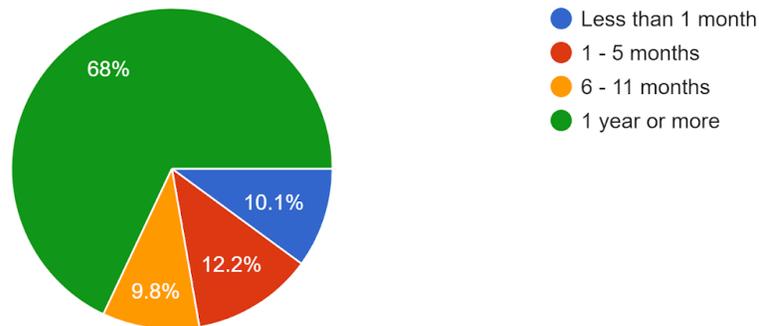


Ellie's Way Group Annual Survey

January 31, 2019

How long ago did you join the Ellie's Way Group?

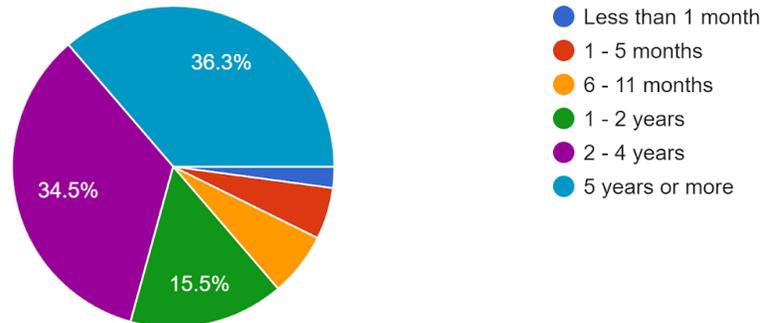
328 responses



68% have been members for more than one year!

How long ago was your loss?

328 responses



72% - More than two years ago

14% - Less than one year ago

I lost my _____. (Multiple answers allowed)

328 responses

- 51% - Child (18 years or older)
- 31% - Parent
- 16% - Spouse or significant other
- 15% - Sibling
- 13% - Child (10 to 18 years old)
- 11% - Grandparent
- 10% - Friend
- 7% - Child (less than 2 years old)
- 5% - Child (2 to 10 years old)

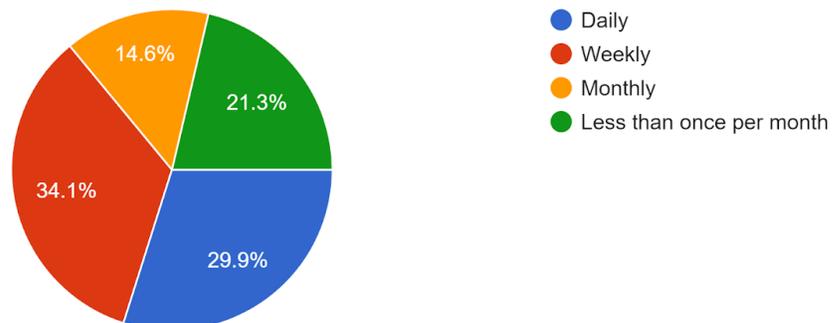
Which of the following do you do in the group? (Multiple answers allowed)

328 responses

- 93% - Read the posts
- 87% - React to posts (like, sad, etc.)
- 86% - Comment on posts
- 55% - Post in the group
- 16% - Attend group events
- 11% - Volunteer with Ellie's Way
- 3% - Meet up with other members in person

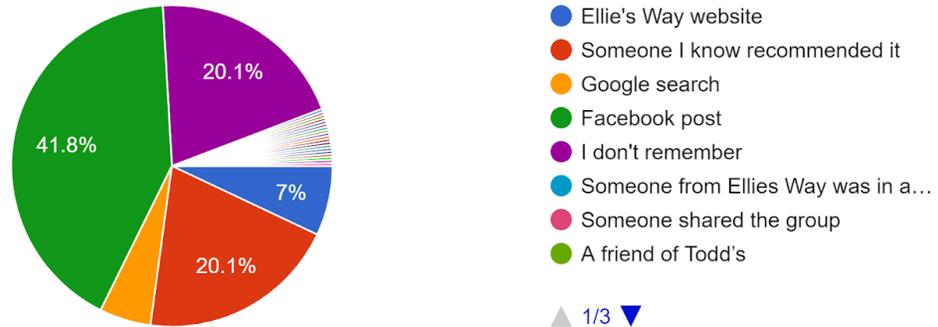
About how often have you commented or posted something in the group over the last six months?

