

Group Counselling – Frequently Asked Questions

I have never been to a group before, what can I expect?

It will give you an opportunity to meet other people affected by adoption and to share issues, thoughts and feelings with them.

How long do groups last and do I have to be there the whole time?

Groups usually take place on a week night over a period of ten weeks or a school term. You will find that you and the other group members will get much more out of the group if everyone is present for the duration.

Can I bring someone along with me?

We prefer group members to be personally affected by adoption. We encourage relatives and partners to attend an Information and Discussion Meeting but limit groups to those who are most closely impacted by adoption.

Details of Information and Discussion Meetings can be found on PARC's Calendar of Events.

Who leads the groups?

Our groups are led by two counsellors. We currently run groups which are co-led by a PARC counsellor and an outside group therapist. All are experienced in facilitating groups.

I'd like to come along, but I am a bit nervous.

Please don't hesitate to ring PARC to speak to one of the group leaders about any questions you may have about the group. Rest assured that most people who come to a group feel a bit nervous. You may be expected to have an interview with a counsellor before attending a group to ensure that the group is right for you.

Do I have to tell my whole life story?

It's up to you how much of your story you wish to tell to the other group members. Most people find that as the group progresses, considerable trust and support develops, so they feel more able to share aspects of their experiences and seek feedback from the other members. Each group member is asked to sign a confidentiality agreement since it's an important part of establishing trust that things that are discussed remain within the group. You'll never be pressed to disclose anything you wish to remain private.

Are there any "ground rules" for the groups?

Punctuality and sending apologies if you're unable to attend are strongly encouraged, as lateness and non-attendance can have a negative effect on other group members.

As the groups are primarily for listening and sharing we encourage members to always be thoughtful so that each person who wishes to participate is able to do so. Direct advice giving is not encouraged, as we believe that although it is extremely helpful to listen to others in the same situation, each person remains the expert about their own life.

How do I protect my privacy?

When attending any group meeting at PARC you will only be identified by your first name to other members of the group.

Your full name and contact details are required when booking to attend meetings or interviews and will be treated as confidential by PARC.

Will group participation solve all my problems?

We wish we had a magic wand, but the answer is "no". People who have attended our groups say that the memory stays with them. These are some of the things people have said about coming to our groups:

"We all spoke a common language"

"The opportunity to think and talk honestly"

"A chance to hear from all sides of the triangle."