

What is Parent to Parent and who attends this group?

This group is a peer support group made up of parents who either have a child currently receiving treatment for childhood cancer or parents who have a child who is in remission for childhood cancer. Parents can talk about the impact a childhood cancer diagnosis has had on their child, their own life, and their families lives – medically, physically, emotionally, financially. Much of your experience may seem unique and isolating but talking with other families reassures you that your feeling are not uncommon and you are not alone. Parents often gain valuable insight into their own experience and how it will unfold over time by talking with others at various stages of treatment. The goal of this group is to inform families about different aspects of childhood cancer and enable other parents to gain confidence by sharing individual experiences.

Every meeting is held at Sherry's House, 1152 Pleasant St. Worcester, MA 01602. Prior to the start of every meeting there is a dinner & a social hour 6-7pm. Why Me will provide the food and drinks for each meeting. This gives families the opportunity to catch up and socialize before the meeting starts. At 7pm parents join together in our activity center for the structured group to begin.

Can I bring my children?

Yes. During every group time we have trained and CORI-approved volunteers who will entertain and supervise the children. At any point you can step out of group to check on your children.

Are all of the groups the same?

The structure of the group changes month to month. We will let parents know the format ahead of time for each group. Some groups are an open forum, giving parents in attendance the opportunity to discuss topics that are most important to them. This may include questions posed to other parents or facilitators. Open meetings also give parents the time to open up about their needs and challenges they may be facing, while offering other attendees the opportunity to give advice or share experiences. We also have topic driven meetings, where there is a particular focus that centers the discussion. Some examples are: sibling issues, cold & flu season, financial resources etc. Additionally we also have meetings where we feature guest speakers. The goal of having guest speakers is to share information on a particular area of expertise that directly relates to childhood cancer patients and families. Some examples of guest speakers are: oncologist, nutritionist, neuropsychologist, childhood cancer survivors, nurses etc.

What is the cost of attending a group?

This group, along with all Why Me events is free of charge.

My schedule is really busy and I might not be able to make it to every meeting, can I still join the group?

Yes, please come whenever you can. You are always welcome. Perhaps you usually cannot attend the meetings, but there is a guest speaker of particular interest to you – do not hesitate to join in!

When can I go to a group? Is there a start date?

There is no start date – the groups are ongoing throughout the year and parents can join at any time.

Who comes?

The majority of the group is made up of mothers & fathers who have a child being treated for cancer. We also have welcomed close family members - aunts, uncles, grandparents etc. to attend the meeting who are seeking out support for their loved ones. Parents are welcome to bring additional guests with them. We realize that friends and family members are your biggest support system during this difficult time and we want you to feel comfortable and supported during the meeting, so please bring along a guest if you'd like. Guests often benefit from hearing different perspectives from other parents and find they are better able to support you

Who else?

In addition to other parents, both Danielle Sikonski, Director of Family Services at Why Me and Claudia Neithercut, Pediatric Social Worker at UMass assist to facilitate this group.

Any other questions feel free to contact Danielle at dperron@whyme.org



Sherry's House