328 responses



How did you first learn about the Ellie's Way Group?

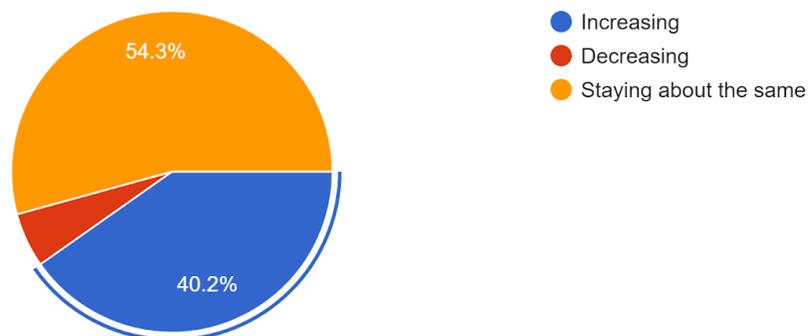
328 responses



42% - Facebook post
20% - Someone I know recommended it
20% - I don't remember
7% - Ellie's Way website
5% - Google search

How would you describe your involvement in the group?

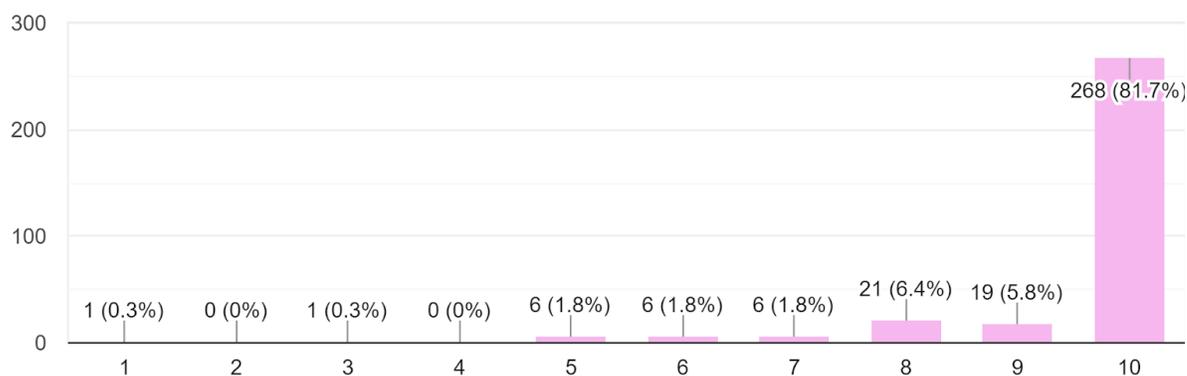
328 responses



95% - Increasing or staying the same!

How likely would you be to recommend the Ellie's Way Group to someone else who has lost a loved one?

328 responses



How has your participation in the Ellie's Way Group helped you on your grief journey? (Multiple answers allowed)

328 responses

- 84% - Helped me feel less alone and isolated
- 51% - Led me to support others
- 50% - Helped me find hope
- 44% - Connected me with others who provide support
- 40% - Strengthened my faith
- 22% - Increased my resilience
- 21% - Helped me find resources and other support organizations

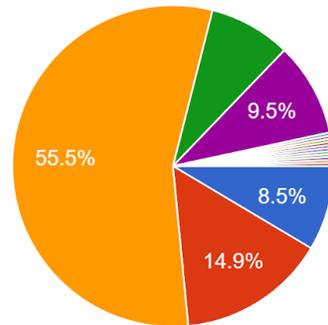
Which of the following would be most helpful to you in our group? (Multiple answers allowed)

328 responses

- 46% - People sharing more about their loved ones
- 32% - More resources shared within the group
- 26% - More discussion topics
- 25% - Meeting others in person
- 13% - Volunteering to serve others in the group
- 13% - Smaller groups within the group
- 12% - More questions

Are you interested in volunteering with the Ellie's Way Group?

328 responses



- Absolutely - how can I sign up?
- Need more information
- Not ready, but perhaps in the future
- No
- Already a volunteer (THANKS!)
- Sick. I've had cancer 4 times
- I do volunteer
- Already on the volunter list

▲ 1/2 ▼

- 56% - Not ready, but perhaps in the future
- 15% - Need more information
- 10% - Already a volunteer
- 9% - Absolutely, how can I sign up?

