



**GRACE ALLIANCE**

HEALTHY SOLUTIONS FOR YOUR MIND

## How to introduce Grace Groups to your church:

Pastors and pastoral care teams like to work with a very clear vision, the reasons behind it, and a structured plan (even how it is administrated). When they are approached without these details it makes the process long.

This will give you simple notes to help you introduce Grace Groups to your church.

### 1. KNOW THE REAL STORY & NUMBERS

Be prepared knowing simple facts. Use the information to reveal the challenges, not as scare or guilt tactic. Rather to give a window to the overall need and how Grace Groups will be a unique solution for the church.

- 1 in 5 adult population (U.S.) and 1 in 5 adolescent/children are affected.
- **27% of church congregations on any give Sunday are dealing with mental health and experiencing 2x stressors, and decrease in faith values or beliefs.**
- Over 50% don't reach out for help due to accessibility and affordability.
- The church is where people reach out for help before going to a professional.
- 71% of pastors feel ill equipped to respond (lack of education, training from seminar and/or in-house ministry training).

### 2. KNOW WHY GRACE GROUPS WORK (what are they & how they work)

**Family Grace:** for families, spouses who have a loved one experiencing depression, anxiety, or any mental health condition.

**Living Grace:** for adults individuals experiencing a depression, anxiety, or any mental health condition.

**Redefine Grace:** for young adult (high school - college students) experiencing depression, anxiety, and any mental health condition.

- **16-Week User Friendly Experience:**

Grace Groups are designed with a user-friendly 16-week topical curriculum and simple group format for any lay or peer led facilitation. The group model is simple and easy to facilitate and reproduce. Grace Groups can divide the 16-week curriculum into 8-weeks per semester (Fall/Spring; Spring/Summer; Summer/Fall).

- **Integrated with Evidenced Based Science, Tools, & Biblical Values**

The Grace Group curriculums integrate neuroscience, psychology and biblical insights (scriptures) with simple therapeutic tools and exercises. The material follows a whole-health (holistic) approach (Physical, Mental, Spiritual/Faith, Relational). The goal of the group is to see participants educated and empowered to have transformative whole-health outcomes. Grace Groups are based on empowerment principles:

- a. **Discovery-Based Education:** science and faith principles (self-awareness; self-actualization)
- b. **Experiential Learning** (discovery-based learning; self-determination)
- c. **Community Engagement** (empathy, healthy environments, encouraging communal growth)

- **Grace Alliance has Published Research with Positive Results**

The Grace Alliance curriculums have published efficacy research showing participants (including serious mental illness) having significant reduction of symptoms, overall mental health recovery, and renewed faith.

- **They are Simple Small Groups NOT Clinical Support Groups**

As noted in published research, the Grace Groups have positive therapeutic benefits and results, however they are not clinical support groups. In addition, the Grace Groups are designed with healthy validation for challenges, however it does not follow the model of a “venting group.” The Grace Group provide a healthy structure and a positive environment.

- **Grace Groups are successful across the world, across denominations**

There are over 220 Grace Groups across the U.S. and around the world. The groups spread across multiple denominations from mega churches to small churches, and officially offered at two Christian University campuses. Grace Groups are not marketed; however the valuable experience is spreading to others and, as of 2018, there are 20-30 new Grace Groups starting every quarter.

### 3. KNOW THE PROCESS OF GRACE GROUP TRAINING, WORKBOOKS, COST

- **FREE online training and NO memberships fees or subscriptions:**

The Grace Alliance offers a [FREE high-quality education and training](#) for anyone or group wanting to start and be Grace Group facilitators. The training can be completed at your own pace and takes about 2 hours. There are no huge training cost or membership/subscription barriers (saving thousands).

The Grace Groups includes these advantages for facilitators:

- + Grace Group facilitators have **FREE** access to a private Facebook page to engage and support one another.

- + Grace Group facilitators have **FREE** access to special webinars specifically designed for facilitators (conducted by the Grace Alliance team.)

- + Grace Group facilitators have **FREE** access to the Grace Alliance team for any ongoing support or questions.

- **Affordable Cost for Workbooks ... that's it!**

The only cost associated is the purchase of the affordable workbooks, any amount that's needed (even if it's only three workbooks). Free shipping on 10 or more.

### 4. KNOW THE DETAILS ON HOW TO START GRACE GROUPS:

Answer these questions:

- When will you plan to start the Grace Group(s)?
- When and where will you host the Grace Group(s) (time, place)?
- Which Grace Group or Grace Groups would you like to facilitate?
- Who will help co-facilitate the Grace Group(s)?
- How many people do you know or have interacted with that would be ideal for participating in Grace Group(s)?
- How would you like to promote and advertise the group at the church?
- Do you attend to collaborate this with any other interested church in the area?
- How or who will purchase the Grace Group workbooks (church, collective, fundraiser)?
- What other questions do you think your pastor or pastoral care team will ask?

## 5. KNOW THE PROCESS TO MEET WITH YOUR PASTOR OR PASTORAL TEAM

- **Contact for a meeting**

Be clear that you would like to discuss about mental health need in the church and to submit an idea and solution that could be helpful without adding extra work to the pastoral team.

- **Humble Spirit and Submit**

Keep a peaceful and humble posture for the idea. If anything comes off as a pushy agenda, it will make for a defensive meeting and pastoral team to shy away. Come with a humble spirit to submit it to the church, not push for it. If they say “no,” you can always follow up for more helpful and ongoing dialogue.

- **Have samples or a copy of the workbook**

Download free samples of the workbooks or purchase a couple of the workbooks. It's important for the pastoral leaders to see and even browse through the material. They need a visual and tangible as they listen to your idea.

Here's a simple outline of how to conduct the meeting:

1. **Submit the vision, the reason, and the plan**

Start out the meeting with an overall statement or vision by sharing that you and your friends would like to (come up with your own statement):

Ex.

*“To have a simple community resource in the church for those experiencing depression, anxiety, or other mental health conditions that will give them hope and transformative outcomes.”*

2. **Explain the reason – the why**

Share your story or situation for the need and the hope you found (keep it brief). Then, share some overall statistics that proves the need and the opportunity for the church to be in a better position to help.

3. **Submit the plan of Grace Groups**

Share what, why, and how the Grace Groups work (info above). Then, share the costs and review many of your details to the questions listed above. Let them interject with questions during this dialogue. Keep it a nice conversation and interest.

**4. Explain it is a simple function of care and support, not a ministry**

The word “ministry” can imply a huge budget, pastors, or other huge functions. Also, do not use the word, “support group” as this implies a clinical focus or feel. Instead, this is just about having a simple small group and community resource for those experiencing these challenges. This will take away the burden of pastoral teams having to meet with families and individuals, not add to them. They can refer to the groups (which many churches that have Grace Groups already do). The Grace Group provides an ongoing and proven community small group experience resulting in positive outcomes ... a progressive healing experience.

**5. Dialogue and Follow-up**

After you finish ask them what they think and facilitate their questions. Let them think and discuss about it and ask when you can follow up with them.

**6. Faith and Patience**

Be patient and continue to pray for God to reveal His wisdom and creativity to everyone for involved.