



## How to be an Effective Support Group

*Support groups are formed for a variety of reasons and no two groups are exactly the same. Effective groups have many similarities. Some common areas will involve their organisational structure and the group processes.*

### Organisational Structure

*The group*

- *agrees on a common mission, goal and purpose*
- *maintains a good balance between informality and structure*
- *provides mutual support and other related helpful and fun activities*
- *has access to resources e.g. a meeting space, mailing address, phone,*
- *maintains positive relationships with the appropriate professional services*
- *ensures decisions are made using an approach that develops mutual agreement*

### Group Processes

*The group processes ensures*

- *the even distribution of opportunities to help within the group (including leadership opportunities)*
- *members are encouraged to help each other*
- *to achieve individual goals,*
- *by providing positive feedback,*
- *by sharing personal feelings, concerns, successes and failures*
- *by being non judgmental*
- *members are supported in their attempts to apply new strategies*
- *that a variety of principles and techniques in dealing with problems within the group are used*
- *that members **maintain confidentiality** within the group*
- *more than one or two leaders, core members or "energy" persons are developed*
- *social aspects are included at meetings*
- *that meetings are held in settings that are positive and encouraging*
- *that meetings provide positive learning experiences*

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