What is your favorite thing about the Ellie's Way Group?

(sample of responses)

The support and love. I didn't lose a child like most others but they all have made me feel welcomed all the same.

Meeting others on this journey.

We are all together.

The love and encouragement.

That everyone understands and are always helpful even when they are hurting.

Having others who understand a loss like mine to share with.

Sharing grief others are dealing with.

I'm not alone. So many people have lost their loved ones.

The compassion of the members.

People sharing their stories.

I can express my feelings without being judged.

Your thoughtful posts.

Everything!

I like the fact you all are very active with the Ellie's Way Group and the communication in the group is very helpful. I never feel alone in this group!

The support, love, and compassion I've found here.

All the love and support I always feel in here. I also feel understood and not judged or criticized. Support from each other, especially on tough days.

The support of everyone.

I've made friends that understand what we are all going through.

The support and understanding given.

The contests.

Acceptance and compassion.

Feeling like I'm not alone.

Besides what it provides for me, interacting with others.

What is your favorite thing about the Ellie's Way Group? (continued)

The way everyone comes together to support each other.

Ellie's Way has truly become my family. I did not ever even deal with the loss of my boys until I became part of Ellie's Way. I love how even though there are so many of us, it still feels small and personal. I love daily themes and I love how the love is unconditional and there is no judgement. I honestly don't know how good I would be holding up if it weren't for Ellie's Way.

How kind and considerate people are that are on the site. They open my eyes to a lot of things and I hope I can open their eyes to a lot of things. I feel as if I made new friends and I'm very grateful for that.

I've found someone who's reached out to me.

The online support.

Everyone is so supportive and helpful in this journey. It feels good to share our loved one's memories and photos without any judgemental or rude comments.

Connecting with others who are grieving losses.

The love and support without judgement that is shown to me.

Ellie's photos, Todd and his family's dedication.

I love to read other's stories. I know I'm not alone.

Everyone supports each other.

The kind and understanding people.

Everyone is so caring.

Other people's posts and stories.

The love, encouragement and support from members.

The friendships.

Others sharing their thoughts and feelings and coping mechanisms.

I like the daily prompts.

The support and compassion of the members and administration.

Faith based.

People sharing about their loved one.

What is your favorite thing about the Ellie's Way Group? (continued)

The questions really prompt me to do some good thinking. I like that and also like seeing how others think through the questions. I also love the opportunity to be an encouragement when I feel led to do so. I'm not perfect and I hold back a lot because I can be strong. Different stages require different responses I've found.

The love and understanding that others show each other.

The people are so kind, there is no judging and no comparing, I feel is why we are so successful. That's what first drew me to Ellie's Way. I love this group and it's members so much.

I never see drama in this group.

The way I feel when I think I may have made a difference.

Just knowing someone is there.

I love everything.

Topics and people who care about you.

Seeing the pictures and post from others.

I love everything about Ellie's Way!

Everybody is so caring.

Meeting new people and all the help.

Reading the stories.

The love and support all members give each other.

The questions of the day, like what are you doing this weekend, etc., makes me focus, think and get involved.

Listening to others and how they cope. Being able to help others.

Making friends and realizing I'm not alone.

Meeting new members and sharing encouragement.

Always being there when I need support, even if it's just to read others posts.

The fact that it's a safe and supportive place to grieve.

Being able to express my grief.

Faith in God.

The REAL LOVE that Flows ~~~ through and to others!!!

What is your favorite thing about the Ellie's Way Group? (continued)

The involvement of the members and admins.

The feeling of belonging especially when I feel lonely.

The proactive steps to involve members.

The love and support given on hard days when the commenters are struggling themselves.

Hope.

The emphasis is on hope and healing.

Quick response times.

Even though the stories are heartbreaking, I get comfort from the people that post them.

Love, Compassion, Caring, Christian Values!

Positivity and a collective understanding.

Hearing what others are going through losing loved ones and knowing I'm not alone. The strength that the Ellie's Way Group gives me to go on.

People sharing, quotes on grieving, Biblical references.

Sharing encouragement and my pain with like minded individuals who understand all too well.

How everyone is supportive to everyone no matter what.

