

AFFIRMATIONS:

- 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 brain disorder for we are not to blame for the illness or its effects.**
- 4. We understand and recognize that mental illness has had an impact on 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 the person with mental illness at realistic levels.**
- 8. We believe that we have the personal inner strength which will support and sustain us through crisis.**
- 9. We appreciate the strength and validity of this 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.**

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Meeting Guidelines

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 brain disorders.
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.

Traumatic Event Recovery Process

(THE 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 help others
Patience with frustration at the slow progress of change
Information on policy issues ~ Research
Support groups

Problem Management

Define the problem: No pile-ups **Owner**

Past **Owner**

- **Who?**
- **What?**
- **When?**
- **Where?**
- **How?**

- **Additional information needed** **Others**
(may direct additional questions to facilitator)

Past: Tried it. Learn from what didn't work.
Owner

Options **Others**

- **Be creative**
- **Be positive**
- **Be realistic as to emotions**
- **Be open to suggestions**
- **Be flexible**

What to do **Owner**

- **Choose plans of action 1...2...3...**
- **Identify partial choices**
- **Share results/emotions**