

# *Refuge*

## Group Guidelines

1. Start and stop on time. 3 minute time-limit for stories.
2. Anyone may pass. All are encouraged but not required to share.
3. Observe absolute confidentiality. What we say here *stays* here.
4. Be respectful. No interrupting another's sharing or side conversations or devaluing another's experience.
5. Keep it relevant and current. We're more effective when we focus on what's happening here and *now*.
6. Empathize, don't criticize or attempt to fix. Use "I" statements not "You" statements.

## Guiding Principles

1. Mental illness is a biological brain disorder.
2. *Refuge* is neither therapy nor treatment. Ongoing and more serious needs may result in referral to an outside resource.
3. *Refuge* extends support and encouragement to those with a diagnosis of mental illness and to those who love them.
4. Each meeting will incorporate scripture, prayer and our own shared experiences as well as exposure to resources developed by mental health professionals.
5. We are committed to reducing stigma – our focus is on the person, not the diagnosis.
6. Our approach seeks to be Christ-centered and Bible-based.
  - a. We find our refuge in Christ. *You have been my stronghold and a refuge in the day of my distress. Psalm 59:16*
  - b. We embrace God's forgiveness and seek to forgive those who have hurt us.
  - c. Our hope is in Christ and His best for each of us while submitting to His perfect will.
  - d. Our suffering is a universal experience in a fallen world but for believers has purpose and is not a sign of God's displeasure.
  - e. We seek to walk with God in our suffering, His presence our comfort, His word our encouragement.
  - f. God cures some but we all can experience His healing.
  - g. We benefit from sharing our experiences and from listening to the experiences and the perspective of other's. Alone we are vulnerable.
  - h. We affirm the value of medical care in conjunction with spiritual care.
7. We are committed to small steps over time with patience for the ups and downs related to living with a mental illness.
8. There is no financial obligation. From time to time materials may be available for purchase at cost.
9. Attendance is voluntary. Participants are free to leave at any time.
10. Regular attendance is not required but support groups are most effective when participants commit to attending regardless of their experience of personal highs and lows.
11. The New Hope family and all our friends in the community are welcome.

## Your Facilitator will:

1. Listen and respect sharing.
2. Help the group stay on topic
3. Provide a safe place to share.
4. Pray for you and with you
5. Refer you to additional help if necessary.
6. Your facilitator is mandated by law to intervene if he/she suspects that a child (under 18) or an elder (over 65) or a vulnerable adult is currently endangered by abuse or any participant is a danger to others or themselves.