My favorite thing about Ellie's Way Group is how complete strangers come together to support and lift each other up no matter how long ago or how recent their loss was or how they lost their loves one. It gives me comfort and I don't feel so alone like I did before joining this wonderful group.

I read every single post by Todd that issues me wisdom, faith and hope. I share it to my page so my other friends can read them as well.

Shared stories of loved ones. Encouraging comments.

Encouraging scriptures and quotes.

The encouraging post and comments from others.

How helpful it is to be around others who understand how you feel and offer encouragement, support and accept where you're at in your grief journey without judgment.

Seeing others posts. Knowing if they can make it, there's hope for me also someday.

I know now I am not crazy thanks to this group.

What is your favorite thing about the Ellie's Way Group? (continued)

The emotional support and respect I feel.

Todd's honesty and hearing other people's struggles and how they survived.

No one has judged me. It's helped me open up and talk which I haven't been able to with my family or friends.

It's so real and supportive, with a reminder that faith and God are genuine. Also, that the pain of grief is okay.

My favorite thing about Ellie's way group is the people in the group seem to be very genuine and even with all the sadness everyone in there own way are very positive and hopeful.

Receiving hope and inspiration from other members.

How administrators keep involved and the messages.

Sharing our loved ones with the world.

I can read posts and there is no pressure to post myself.

A feeling of belonging somewhere.

You are there for whoever needs you at that moment.

God's words.

I like that you always remember my daughter's birthday and angelversary.

It is refreshing in my darkness.

Reading all the kindness and love shared.

It's there when I need it.

Getting support from people who understand and have experienced losing someone.

I feel like someone is always there that feels my pain and understands too.

The opportunity to read other's stories, pray for them, and share feelings. The people in this group understand in some way about how I feel. The Ellie's way group gives me a place to express my feelings without judgement.

A safe place to share and care.

The encouraging words everyone has for others in the group.

There is a calmness within the group. The presence of our Lord is felt and I believe His influence and guidance is genuine.

What is your favorite thing about the Ellie's Way Group? (continued)

The support and love each volunteer gives.

My favorite thing is reading the responses to member's stories conveying such love and support.

It's a place you don't have to hide or lie about how you really feel.

Everyone is treated equal, no loss is greater than anyone else's.

This group of grieving parents have helped me to know I'm not alone. One of the members took my son's picture and made a beautiful new picture that she sent to me. I'm already being told by those who should be supportive that I need to get over it and move on. The people in this group have been nothing but loving, kind and supportive. I'm very thankful to have found this site. Eventually I would like to be a volunteer, but it's still so new and hard to believe. Thank you all for your kindness, prayers, compassion and sharing. May God bless you all.

All of the camaraderie I have seen so far in the posts and comments.

Reading the story from Ellie's dad.

Mentioning God.

What changes would you like to see in the group?

(sample of responses)

I love the group just keep on with the amazingness.

More discussion.

Maybe the administrators can get more involved with members, such as topic discussions.

To me there are too many discussion groups that are becoming every night.

More opportunities to connect in person

I like it the way it is.

More info about working through loss.

I'd love more live chats.

Differentiated groups.

Not a change but feel smaller groups would be good.

I've already noticed more content, but would like to see more online events (like "Share Your Memories")

Great as is! Like that you are always trying new things to serve members.

Less comments about limiting who can post about which family members they have lost. Any loss is devastating and we should be open to caring about all of them.

All deaths are horrible because it bring pain. Everyone who dies has a parent which makes it worse. I've lost the whole spectrum of loved ones including a brother, my mother and father, a daughter in-law: It was so very painful and there were moments I wondered how I'd make it through. CHANGE ONE: Losing a child is a different kind of pain. I can't relate to those who've lost others, not in a unsympathetic way, but in a "I've been there, know your pain, but losing my child is in another realm of pain" WHAT i would change. Those who've lost a child should be separated from those who've lost others. CHANGE TWO: Since my son died, I have donated to gofundme (my youngest son said more than I should and I need to be stop....I say I'll be very careful) He's right, and so now I have a burden. There are parents who are homeless, about to lose a grandchild, in desperate need of medical help or maybe even lawyer to save a child or grandchild. My hope is that there can be an ongoing fundraiser that is always open for the reasons above, and other purposes, just for grieving parents. I really feel it would help bring in donations if this gofundme would show each person it has helped and how much was given to them.

The group works well. I have some problems with so much religion, but that is my issue.

