

Peer-Led Support Group Rules for the U.S. Pain Foundation

These rules are designed to create a supportive and inclusive environment in which group participants can share their experiences, find solace in one another's company, and learn effective coping strategies from peers.

1. **This is a Peer-Led Support Group, not a therapy group.** This group is not a substitute for professional medical or psychological advice, nor will such advice be provided. None of the peer support group leaders are part of your medical team, even if they are healthcare professionals.
2. **All Peer-Led Support Groups are confidential.** What is shared in the group stays within the group.
3. **Discussion of suicidal thoughts and self-injury are NOT allowed. If you are in crisis and are having active suicidal thoughts or self-injury, do not attend group. You are in need of immediate assistance and need to call or text the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline at 988 or call 911.** (View the "What To Do in a Crisis" PDF for further guidance).
4. **If you would like to speak, raise your hand and you will be called on by the peer support group leader.** Please limit your response to 2-3 minutes and keep to the topic of discussion. Everyone will have a chance to speak.
5. **Offer support and encouragement.** Keep in mind that each person's experience with pain is unique. Feel free to share your personal journey and coping strategies, but refrain from offering unsolicited advice and refrain from attempting to diagnose others. Discrimination and rudeness will not be tolerated.
6. **Respect each other's boundaries.** If someone doesn't wish to share, it's important to honor their choice. Respecting boundaries also means not contacting peer support group leaders outside of the group.
7. **Promoting, selling, or endorsing specific treatments, medications, doctors, or services is not allowed in groups. This is not the space to discuss politics or religion.**
8. **No drinking alcohol, smoking, or vaping during group. No coming to group intoxicated or high.**
9. **If you need to adjust positions or move, turn off your camera to do so as some people have sensitivities to movement. As soon as you are situated, turn your camera back on. Remember to keep your camera on at all times, except when adjusting your position, to maintain confidentiality.**

If you do not follow these rules, your peer support group leader will respectfully interrupt you and remind you of the rules. These rules are strictly enforced for the benefit of everyone. Peer support group leaders are authorized to immediately remove a participant from group who is violating any of these rules without prior notice.