

WFWP USA: Presenter Donna Avey at the monthly Self-Care Isn't Selfish series

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Donna Avey presenting about support groups

On Saturday, March 12, Donna Avey was the presenter at the monthly "Self-Care Isn't Selfish" series. She shared with all those present "How can a Support Group Be Part of Your Self-Care Strategy?" Donna brings a wealth of experience with support groups, both personally and professionally. She opened with telling us some of her journey, stating, "I have learned from personal experience more effective ways to cope and handle difficult situations through support groups." Her most recent experience was when her husband of almost 40 years, passed away after a number of health challenges for which she was his primary support.



Sharing on Facebook her reflections about her inner conflict over whether she should change her profile picture which was one of her and Jim together drew her thoughts to her own grieving. Knowing that she needed to move on and feeling the need for support in this process, Donna reached out through Facebook messenger. Donna told us, "When six people responded, I organized a small group to share about our common experience of grieving."

Donna guided the participants through the process of exploring for ourselves:

- What is Self-Care?
- What is Support?
- How is a Support Group a Self-Care Strategy?
- Where do I find my support?
- How do I know if this support group is right for me?

Using the familiar parable of the drowning man, Donna challenged us to be aware of what and who shows up as support. If you are not familiar with the parable, the man is stuck on a rooftop in a flood and he prays for help from God. When someone in a rowboat, a motorboat and a helicopter show up to save him,

the man tells each of them, "No, it's OK, I am praying to God and He is going to save me" completely missing how God was sending him the support he needed.

Through sharing in small groups and in a whole group discussion, everyone had the opportunity to discover more about support groups and how to take the next step from wherever we are. We had the opportunity to hear the varied experiences that others have had with support groups - everything from zoom groups centered on crafts, small group book studies, hiking in nature, grief support groups and more.



How Can A Support Group Be Part Of Your Self-Care Strategy?
Presenter: Donna Avey
Sat., March, 12, 1-2:30 pm PST

If you weren't able to attend this Self-Care Isn't Selfish session, you can watch the recording [here](#).

Donna also shared a Support Group Resource list which you can access [here](#).

Join us for April's session on the topic of "Thoughts - Emotions - Actions: A Word Can Save or Destroy" with our guest presenter, Hanka Musilova from the Czech Republic. For more details, see the flier and register for Saturday, April 9th session at 1 pm PT [click here](#).



Women's Federation for World Peace SR-5 "Self-Care Isn't Selfish" Series

Reference List for "How Can a Support Group Be Part of Your Self-Care Strategy?" by Donna Avey

1. <https://www.pathforward.org/self-care-is-not-an-indulgence-its-a-discipline/> Tami Forman, April 11, 2019. (Appeared in Forbes in 2017).
2. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/in-depth/support-groups/art-20044655#:~:text=Benefits%20of%20support%20groups&text=Feeling%20less%20lonely%2C%20isolated%20or,skills%20to%20cope%20with%20challenges>
3. <http://davidsusman.com/2015/04/23/9-benefits-of-support-groups/>
4. <https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/implement/enhancing-support/peer-support-groups/main>
5. <https://www.thisiscalmer.com/blog/5-stages-of-burnout>
6. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parable_of_the_drowning_man
7. <https://truthbook.com/stories/funny-stories/popular-stories/the-drowning-man/>
8. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/fumbling-change/200905/two-boats-and-helicopter-thoughts-stress-management>
9. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/323740134_The_effectiveness_of_support_groups_a_literature_review

(Peer Review) Studies indicate that support groups for people with **lived experience of mental illness have positive and effective outcomes**, such as improvements in self-efficacy, enhancing coping skills, self-esteem and social support, and reduction of psychiatric symptoms (Mancini et al., 2013; Worrall et al., 2018) .

March 2018, [Mental Health and Social Inclusion](#) 22(1):00-00, DOI:[10.1108/MHSI-12-2017-0055](#)

Authors: [Hugh Worrall](#); [Richard Schweizer](#); [Ellen Marks](#); [Lin Yuan](#); [Chris Lloyd](#); [Griffith University](#); [Rob Ramjan](#)

Abstract

Purpose Support groups are a common feature of the mental health support engaged by carers and consumers. The purpose of this paper is to update and consolidate the knowledge and the evidence for the effectiveness of mental health support groups. Design/methodology/approach This paper is based on a systematic literature review of relevant databases around support groups for mental health. **Support groups are defined as meetings of people with similar experiences, such as those defined as carers of a person living with a mental illness or a person living with a mental illness. These meetings aim to provide support and companionship to one another. Findings The results show that there is a consistent pattern of evidence, over a long period of time, which confirms the effectiveness of mental health support groups for carers and people living with mental illness.** There is strong, scientifically rigorous evidence which shows the effectiveness of professionally facilitated, family-led support groups, psychoeducation carers support groups, and professionally facilitated, program-based support groups for people living with mental illness. Research limitations/implications This research implies the use of support groups is an important adjunct to the support of carers and people with mental illness, including severe mental illness. Originality/value This research brings together a range of studies indicating the usefulness of support groups as an adjunct to mental health therapy.

Benefits of support groups

Feeling less lonely, isolated or judged. Reducing distress, depression, anxiety or fatigue. Talking openly and honestly about your feelings. Improving skills to cope with challenges.