

## **Supper Club FAQs**

### **What is the Supper Club?**

The Supper Club is a grief and bereavement support group for family and friends who have lost a loved one due to their substance misuse.

### **Why a special group for bereavement due to substance use?**

Many of our members felt they didn't fit in so called "normal" bereavement groups due to the stigma attached to substance use. They sometimes felt judged as parents or partners of someone who was misusing drugs or alcohol: "People think your son died of choice. The stigma we feel could be our own perception, but we do perceive it." Because of these feelings, members often feel very isolated. The group provides a safe space where members can express their feelings without fear of judgement: "I finally felt like I belonged and that those surrounding me understood my pain as I understood theirs."

### **Who leads the Supper Club?**

The Supper Club is led by a professional grief counsellor because the loss experienced by members is complex. Many can have post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms from watching their child deteriorate, from calling ambulances and police, and from letting all but the most trusted friends slip away in order to contain the stigma. The grief counsellor provides the opportunity for members to connect through their shared experiences.

### **What happens at the Supper Club meetings**

At each two-hour session, The leader facilitates and fosters a group interaction that encourages learning of coping skills and mutual support. The facilitator's role is not to provide counselling or answers. The direction the group takes is very much aligned to the needs of the members.

As a member of the group you will have an opportunity to speak on your first visit, if you wish. Members' input and contribution is encouraged and appreciated. "I was very isolated...I knew rationally that I couldn't be the only person going through this, but at the time it seemed like it." "I just wanted to share my experience with others and listen to other's experiences, just to know that what I was going through was pretty normal."

### **What do members gain from attending the Supper Club?**

- Sharing and gaining emotional support from people who have been through a similar experience
- Mutual learning: learning about oneself from others in the group
- Reducing the stigma and isolation and gaining the sense that you are not alone and that your grief responses are shared by others
- Group cohesion: experiencing an increased sense of belonging
- Imparting of information and wisdom

- Access to a resource library, referral for bereavement counselling

### **How Do I Access the Supper Club?**

The Supper Club meets on the second Tuesday of every month from 6 – 8 pm at the SHARC offices in Carnegie. To enquire about The Supper Club, the Family Drug Helpline is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week on 1300 660 068.

