



GUIDELINES FOR ONLINE SUPPORT GROUPS

PLEASE NOTE, IT IS EACH GROUP MEMBER'S RESPONSIBILITY TO ABIDE BY THESE GUIDELINES. VIOLATION OF THESE GUIDELINES MAY RESULT IN BEING REMOVED FROM THE GROUP.



1. CONFIDENTIALITY

I agree that everything said in group is strictly confidential. I agree to keep secret the names of other group members and what is said in group. I understand that the exception to this confidentiality applies only to the clinician facilitating the group if they believe someone is in danger. *Recording group sessions, taking pictures, or screenshots is strictly prohibited.*



2. PARTICIPATION

I understand that I have the right to pass and am not required to share during group. I also understand that I will benefit more from group if I am able to be vulnerable in sharing and actively participating.



3. OFFER SUPPORT, NOT ADVICE

I will not give advice to others unless it is asked for. I understand group is about supporting one another without trying to "solve" one's concern.



4. LISTENING

I will listen empathically without interrupting others. I will allow time for each person who wants to share.



5. RESPECT

I will be respectful of other group member's opinions, statements, ideas, and experiences, even when they may be quite different to my own. If you believe someone is being inappropriate, privately inform the group facilitator.



PREPARING FOR GROUP:

- **Treat your online group the same way you would treat an in-person group.** Give yourself 5 to 10 minutes before the session starts to check in with yourself and create mind space for group the same way you would while seated in a physical waiting room.
- **Confidentiality:** Sit in a quiet and confidential space where you can focus, engage, and express yourself. There may not be anyone in the room with you.
- **Limit Distractions & Noise:** Turn off or mute all other apps or notifications on your device that may distract you or interrupt group. If you are on a laptop, do not type as the noise is disruptive.
- **Check Connectivity:** Make sure your WiFi is working, device is charged, and audio and video are working prior to the session.
- **Eye Contact:** Set up your device so that you don't need to hold it. Position yourself and the camera in a way where it's easy to maintain eye contact with group members. This will make you feel connected to one another.
- **Clean your webcam:** This will help everyone in the group accurately read one another's emotions.



DURING GROUP:

- **Video camera must be turned on** in order to see one another, just as you would in an in-person group.
- **Use the mute function** when not speaking. This allows us to eliminate background noise.
- **Raise your hand** for turn taking. The facilitator will make sure everyone has a chance to speak.



AFTER GROUP:

- **Self-Care:** Group is a very unique space from the rest of our lives. Take some time to transition back into your day or evening.
 - Consider leaving the room you were in and practicing some form of self-care – a gentle walk, listening to music, write in a journal, or speak to a close friend, etc.
 - If you feel like you need to talk to your facilitator, send them a private message.