

With Hope In Mind ©

Support Group *Participant's Manual* ©

*Coming together is a beginning;
Keeping together is progress;
Working together is success;
Understanding and healing
come from success.*

provided through Center of Understanding: Education, Support & Advocacy

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What Can I Expect at a Support Group?

Various Roles in Support Groups

Facilitator

- Opens the meeting on time, identifies who will share first and reminds the group of closing on time with positive focus.
- Assists with creating an environment where people can work positively and collaboratively.
- Displays no authority over others.
- Agrees to perform certain tasks during the meeting.
- Volunteers and undergoes special training.
- Functions as “one of the group” (other than opening and closing tasks).
- Encourages group members to share.
- Encourages and participates in the problem management techniques.

Greeter

- Responsible for greeting all newcomers to the support group.
- Responsible for maintaining files with introductory and support materials provided through mental health organizations.
- Follow-up with contact of newcomers after the first meeting, encouraging continued participation in support groups and referring to education classes and monthly meetings.

Crisis Contact Person

- Responsible for maintaining a list of mental health services in a specific area.
- Responsible for provision of that information to those in crisis.
- Willing to return telephone calls for crisis situations.
- Maintains close contact with local affiliate to ensure that the list of resources is updated.

Support Group Member

- Responsible for participating in and understanding the Guidelines.
- Responsible for participating in and understanding the Affirmations, With Hope In Mind.
- Participates in the family education workshops.
- Provides support to others in need.
- Shares his/her own feelings openly.
- Participates in problem management techniques.
- Is active in creating an environment where everyone can work together.
- Believes in the power of people sharing together in a group.

Focus Statement

Who We Are/Why We're Here

We are spouses, partners, parents, children, siblings, family members, and friends. We come from many different walks of life but have a common heart. We gather at this time to share our mutual experiences of living with the effects of someone else's mental illness. We believe that our life situations can and will improve as we develop awareness, understanding, resources and self-care skills. Our primary purpose is to share hope and strength with each other that we may improve quality of life for individuals with mental illness, their families, and our communities today.

This is a support group meeting of the With Hope in Mind family education and support program sponsored by NAMI _____. For consistency, this meeting will end at _____. At that time you will be free to leave or stay awhile and fellowship. We will begin our wrap-up about 15 minutes before that time and will have reminders along the way.

As we begin, we would like to remind everyone that you always have the right to speak as well as the right to decline to speak. You may decline by simply saying "pass." Your decision will be respected by all. We would also like to reinforce that this is a safe place. What is said in this group and who you see in this group must remain in the group. These principles come from our guidelines and affirmations which constitute our core beliefs and will guide us through this meeting. While there may be some similarities in our guidelines and affirmations, this is not a twelve step program. Our affirmations are viewed as goals to live by rather than ordered steps. Let us spend our sharing time with the resolve that while we may live with the effects of mental illness in our lives, we choose to live in mental wellness.

Now, let's begin by reading the With Hope in Mind Meeting Guidelines and Affirmations.

Family Support Groups

MEETING GUIDELINES, *With Hope In Mind*

- 1. Meetings begin and end on time.**
- 2. Members are encouraged to use first and last names. To use only first names, or insist on being anonymous, implies that there is a shame in mental illness.**
- 3. Discuss the “here and now.”**
- 4. What is said in the group stays in the group. Who attends the group remains confidential.**
- 5. Be an active listener.**
- 6. Talk on a feeling level.**
- 7. Admit to your fears before trying to help others.**
- 8. Remember that honesty helps understanding.**
- 9. Everyone is given the opportunity to speak as well as the right to decline to speak.**
- 10. Advice and guidance are given when requested.**

Family Support Groups

AFFIRMATIONS, *With Hope In Mind*

1. **We acknowledge and accept the fact that someone we care about has a mental illness.**
2. **We accept that we have no control over this illness or the individual with the illness. We only have control over our own actions and thoughts.**
3. **We let go of all feelings of guilt concerning this mental illness, for we are not to blame for the illness or its effects.**
4. **We understand and recognize that mental illness has had an impact in all aspects of our lives.**
5. **We forgive ourselves for mistakes we have made, and we free others for wrongs we feel have been intended toward us.**
6. **We choose to be positive and healthy. We choose to return to a healthy focus on our own lives.**
7. **We keep our expectations for ourselves and for persons with mental illness at realistic levels.**
8. **We believe that we have personal inner strength which will support and sustain us through crisis.**
9. **We appreciate the strength and validity of our support system and we will strive to sustain it for the benefit of all.**
10. **We acknowledge that there is a Higher Power to whom we will turn for support and encouragement as we learn to release feelings toward situations over which we have no control.**

Our focus, With Hope In Mind...

We may not think we can reach it, but we will climb anyway.

We may not think we'll be heard, but we will speak anyway.

We may not think we can change things, but we will try anyway.

~inspired by Maya Angelou

Brief Introductions

Guideline Reminder

Guideline 4 What is said in the group stays in the group.
Who attends the group remains confidential.

Guideline 9 Everyone is given the opportunity to speak as well as the right to decline to speak.

Your name

Name of the person with mental illness

Their diagnosis

Where you are in the recovery process

Traumatic Event Recovery Process

I. SHOCK AND DISBELIEF AND ISOLATION

- Shock
- Denial
- Feeling numb or unresponsive

FAMILY NEEDS: Sympathy ~ Comfort ~ Delivery from guilt
Unconditional friendship
Basic information on diagnosis/prognosis
Concrete advice and direction

II. DEVELOPING AWARENESS/ANGER, BARGAINING, DEPRESSION

- Feel raw and exposed
- Preoccupation with illness; with ill relative
- Anxiety; restlessness
- Anger/guilt
- Prolonged stress/fatigue
- Grief

FAMILY NEEDS: Encouragement to vent feelings
Recognition of their sacrifices and devotion
Self-care ~ Hope ~ Empathy
Information about biological causes
Information about services
Encouragement to let go
Support groups

III. HEALING AND RENEWAL/RESOLUTION AND ACCEPTANCE/ADVOCACY

- Understanding and acceptance of the illness
- Return to focus on self and others in family
- Involvement in activities that improve life of relative

FAMILY NEEDS: Continued encouragement to express grief
Recognition of determination and dedication
Permission to have fun
Opportunities to work to improve the system and to help others
Patience with frustration at the slow progress of change
Information on policy issues ~ Research
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Attitude

I Promise Myself

To be so accepting of my circumstances that I can have peace of mind.

To talk about awareness and acceptance of my life events to others.

To make my friends feel that there is something special about them.

To have courage to remember the positive things shared in life.

To reflect on, to work toward and expect only the best in life.

To be enthusiastic about the positive changes for others.

To forget the mistakes of the past, pressing on to greater achievements of the future.

To wear a cheerful countenance and give every living creature I meet a smile.

To give time toward the improvement of myself and my abilities.

To be too strong for fear and too happy to permit the presence of trouble.

To let others be a part of my life and accept them as they are.

To remember that others are in different levels of acceptance.

To remember to accept myself...and work toward my fullest potential..

My Life is My Attitude