What changes would you like to see in the group? (continued)

Groups within the group.

I'd like it to be 'faith based' and have less of the Bible involved to include more members. I firmly believe in God and my faith is very, very strong. My relationship with God is firm or I wouldn't be in this group. However, I feel it's gotten away from that which it was when I first joined. I don't like that it has become more 'preachy' when I feel LOVE is the most important thing to share and concentrate on. I'm still good friends with some great ex Ellie's Way members, that quit because they say it became way too much about God and less personal. They are ALL Christian like I am but they, like me, don't like our grief to be 'Bible thumped' over as much as it has become. They all say, they would all join again if their grief was not dismissed feeling with all the talk of The Bible so much from Ellie's Way. Although that doesn't deter me, I do definitely have to agree with them as I totally get as well as understand their point because I feel that way too, that it's become more about Bible quotes way more than it was and that for which I think is way too much about the Bible. Loving one another is more of value to me and those I know who are grieving. Saying we are 'Faith based' feels and sounds a lot better to me and is of more comfort to me than all the Bible quotes, poems, memes and poems. I'd rather us not limit the group to all God but to include everyone from all types of Faith we then leave out, as a consequence for all the Bible talk.

More posts about being young and losing a parent and how to survive all the things you need your parents for (how to do taxes, change oil in a car)...maybe a mentorship program for people.

More activity within the group. We need more people sharing their stories because it helps others to reach out to them. I poured out my heart in groups like this one getting support from others. I realized I was giving others support after awhile and it felt good paying it forward as I know how child loss feels. Open topics might help others. Also an understanding that there is no time frame in loss. A list of how to grieve what works what doesn't. After loss I find a lot of moms feel they have no purpose anymore. A list of how to take care of us now because all we feel is depression. How grief affects your health is really important. I thought I was grieving properly then I had my yearly ekg and found out I have afib atrial fibrillation. I had no symptoms at all. I'm now on a blood thinner. Grief affects your whole body mind and soul. It kills you from any joy hope and takes years from you. I'd like to see topics on how family friends avoid us after the funeral. No more calls no visits I'm on my own. On my own to deal with a pain I will never get over. It's like my daughter never existed no one mentions her name. Grief is a solitary journey and it's lonely devastating as we have been through the unthinkable unimaginable unbelievable unbearable. It's like taboo to talk about your loss no one wants to hear it. So it's groups like these that helps us have a place to rest our weary souls where they aren't welcomed anywhere else.

Create chapters for group support.

Maybe suggest books that could be helpful. Maybe a book exchange or book sharing with the group.

What changes would you like to see in the group? (continued)

Not sure as I don't know what the outreach efforts are. The more who know about this group, the more suffering and anxiety will be helped.

More Bible verses.

Share books/authors that are recommended.

More talk about the aspects of going through the different things surrounding your loved one being a victim of homicide - like the legal process, court, community responses to murder, etc.

More discussions on coping and adjusting.

It's perfect!

I enjoy the group, as is!

More questions or discussion topics to get people to share. Loved one's favorite animal, book, movie, vacation spot, etc.

Individual group meetings within each of the 50 states.

Be open to talking about things like have you received any profound messages from our departed. Because I have and would love to share.

Smaller groups within the groups. My son had special needs and passed away at a young age due to the flu. I would like to be connected with grieving mothers that can relate more to my situation.

Finding people that live in my area that are in the group

Tips on dealing with isolation and depression.

Maybe more focused group for each kind of loss?

Live conferences or meetings at different times and states.

Maybe more person to person conversations.

I think it's already pretty amazing.

I would like a small group for SIDS.

Smaller groups in addition to the general facebook posts.

More posts about losing a sibling.

Can you share how the Ellie's Way Group has influenced your journey?

(sample of responses)

Ellie's Way helped pull me out of a huge depression slump. The group helped give me purpose. It gave me a reason to get up, look at my phone, and continue on. I owe so much to this group already!

Has taught me to share our story and helped me to reach out to others who our grieving.

I joined just months after my daughter passed in 2015, the group was small but everyone reached out to me. I didn't feel so alone and I was just able to express my feelings and knew others related. Knowing that there is people that understands and that are hurting so bad but yet they help others and keep on going somehow, gives me the strength to keep trying.

Helped me realize I can use my experience to support others.

It's helped my faith more and gives me a peace of mind.

