



# QUESTIONS TO HELP YOUNG ADULTS DECIDE WHEN TO CLOSE FROM DOUGY CENTER

**One of the hardest decisions for participants in our young adult groups is figuring out when they are ready to close.** Just like grief, the ‘right time’ to say goodbye is different for every young adult. We know this decision can feel complex, so we’ve put together some Q&As to help you sort through what seems right for you. You can also reach out to your Staff Coordinator at any time to talk it over.

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For me, it was a felt sense – my body/emotions felt different in group as I went on, things felt less-charged. The stories weren’t hitting as close to home – they still resonated in my body, but the sensation wasn’t as ‘hot’ as before. I started feeling more like I wanted to help others know they weren’t alone more than I needed to not feel alone.

- Former Young Adult Group Participant

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## How do I know when it’s time to close?

While the answer is as unique as each young adult who attends, in our years of conversations with participants we’ve heard several common themes. Here are a few signs that can help you decide if it’s the right time for you to close.

**1. You realize you no longer need the type of support our groups provide.** Our peer grief support groups are designed to help you feel less alone in your grief and give you a safe place

to talk about what you’re going through with others who can relate. You might discover that you need a different type of support, such as therapy or community-based expressive options like art, dance, music, and movement. Or, you might realize the support you’re receiving from friends, family, and other connections meets your current needs.

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The waves of grief outside of group felt easier to ride – sometimes they’re still sharp but they’re not as distressing, I trusted the process.

- Former Young Adult Group Participant

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- 2. Your schedule doesn’t allow you to attend regularly.** If you’re unable to attend consistently – at least 75% of the time – it’s best to talk with your Staff Coordinator about either switching to a different day/time or closing from the program for now.
- 3. A different activity becomes a greater priority.** If you’re beginning to prioritize other interests or responsibilities over attending your Dougy Center group, this could be a good indicator that you’re ready to close.
- 4. Being in the group seems to make your grief harder to carry, not easier.** For some, hearing the stories of others who are grieving feels connecting and validating. While it’s common for

the group to highlight your own grief, if you find that you consistently feel negatively impacted by being surrounded by the grief of other people, it might mean you need a different type of support.

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About six months after I joined, I started feeling overwhelmed by hearing other people's experiences. I realized I needed to close from group and focus on individual therapy.

- Former Young Adult Group Participant

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### **If I decide to close, what are the next steps?**

When you are ready to close, it's best to reach out to your Staff Coordinator. They'll help you navigate the best way to share the news and plan a thoughtful

goodbye. You'll be invited to participate in a special closing ceremony at your last group. While this is completely optional, it can be a meaningful way for the group to appreciate you and for you to have a chance to say goodbye.



### **If I close, can I return?**

Grief changes over time, so in most cases, the answer to this common question is yes. Some young adults will rejoin a group if they experience another loss or move into a new phase of life that stirs up their grief. While we can't guarantee that you'll be able to rejoin the exact same group, we will work to get you connected to one that works with your schedule and needs.



The National Grief Center  
for Children & Families

### **Dougy Center Bookstore/Resources**

Dougy Center's practical, easy-to-use materials are based on what they have learned from more than 65,000 Dougy Center participants. To order online, visit [dougy.org](http://dougy.org) or [dougybookstore.org](http://dougybookstore.org), or call 503.775.5683.

### **About Dougy Center**

Founded in 1982, Dougy Center provides grief support in a safe place where children, teens, young adults, and their families can share their experiences before and after a death. Dougy Center provides support and training locally, nationally, and internationally to individuals and organizations seeking to assist children in grief.

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