

Participant Agreement

Support Group for Married Women Navigating Separation or Divorce



Facilitated by:

- Doyanne Darnell, PhD, Licensed Clinical Psychologist (**primary contact for the group**)
doyanne@tacomapsychologist.com
- Lauren Ashbaugh, PhD, Licensed Clinical Psychologist
lauren@pacificnwpsychology.com

Both facilitators bring professional expertise in clinical psychology and lived experience of marital separation/divorce.

1. Description of the Group

This is a professionally facilitated support group for married women who are considering or are in the process of separating or divorcing from their spouse.

The group provides a structured, supportive space where participants can:

- Share experiences and reflections
- Discuss common emotional, relational, social, and practical challenges
- Receive and offer mutual emotional support
- Reduce isolation and increase understanding during a major life transition

Each group includes a facilitated discussion topic as well as time for participants to bring forward what feels most relevant or pressing in their lives.

The group values center on compassion and understanding to support personal agency and respect for the dignity of all involved.

This is a quarterly closed group, meaning participants may only join at the start of the quarter.

2. Boundaries of Service

Participation in this group:

- Does not constitute individual or group psychotherapy
- Does not establish a therapeutic relationship for individual mental health treatment within the group setting
- Does not include legal, financial, or medical advice
- Is not a substitute for individual therapy, crisis services, or legal counsel

Participants are encouraged to seek appropriate professional services as needed outside of the group. They are welcome to contact either facilitator to explore pursuing psychotherapy services with them or for referrals.

3. Facilitator Role

The facilitators provide:

- Structure for group sessions
- Psychologically informed perspectives and discussion prompts
- Support for respectful and meaningful group process

Facilitators reserve the right to withdraw participants from the group due to safety concerns for the participant or the group.

4. Confidentiality

Confidentiality is essential to maintaining a safe and supportive group environment.

Participants agree to:

- Maintain confidentiality regarding the identity and personal information of other group members
- Not disclose or share what other participants say outside of the group

However, confidentiality in a group setting has important limitations:

- Facilitators are legally and ethically required to break confidentiality if there is a risk of harm to self or others, or as otherwise required by law (e.g., child or elder abuse)
 - While facilitators maintain professional confidentiality, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed with respect to other participants. Each participant is responsible for honoring group confidentiality agreements.
 - Facilitators will keep records of group attendance for administrative purposes only. They do not otherwise keep records or notes of individual participation.
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5. Risks and Benefits

Participation in this group includes discussion of emotionally-laden topics and experiences. Examples of experiences participants may have include, but are not limited to:

- Emotional distress, grief, anxiety, or sadness
- Feelings of vulnerability or discomfort when sharing personal experiences
- Activation of painful memories or relational dynamics
- Discomfort arising from hearing others' experiences

At the same time, potential benefits may include:

- Reduced isolation and increased sense of connection
- Emotional support and validation
- Increased self-understanding and clarity
- Development of coping strategies and emotional insight
- A greater sense of grounding and stability during transition

No specific outcomes can be guaranteed.

6. Participation Expectations

Participation and attendance in this group is voluntary. Consistency is encouraged but not required.

Participants agree to:

- Engage in respectful communication with other group members
- Allow space for others to share without interruption
- Respect differing perspectives, experiences, and relationship decisions
- Refrain from advice-giving or suggesting to others what they should do
- Share at a level that feels personally appropriate; participation is always voluntary
- Be responsible for their choices and decisions that may be informed by information shared in the group

It is natural for friendships to exist or develop within the group. Some participants may already know each other, and others may form connections over time. We welcome this sense of connection while also asking that participants be mindful of keeping personal relational dynamics outside of the group space, so that the group can remain a balanced and supportive environment for everyone.

7. Technology and Privacy

For virtual groups:

- Sessions will be conducted using a secure, HIPAA-compliant platform, when applicable
 - Participants are responsible for ensuring they are in a private, confidential setting during sessions
 - Use of headphones is strongly encouraged to protect privacy
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8. Communication methods

Email:

- Email is the preferred contact for facilitators. The primary contact for the group is Doyanne at doyanne@tacomapsychologist.com
- Facilitators will communicate with participants via email for administrative purposes, such as for billing, scheduling, and providing general information about the group.
- The privacy and confidentiality of email cannot be ensured; participants are encouraged to refrain from sharing personal information that does not serve an administrative purpose over email.

Phone:

- Facilitators will contact participants by phone to complete the initial screening for the group and for administrative purposes as needed or if requested

Please inform the facilitators of any additional privacy considerations.

9. Fees and Cancellations

Fees & Payment

- Groups are run on a quarterly basis. After an initial screening process, participants sign up to participate in the full quarter, which consists of 6 groups over 3 months at a cost of \$300.
- Payment is required before the start of the quarter and may be made by credit card. Participants will receive an invoice with information about payment.

Cancellations:

- Participants may decide to cancel for a refund of \$250 after the first meeting of the quarter. Requests must be made before the second group meeting of the quarter via email to doyanne@tacomapsychologist.com. Refunds are otherwise not available.
 - Participants may attend as many of the groups as they would like throughout the quarter. Refunds are not made for missed groups.
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10. Emergency and Crisis Resources

This group does not provide crisis services and facilitators are not available for other than administrative purposes outside of scheduled group times.

If you are in immediate distress or crisis, please contact:

- 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline
 - 911 or your local emergency services
 - Your local emergency department
 - National domestic violence hotline: 800.799.SAFE
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11. Acknowledgment and Consent

I acknowledge that:

- I have read and understood the information above
- I voluntarily agree to participate under these conditions