

Support Group Meeting Agenda

1 Welcome

2 Read

Group Guidelines +
Principles of Support

3 Check In

(1-2 minutes)

4 Group Discussion

5 Closing

Revised May 2021

Group Guidelines

The Group Guidelines tell us how we are going to care for each other in the group. They provide the mutual consideration, acceptance and protection that are often hard to find in the real world. We will follow these guidelines at each meeting to create the sanctuary and safe place we need.

1 Start and stop on time

Yes, you will get home at the appropriate hour!

2 Time limit for check in

1-2 minutes. If each of us told our entire story at every meeting, nothing else would ever get done.

3 Absolute confidentiality

What we say here, stays here.

4 Be respectful

Give me grace and space to get through this trouble.

5 Be mindful of others:

no monopolizing or crosstalk

6 Keep it in the here and now

We're more effective when we focus on what's happening right now.

7 Empathize with each other's situation

Even if you don't understand, know that I am doing my very best.

Principles of Support

The Principles of Support represent what we are striving for as we struggle to come to terms with mental illness. This is our belief system regarding universal, necessary truths that guide and strengthen us when life deals us this particular challenge.

- 1** We will see the individual first, not the illness.
- 2** We recognize mental illnesses are medical illnesses that may have environmental triggers.
- 3** We understand that mental illnesses are traumatic events.
- 4** We aim for better coping skills.
- 5** We find strength in sharing experiences.
- 6** We reject stigma and do not tolerate discrimination.
- 7** We won't judge anyone's pain as less than our own.
- 8** We forgive ourselves and reject guilt.
- 9** We embrace humor as healthy.
- 10** We accept we cannot resolve all problems.
- 11** We expect a better future in a realistic way.
- 12** We will never give up hope!

Predictable Stages of Emotional Reactions

Dealing with Catastrophic Events

Crisis/Chaos/Shock
Denial; "Normalizing"
Hoping against Hope

Needs

Support
Comfort
Empathy for confusion
Help finding resources
Early intervention
Prognosis
Empathy for pain
NAMI

Learning to Cope

Anger/Guilt/Resentment
Recognition
Grief

Needs

Vent feelings
Self-care
Education
Skill training
Networking
Co-operation from system
Letting go
Keep hope
NAMI

Moving into Advocacy

Understanding
Acceptance
Advocacy/Action

Needs

Restoring balance in life
Activism
Responsiveness from system
NAMI