

SUPPORT GROUP GUIDELINES

Many PFLAG chapters have found that support group guidelines that are read, distributed or posted at the beginning of every meeting are critical to providing a safe space for people to share concerns. These guidelines can also be helpful in dealing with disruptive people – if they are consistently violating the guidelines, they can be asked to leave. Here are some suggestions:

1. Our support groups focus on problems and feelings in regard to coming out to, or relationships with, families, friends and our larger communities. We understand that we are all here to better understand our own feelings about sexual orientation and gender identity and to support each other as we learn to embrace our own sexual or gender identity or that of our loved ones.
2. Confidentiality is a top priority. Nothing said in this room will leave this room, nor will people be pressed to share more information than they are comfortable with here or after the meeting.
3. We provide support by listening carefully, sharing our own stories, and relating our own problem solving experiences. We are sensitive to each person's stage in the acceptance process.
4. We each speak from our own experiences, and respect the experiences of others.
5. We are supportive rather than confrontational. Anyone who is uncomfortable may make this known to the facilitator. Everyone will be given the chance to speak. In addition, each person is asked to be conscious of the amount of time they are using and to allow others to speak. No one person is permitted to monopolize the conversation.
6. We are considerate of the group and do not have side discussions. Each person's remarks are important to the whole group.
7. The facilitator will intervene when the guidelines are not followed and redirect the discussion.
8. Our main concern is to create a supportive atmosphere for all group participants.
Thank you for helping to support the family feeling we have at our support meetings.

