

New Jersey Self-Help Group Clearinghouse

"Helping people find & form their own community support groups throughout NJ for over 30 years."

1-800-367-6274 or 973-989-1122 * 375 E. McFarlan St., Dover, NJ 07801 * www.selfhelpgroups.org

CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUPS HELP!

Take a little time away, to share with and learn from those who truly understand, because they too have "been there."

GENERAL CAREGIVER GROUPS

Adult children caring for an aging parent * **Well Spouse Association** (spouses/partners of those with any chronic illness or disability) * **Caregivers of elderly frail persons** * **Caregivers of ill relatives** * Families caring for a loved one with a **serious disability** * Families of those with a **serious mental illness** * **Parents of children with special needs** * **Adult Siblings** of adults with any serious disability * **Parents Caucus, Family Support Organizations** (FSOs) and other related support groups that are available for parents & caregivers of children with any complex emotional/behavioral challenges * **Fathers of children** with emotional/behavioral challenges * Or any of the hundreds of different mutual help support organizations for **specific rare disorders** that a family member has, which requires family caregiving.

ILLNESS / DISABILITY/CONDITION-SPECIFIC CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUPS

Caregivers of Persons with Alzheimer's Disease (all counties) * Wives of husbands who are stroke survivors (Middlesex County) * Spouses of those with a mental illness (Union & Cape May counties) * Potential future caregivers of those diagnosed with any early stage dementia/Alzheimer's (Morris County group & an international online group) * Caregivers of those with Frontal Temporal Dementia (Burlington County) * Specific forms of dementia * Stroke * Aphasia * Parkinson disease * Multiple Sclerosis * Cancer * Muscular Dystrophy * Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis * Spinal Cord Injury * Brain Injury * Brain Tumor * Heart Disease * Huntington's Disease * Kidney * Liver disorders * Lupus * Chronic Respiratory Disorders * Families with loved one who has a mental illness – separate groups just for: Spanish-speaking families, Portuguese families, for African American families, for families of Chinese origin, or for those of South Asian origin (India, Pakistanis, Bangladeshi, Sri Lankan) * Families of combat vets with PTSD * Breast Cancer * Partners of incest/rape survivors * Or any one of the many support networks just for families dealing with any one of hundreds of other debilitating disorders/ disabilities.

OTHER PARENT/FAMILY CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUPS

Grandparents or other caregivers raising children * Parents of children with any form of Autism * Congenital disabilities * Developmental Disabilities * Multiple or profound impairments * Brain Injury * Spinal Cord Injury * Parents of Children with Drug/Alcohol Problems * Childhood Cancers * Physical disabilities * Muscular Dystrophy * Cerebral Palsy * Vision Loss * Hearing Loss * Cystic Fibrosis * Juvenile Diabetes * Epilepsy * a wide variety of children's and Cardiac problems * Inflammatory Bowel Disease * Kidney * Liver * Mothers of Daughters with Breast Cancer (a model group that can start in NJ if there is interest). * For youth workers, teachers, or others interested in helping youth (under 18) who are significant part-time caregivers to have their own 8-session support groups, the American Assn. of Caregiving Youth can possibly help.

FAMILIES OF THOSE WITH AN ADDICTION

Al-Anon (families & friends of alcoholics) * Nar-Anon (families & friends of drug abusers) * Gam-Anon (families & friends of compulsive gamblers) * Families Anonymous (parents & families of persons with drug, alcohol or behavioral problems) * BASA (Brothers And Sisters of Addicts) * Parent Support groups (parents of children with a chemical dependency).

For info and contacts for **any of these caregiver support groups cited above**, or for **any other** type of no-fee **support group** (bereavement, loss, women's groups, other parenting issues, etc.), or to **learn how you can join with others to start your own group**, from anywhere in NJ, contact your Clearinghouse...

Call **1-800-367-6274** more easily remembered as
1-800-FOR-M.A.S.H. (Mutual Aid Self-Help)

"Caregivers can begin to develop a sense of control over their lives as they begin to understand what to expect during the course of the disease and the changes that will affect the person... A support group can be a lifeline for the caregivers, providing the freedom to express their emotions without guilt and the opportunity to receive positive reinforcement from their peers."

from "Successful Support Groups for African American Caregivers" by E. Williams & P. Barton, [Generations](#),
the Journal of the American Society on Aging, 27 (4), Winter 2003/2004, 81-83, p. 82.

