

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
2. Time limit for Check In
3. Absolute confidentiality
4. Be respectful
5. Be mindful of others; no monopolizing or cross talk
6. Let's Keep it in the here and now
7. Empathize with each other's situation

Agenda

Welcome
Group Guidelines
Principles of Support
Check-in (2 minutes)
Group Discussion
End on Time

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 that 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 solve all problems.
11. We expect a better future in a realistic way.
12. We will never give up hope.

STAGES OF EMOTIONAL RESPONSES

I. DEALING WITH CATASTROPHIC EVENTS

Crisis/Chaos/Shock
Denial: “normalizing”
Hoping Against Hope

NEEDS:

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

Guide for Check-in

(2 minutes)

Name

Relative with mental illness

Diagnosis

Number of years ill

What’s going on right now?

II. LEARNING TO COPE

Anger/Guilt/Resentment
Recognition
Grief

NEEDS:

*Vent feelings *Keep hope *Education
*Self-care *Networking *Skill training
*Letting go *Co-op from System *NAMI

III. MOVING INTO ADVOCACY

Understanding
Acceptance
Advocacy/Action

NEEDS:

*Activism *Restoring balance in life
*Responsiveness from System *NAMI