

Support Group Startup Checklist

Work through this before your first meeting. Most of it takes an afternoon, and the referral section is the part you will be glad you did calmly rather than in the moment.

1 Define the group

- ☐ 1 Write one sentence describing exactly who this group is for. Be specific rather than broad.
- ☐ 2 Decide whether this is peer support or clinically facilitated, and state it plainly in every description.
- ☐ 3 If it is peer support, make sure nothing you publish could be read as offering treatment.
- ☐ 4 Decide whether the group is open (anyone can join anytime) or closed (a fixed cohort for a set number of sessions).
- ☐ 5 Set a maximum size. Most peer groups work best under about twelve people.

2 Privacy decisions, made in advance

- ☐ 6 Decide who can see the member list, and confirm members cannot see each other's contact details unless they choose to share.
- ☐ 7 Decide whether joining the group is visible to anyone outside it.
- ☐ 8 Decide what, if anything, is ever said about attendance outside the room.
- ☐ 9 Choose a platform where participation is not attached to a public social profile.
- ☐ 10 Write your privacy commitment in plain language and give it to every new member.

3 Ground rules to read aloud every meeting

- ☐ 11 Confidentiality: what is said here stays here.
- ☐ 12 No cross-talk: one person speaks at a time, without interruption.
- ☐ 13 No unsolicited advice: share experience rather than instruction.
- ☐ 14 Everyone can pass. Attending without speaking is full participation.
- ☐ 15 No recording, no photos.

- ☐ 16 Read these at the start of every meeting, not just the first one.

4 Prepare for what a group cannot hold

- ☐ 17 Compile local crisis line numbers and keep them accessible at every meeting.
- ☐ 18 Build a short list of therapists or clinicians who work in your group's subject area.
- ☐ 19 Decide who on your team responds if someone discloses they are in danger.
- ☐ 20 Agree what the facilitator does in the moment, and what happens afterwards.
- ☐ 21 Know the limits of what you are offering, and say them out loud when someone joins.

5 Logistics and rhythm

- ☐ 22 Fix a day, time, and location, and keep them the same.
- ☐ 23 Confirm the space is private, accessible, and does not require walking past a public sign-in.
- ☐ 24 Name a facilitator and at least one backup.
- ☐ 25 Decide the meeting shape: opening, check-in, main discussion, closing.
- ☐ 26 Plan the first six meetings before the first one happens.

6 Communication, the thing that decides survival

- ☐ 27 Pick one place where the meeting schedule always lives.
- ☐ 28 Choose a channel that reaches every member who opted in, not one that ranks posts.
- ☐ 29 Set up somewhere to hold reading, referrals, and resources between meetings.
- ☐ 30 Create a way for a new person to find and join without making a public post about it.
- ☐ 31 Make sure the group owns its records, so the group survives a change of facilitator.

Want all of this handled in one place?

Kannect puts events, members, messaging and resources under one roof, and reaches every member who opted in, every time. Plans start at \$29/mo with a 7-day free trial.

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