

HOW TO FORM A SUPPORT GROUP

General Guidelines for Starting a Women's Support Group

1. Find or make some sort of promotional piece to create interest. Be sure to include a contact person and phone number.
2. Get the word out! Distribute your promotional piece to targeted audiences through CHADD & ADDA meetings, Women's Centers, Social and religious agencies, public service announcements on local radio and TV, etc.
3. Ask prospective members to call the contact person to confirm their interest. Gather information from them such as age, address, phone number, email address, length of time since diagnosis and willingness to participate in the group. Also ask about a convenient time, day of the week and place for them to meet, and any skills they might have that would benefit the group.
4. Plan your initial meeting for a reasonably convenient date, time and place that suits most women who will be coming. Keep in mind children, work and other responsibilities.
5. One to two nights before the scheduled meeting, send out notification by email of the first meeting and make a reminder call to any that have expressed an interest in the group. Meetings should be held at a centrally located, neutral place (such as a coffeeshop, library, etc.)
6. Have a general idea of how you want the group to work, but spend time during the first meeting soliciting goals and ideas from other members.
7. Remember most group members will have ADHD. Meetings may at times be slightly chaotic. There will be pain, exuberance, and some unrealistic personal expectations (some members may want to be 'fixed' – not a function of the group). Gently lead the group towards agreed upon goals.
8. Find a way to keep up and get out by email or snail mail (remember postage) an ongoing printed communication to all members to build a 'connectedness' among members.

9. Be attuned to members who might need additional support (Extra phone attention, etc).
10. Be PREPARED for the group to change and take on its own life.
11. Stick with it and support the group even if it's not exactly what you envisioned. It's always fun to see what your baby grows up and becomes on its own.

Suggested Guidelines for Your Support Group

1. Maintain confidentiality
2. Use 'I' Statements (resist 'fixing' other people)
3. Undertake everything in moderation
4. Honor commitments to self and group
5. Arrive on time for meetings
6. All Group decisions, unless urgent in nature, will require a quorum of six members in order to better reflect the wishes of the groups as a whole.
7. Absentee members should honor decisions made by those who were present at meetings
8. Honor each individual's three minutes of uninterrupted time for an opening statement at the beginning of each meeting
9. Avoid interruptions and simultaneous conversations
10. Be alert to passing of time during the meeting
11. Have a specific time to end each meeting and be adamant about enforcing it.