

Spiritual Crisis Network (SCN) Sheffield Peer Support Group - Frequently Asked Questions

What is it?

The Spiritual Crisis Network is a not-for-profit organisation which aims to promote understanding and support for those going through profound personal transformation ('spiritual crises'), and the carers and professionals who support them. The SCN Sheffield Peer support group is one of several such local groups in the UK.

The word 'spiritual' in the group's title refers to the process of finding personal meaning in unusual experiences, rather than making them fit any particular religious, psychological or philosophical framework.

Who comes to meetings?

Membership of the group changes over time, but at the moment there are about 3 or 4 members present at each meeting. Some people come regularly for many months, while others just check in from time to time. Previous members have included people who identify themselves as having had spiritual crisis experiences, people who want to integrate experiences arising from their own spiritual practice and people with a professional or academic interest in spirituality and mental health. Everyone is welcome.

What does the group talk about?

Previous discussions have included sharing of people's own personal experiences, ideas about what helps in a spiritual crisis situation, discussion of psychological theories of spiritual crisis and consciousness, special presentations.

The character of the group evolves over time as a result of the contributions and changing interests of members.

What is the structure of the group?

The group lasts for about an hour and a half. Each group starts with a short meditative silence, followed by a 'check in' round where all members have the opportunity to briefly say something about themselves if they wish. The main topic for discussion are usually agreed by the group on the day, unless a topic has already been agreed at a previous session. The group closes with a 'check out' round where everyone has the opportunity to say something about their experience of the group that month, and/or an exercise to help with 'grounding'.

What support is available afterwards?

Although the group is not specifically intended to be therapeutic or experiential, members sometimes report that discussions can trigger emotions or personal memories. For this reason, we encourage everyone to be particularly mindful of themselves and each other when leaving the meetings and travelling home. We sometimes go to a local cafe for food or a (non-alcoholic) drink afterwards to help with making the adjustment back towards everyday life, and everyone is welcome to join us.

We can also recommend sources of support for people requiring more in depth information.

There is not currently any active online forum for the Sheffield SCN Group. Please talk to us if you are

interested in being a part of such a group or helping to maintain/set it up. We invite anyone on the mailing list who is not able to attend to send in any questions or topics they would like the group to discuss, and we can provide feedback via email.

How much does it cost?

Membership is free, but we ask for a small donation at each meeting to cover room hire costs.

How long has the group been running?

Historically, there was a spiritual crisis group set up and run by Frances Goodall that ran for many years in Sheffield. Fran worked with Mike and John to relaunch the group in its present form, and it has been running in this format since April 2013.