How Our Clearinghouse Helps People to Start Their Own Caregiver and Other Support Groups

If you are interested in the possibility of joining with others to start your own mutual aid self-help support group (or if you're a professional, who sees the need for a group, and would like to assist in group development), we can help you. Our services are free. Just call us to learn how you can help start a community, workplace or online support group, without all the work being on your shoulders.

As a Clearinghouse, we can provide you with free phone consultation, how-to materials and helpful contacts, but you are under no obligation to follow through on any of our suggestions. As with any self-help group, the group would belong to its members and be run by its members. We can share with you our expertise, based on over 29 years of our experience in helping people in New Jersey to start community mutual help groups. For example, one of several how-to guides that we developed is **The Guide to Starting a Self-Help Support Group for Caregivers of the Aged**, which we co-authored with the national Children of Aging Parents organization. We also worked with the Canadian Assn. of Family Resource Programs in their development of the guide, **Differences in Common: Self-Help for Parents of Children with Special Needs**. We have hundreds of other how-to guides for starting most any type of self-help support group, many of which we can provide to you. We also have contact information for many different national, international, and model, mutual aid support groups that exist so you "don't have to re-invent the wheel."

We can also provide information on local and regional resources, as well as our serving as a "sounding board" for your ideas. We can advise you on finding a place to meet, recruiting members, building shared leadership and on additional issues which - may come up, or just be useful, at different stages of group development. We can even help you to develop an online support group for caregivers from your area, if you would prefer that to a face-to-face group.

If you are interested in starting any type of group, we can list you on our database at no cost, and then only give out your first name and phone number to those callers from your area who indicate that they are interested in working with you to start the group. We get about 8, 000 calls per year - so there's a fair chance, that if there's no support group in your area, we can refer one or two potential group "co-founders" to you.

In any case, for more information or if you have any questions, just call us at **1-800-367-6274**, more easily remembered as **1-800-FOR-M.A.S.H. (Mutual Aid Self-Help)**. Our Clearinghouse services are made possible through funding from the New Jersey Division of Mental Health Services.

For professionals and community leaders, who would like a handy guide to all the NJ, national, online & model groups, and more, our 704-page May, 2011 Directory is available for \$15 postpaid. Call or visit www.NJgroups.org website for details.
But understand that you or your clients can always call us toll-free for the most up-to-date info on any support group.

"Mutual support groups, involving little or no cost to participants, have a powerful effect on mental and physical health... The psychological and physical health importance of this diffuse community is striking...

The self-help movement, both in face-to-face and virtual arenas, has tremendous therapeutic potential."

from American Psychologist feature article "Who Talks?: The Social Psychology of Illness Support Groups" by K. P. Davison, J. W. Pennebaker, & S.S. Dickerson, (55) 2, pp. 205-217, 2000.

"My years as a medical practitioner, as well as my own first-hand experience, have taught me how important self-help groups are in assisting their members in dealing with problems, stress, hardship and pain... the benefits of mutual aid are experienced by millions of people who turn to others with a similar problem to attempt to deal with their isolation, powerlessness, alienation, and the awful feeling that nobody understands... Health and human service providers are learning that they can indeed provide a superior service when they help their patients and clients find appropriate peer support."

- former U.S. Surgeon General C. Everett Koop, MD, who also served as a member of Compassionate Friends, an international self-help group for bereaved parents, following the sudden tragic death of his own college age son. (Note that there are 10 local Compassionate Friends support groups available in different areas of NJ to aid both grieving parents and grandparents - call the Clearinghouse from anywhere in NJ at **1-800-367-6274**, more easily remembered as **1-800-FOR-M.A.S.H. - Mutual Aid Self-Help** - for information on any of the CF groups, or any of the over 6,750 other no-fee support group meetings in NJ, or the over 1,100 national & online mutual support networks we list).