

Abuse Survivors Coalition

Ground Rules for Support Group Meetings

1. Everything said in the group is confidential.
2. Please do not share with anyone the names or stories you learn in this room.
3. We share feelings and experiences just as they are. There are no right or wrong statements.
4. Each person knows what is best for her or himself, and therefore carries the primary responsibility for her or his well-being during the meeting. If at any time, persons need to leave or take a break, for any reason, they are free to do so.
5. Everyone's presence is appreciated and can be a source of healing for others. No one is required to speak during the meeting. Listening is a gift, too.
6. When speaking, use "I" statements, rather than "we," "you," or "they." Please focus on your feelings, not opinions.
7. Avoid individual problem-solving. Individuals can learn from one another's experiences to solve their own problems.
8. When a person speaks, the others should listen actively, with the goal of relating the speaker's experiences to their own. Only one person should be speaking at any given time, with no interruptions from others.
9. Giving or asking for advice is not allowed. It is empowering and healing for us to gather ideas that can benefit us. No one of us is an expert and no one knows what is best for another.
10. The sharing that takes place is a gift to everyone in the room. Please don't ask questions seeking more information. What each person chooses to share is appreciated and sufficient.
11. At times, there may be silence during the meeting. This provides a moment to reflect on what has been shared. No one needs to feel anxious or responsible to break the silence.

The session is divided into two parts. During the first part, everyone is invited to share his or her experiences and feelings. No one should speak more than once during this time. The second part consists of an open discussion where all are invited to share what they learned from the previous sharing.