

Group Guidelines

- Confidentiality:** What is said and done in the group stays in the group. Protecting each others' privacy is the "golden rule" of groups.
- Self-focus:** We are here to work on ourselves, to share our own experience, thoughts, and feelings.
- Limit advice-giving:** We do not advise, analyze, or "fix" others. We listen and support each other so others can find their own answers. Only give advice if it is asked for by the speaker.
- Active Listening** When someone else has the floor we listen to them and acknowledge what they say. This gives them the signal that we are listening. Listening shows respect (without having to agree). We don't interrupt the speaker or cross-talk to others. We listen for the feelings, ask clarifying questions, summarize to the speaker what we think she or he is saying.
- Sharing the Floor** When we have the floor we recognize that others need to speak, too. We share the floor by limiting our own sharing time.
- Speak only about those present** We talk only about members if they are present. Talking about members that are absent robs them of the benefit of getting feedback. It also makes the group unsafe for everyone.
- Use "I" language** We speak about our own feelings and responses to what others say. If someone says something that we have feelings about we can say, "I feel _____ when I hear that or see that..." Or, "I would like if you did _____ instead of _____." We talk about the behavior not what we think the other person's motives might be. We don't assume.
- Attendance** We attend groups consistently and show up on time. **Start of group:** After :10 minutes from the start of group there is no admittance to the first hour of group. You may wait and be admitted for the second hour if you choose to wait. **Second hour:** For the second hour there is no admittance to group if you are late from the break.
- Body Language** Remember that how we say something can be more important than what we say.
- Triggers** Telling "war stories" that "glorify" addict behavior can be triggering to others in the group. We avoid graphic descriptions (it puts triggering pictures in the minds of other people). We should use general descriptions and check it out if we think others may have been triggered.
- Problem Solving** If a problem comes up in the group it is appropriate for the group to stop and work through the problem in a respectful way. We use assertive behavior (not aggression or passivity) as the guideline for finding healthy solutions.