

New Paradigm Counseling

New Ideas - New Actions - New Results

SUGGESTIONS FOR GETTING THE MOST FROM YOUR GROUP EXPERIENCE

- **CONFIDENTIALITY**: Sharing deeply takes trust and courage. For you to feel safe, confidentiality is essential. We understand that what is talked about in the support group needs to stay within the support group.
- **BELONGING**: Feeling a sense of belonging in a group is very powerful. Being a part of the support group adds structure and meaning to our lives as group members.
- **FEELING**: Use feeling words. Speak your truth, rather than expressing theories or ideas. You are not here to impress each other with what we know, you are here to find and share who you are and to give and receive support in being all of who you are.
- **HONESTY**: Bringing feelings, ideas, and beliefs out into the open rather than “stuffing” them promotes greater mental health. In group, be respectful of others and be honest as possible, expressing ourselves as we really are and feel. If we know things are a certain way, we do not try to pretend they are not that way.
- **RESPECT**: Listen to others when they talk. Avoid doing other things while people are talking. Listen without comment or interruption until the idea has been shared. Only one conversation happening at once.
- **SUPPORT**: You are here to offer support, not “fix” or “solve” someone else’s problems. You are here to listen to everyone and to let everyone be heard.
- **ACCEPTANCE**: There are no “right” or “wrong” answers and no “good” or “bad” feelings. Everyone has something significant and important to share and it is important that everyone feel comfortable doing so without fear or judgment.
- **CONNECTION**: Find opportunities to talk with others in the group who have similar experiences as well as learn from those whose experiences are different.
- **LEADERSHIP**: You are all responsible for asking for what you need from the group. The primary role of the group facilitator is to ensure the structure, safety, and stability of the group. We are all responsible for the ongoing health of the group.

Partially adapted from *AIDS, Medicine, & Miracles*, “Small Group Sharing Suggestions” and “Ground Rules for Group Sessions” by Gendlin & Beebe

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