I was so lost and even with other children at home I struggled to get up out of bed. I blamed God and really just felt completely alone until I ran across this group. Although I read every message posted, I don't respond as I'm not good expressing myself but I am learning to communicate a little better. I don't feel alone now and I feel like I have gained more family that is there if I ever need them!

Helping others has helped me.

It showed me that I am not alone in my journey. That there are still caring people left in the world. It gives me the strength I need to keep going.

Helped me to step up and maybe give hope to others early in their grief journey

It's giving me hope and peace.

By holding strong to my faith.

This group has been with me through the wilderness, I am finding my way back to Jesus.

Almost everyday is a struggle for me when it comes with dealing with my loss but when I go to the Ellie's Way website and speak to other people, sometimes I find myself giving them encouragement which helps me forget about my pain. Strange how that works isn't it?

I personally get comfort in other's stories. My journey has been rough and I find reading/hearing from others I'm not so alone.

The fact that you have done so much since losing Ellie to help others is amazing. It just gives me hope that someday, maybe I can help others.

Can you share how the Ellie's Way Group has influenced your journey? (continued)

First, it ministers TO me. Next, it pulls me out of my shell to become engaged with others. I check it twice a day. Sometimes more.

Reading posts makes me feel that I'm not alone and there are others going through the same emotions. I also find it therapeutic when responding to other's posts. It feels good to try and uplift others.

I have began to learn to ask for help and support. I have started to learn to grieve in a healthy way. I am learning that is ok NOT to be ok sometimes. I am learning that the loss of my 2 boys is MY TRUTH..my journey and I'm sorry for whoever doesn't like it and I'm learning to be ok with others not being ok with that. I love Ellie's Way.

The group has helped me in so many ways when I feel depressed or lost I can always go and there's always someone there who makes me feel better.

I am a grief mom for 25 years, have done some grief group work and felt a way to support others in their journey and also people who knew how I felt at times!

Since I joined Ellie's Way in 2016, I've been able to talk more openly about my husband, his illness and passing. I've just recently been able to acknowledge my unborn angel (kept this quiet for too long). I now volunteer with the group. The healing has begun, even though some days are harder than others. Thank you, Ellie's Way!

Appreciation for what is good in my life.

I feel that people understand what I am going through and don't expect me to "get over it."

Helping others has helped me with my own grief. I feel comfortable sharing my stories about my losses and expressing my grief and pain.

You have given me friends to help and follow me on this horrible road.

It's just helped me learn its not the end of the road.

Yes. Helped my husband and I communicate better. I have made some incredible caring friends.

Ellie's Way gave me hope when all was lost.

It has made me see that I can live this new life.

Influences me to keep moving forward and Ellie's Way also gives me hope.

We all will lose and suffer loss and knowing that people care for one another and not just a few.

Can you share how the Ellie's Way Group has influenced your journey? (continued)

Sharing my experiences and sharing in other's experiences has been a lifeline to me. Tragedies happen every day and we need this space to process what's happened when those around us don't want to be reminded of it any longer. Thanks to all who make it possible.

I have shared and you have used my writings, thank you!

To be honest I haven't been consistent. I can get caught up in things that take much time and lose my opportunities with my surviving son, daughters, grands, and husband. I just love the opportunity to jump in when I'm able. Sometimes I get to missing my boys and wonder how can I neglect thinking about them. I come to Ellie's Way and I remember. It somehow helps me.

Ellie's way is pretty unique in that you truly seek to help and that to me has been quite awesome.

Other sites only offer to referee random conversations. I really like the proactive stance you take and it encourages me to see how that's done.

Ellie's way is the best group that I've seen. I'm very hopeful Ellie's Way can be a place every grieving parent can find the support and connections they need.

Encouragement, helping me to restore my faith, knowing that you all are there, understanding and compassion, recognizing your child's angelversary and birthday!

The Ellie's Way Group has been a great resource for me. I pray for those in despair. I try to encourage those who seem to need it. These things make ME feel better. If I have a difficult day and post about it, almost immediately someone somewhere lifts me up. The whole concept of being with others who are on the journey none of us would ever want to take is beneficial.

It has helped me be less angry with family and to trust my heart more. The Ellie's Way Group has helped me work through my pain from my loss.

It helped me to have hope again. It helped me want to keep living. To spread the love of God, and to never take one minute of life for granted.

I was lost for a long time after my husband's passing, this group lifted me up when I needed it.

Helped me heal. Led me to pray more for others.

