held. To Customize Your Online Listing, go to www.griefshare.org/leaderzone.

- It meets with community professionals (see those listed above) and shares the GriefShare group’s information with them by handing out brochures and posters.

- It is connected up with other ministries within your church. Ask your GriefShare leaders and staff head to share with other ministry groups within the church what GriefShare is and what it can do for participants.

- It has a leadership team. The more leaders, the more ministry, the more participants your church can touch, the more healing that can happen.

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

GriefShare is a ministry, not a “program.” People in grief need a support group year-round. Keep the spiritual emergency room open.

People find it difficult to be intentional about their healing, and they need a great deal of courage to come. Their pain is sometimes so severe it can hinder their healing. GriefShare helps them work through those feelings and helps them move on a pathway of being restored.

Part of being established is to be known by others that your ministry is a safe and loving environment. It takes time!

EFFECTIVE MINISTRY CHECKLIST

- Led by the Holy Spirit and prayer
- A vision, plan, and purpose: to reach out to the broken and give them Jesus
- Trained team of leaders
- Healthy environment
- Leaders know who should come and who should not come into group
- Group member agreements set in place
- Atmosphere of love and care
- Participants allowed to be on their own grief journey, without being told how to grieve or feel
- Leaders are whole and healed in Christ from their grief
- A ministry that thinks “legacy”: What can I do to ensure that this ministry continues on after I am gone?
- Impacts peoples’ lives for Christ
- Consistent and established
- Leaders are willing to be trained and want growth
- Adherence to the GriefShare Program Design

**GRIEFSHARE PROGRAM DESIGN**

The Find a Group search tool is provided as a free promotional resource to local churches.

In order for your group to qualify for a free listing, it must operate the way GriefShare was designed. This ensures that people searching for a group online will be connected to groups similar to what is described on the GriefShare website.

Here are the key elements of the GriefShare Program Design:

1. **All 13 session topics are presented**

   Each topic is carefully crafted to meet the needs of your group members. Group members need time to process the information presented at each weekly session.

   **NOTE:** Without affecting your eligibility for listing your group, you may shorten your 13-week cycle to a minimum 11-week cycle by combining a couple of session topics and extending your schedule an extra 30-minutes to allow for adequate discussion time on each session topic. You may also extend beyond the 13-week cycle to incorporate an orientation session and/or special session at the end of the cycle. Feel free to contact us for assistance in customizing your online listing.

2. **Each session lasts at least 90 minutes**

   To ensure adequate time for group discussion, your GriefShare group should meet for at least 90 minutes. A two-hour length is preferable.

3. **Each group member receives a workbook**

   Your group members will interact with the workbook during each weekly session video and during the group discussion time. They will also use the workbook for additional study and reflection during the week. It is essential that each person in your group have a personal copy.
Only groups that operate according to the GriefShare Program Design qualify for a listing on the Find a Group search engine. Use of the GriefShare name and trademark is limited to groups that operate according to the GriefShare Program Design.

**YOUR CHURCH AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY**

To have an effective ministry, you need to know what your ministry can and will do for your church and community.

It is important for you to know who in your community is in need of GriefShare. If you have a large population of seniors, you would want to ensure that your group meets during the day since many seniors don’t drive at night.

Please note that hosting GriefShare on Sunday mornings and Wednesday nights will hinder members of other churches to attend your group. They will not give up their own church services to come to a grief support group.

If there are young widows who will be joining your group, many of them may have young children and will need child care.

You may wish to host GriefShare outside of the walls of your church, such as in a community center. Please make sure that those facilities have the correct AV equipment, secured rooms for sharing confidential information, and room to grow.