Helped me realize I'm not alone and increased my faith and hope again.

I realize now how many people are struggling with deep debilitating loss. And that we care deeply about one another and want to help one another.

Connected me with others who are on a similar path, allowing me to share my struggles and triumphs, I feel like I may have helped others along the way.

Can you share how the Ellie's Way Group has influenced your journey? (continued)

On my darkest days -- Jesus and Ellie's Way!

Allows me to share who my Boys helped make me today!!! It is AWESOME!!!

Tremendous help on how to get through the day.

It's made me feel like I'm not alone, not be so isolated in my grief, opened me up to another world.

Gives me hope for tomorrow.

It is helping me find hope and a bit of joy. This journey is still very new to me.

They gave me hope and support and inspired me to want to do something similar in God's timing.

Deepened my faith and prayer time with God.

It gave me the strength to keep living.

It makes me feel not so alone or isolated, keeps me from wanting to withdraw...increases my faith, gives me hope and also the desire to want to focus on praying, encouraging, supporting others.

It's made me realize that no matter how alone you feel, you are never alone and it's helped me to reconnect with God. It also helped me through the anger part of grief by reading about the others journeys.

Reading others stories of loss and the comments of support and caring has made me feel a hope that I didn't think I ever would.

It helps me come back up for air when drowning in sorrow.

Gives me hope, wisdom and the reading Scripture has strengthened my faith and love for God.

Even when in pain, I can still rise up and help others in pain.

It has helped me to realize that I am not crazy or not abnormal! It has helped me to learn that grief is a process and it's different every day. It's not just stages you go through and you're better, it's a lifetime process that you slowly learn to navigate. There will be good days and then there will be days that you're back to day one. But this group is a huge blessing and has helped me a lot.

It gave me hope. I couldn't see the end of the despair and hopelessness. It helped me hold on until I could feel some hope.

It has given me hope and that I can survive this journey.

I have been able to speak more about my feelings, and not feel judged.

Can you share how the Ellie's Way Group has influenced your journey? (continued)

It gives me hope to see people who have walked through the horrific journey of child loss and how they are coping and thriving despite the eternal heartbreak it causes.

I nearly suicided after losing my son last September. Although I didn't directly say it, someone picked up on it and gently nudged. Now I'm back in college (@64!)

It has influenced my journey by showing me even on the sad dark grief days that by being grateful for our loved ones gives me hope that the future will get better as long as we keep moving forward.

This group gives me an opportunity to comfort other bereaved parents.

Giving me hope and understanding about grieving and hoping.

This group has taught me to not judge others and to be more compassionate toward others.

Has helped me try to focus on my blessings and to support others on this painful journey.

Given me hope.

Helped my grief, faith and given me purpose.

Encourages me when I read posts of people who are successful in dealing with loss.

Made each day more bearable.

Helping me silence my suicidal tendencies.

I believe it has turned my anger and my darkness into something I can deal with to go on living.

It lets me know even though I am having a hard time, there's other people dealing with more than me.

Ellie's Way is always there, right on my laptop or phone, whenever I need to talk. That is priceless to me. And I feel like I can help others a little more now that I have progressed past the raw grief from our own tragedy. I try to offer tips on how to survive and how to heal, as well as how to keep those memories alive.

It helped me understand that I can survive, and survive better by helping others, as others helped me.

Has shown me prayer works.

Strengthened my faith, showed me there are good, caring people in the world.

I feel stronger and I know my faith is stronger.

It's provided the words and encouragement for me to hold on on days when I thought I couldn't.

Can you share how the Ellie's Way Group has influenced your journey? (continued)

It has helped me in my downtime when I'm at my lowest. There is always someone to talk to. It's a wonderful group.

It made me realize I can get through my grief.

It's encouraging to see how Ellie's parents keep on with what they do in her memory.

It has opened my eyes to see that I'm not alone that there are many people who have lost a child and are on the same journey. Many more people than I could ever imagine. It has helped me and I'm able to help others by just being here for them.

My loss has been 24 years ago in March. I can support other parents who are anywhere on the spectrum/journey of loss but also get that same support in return.

The world can be so cruel and cold. I feel safe with this group, and I'm so thankful to have found this wonderful group.

I would not know what to do! Little Ellie is smiling so big down at her daddy for creating something like this that truly came from GOD!

I don't feel so alone and feel I can better support friends and family with their losses.

It has lifted me out of the bottomless pit of despair.