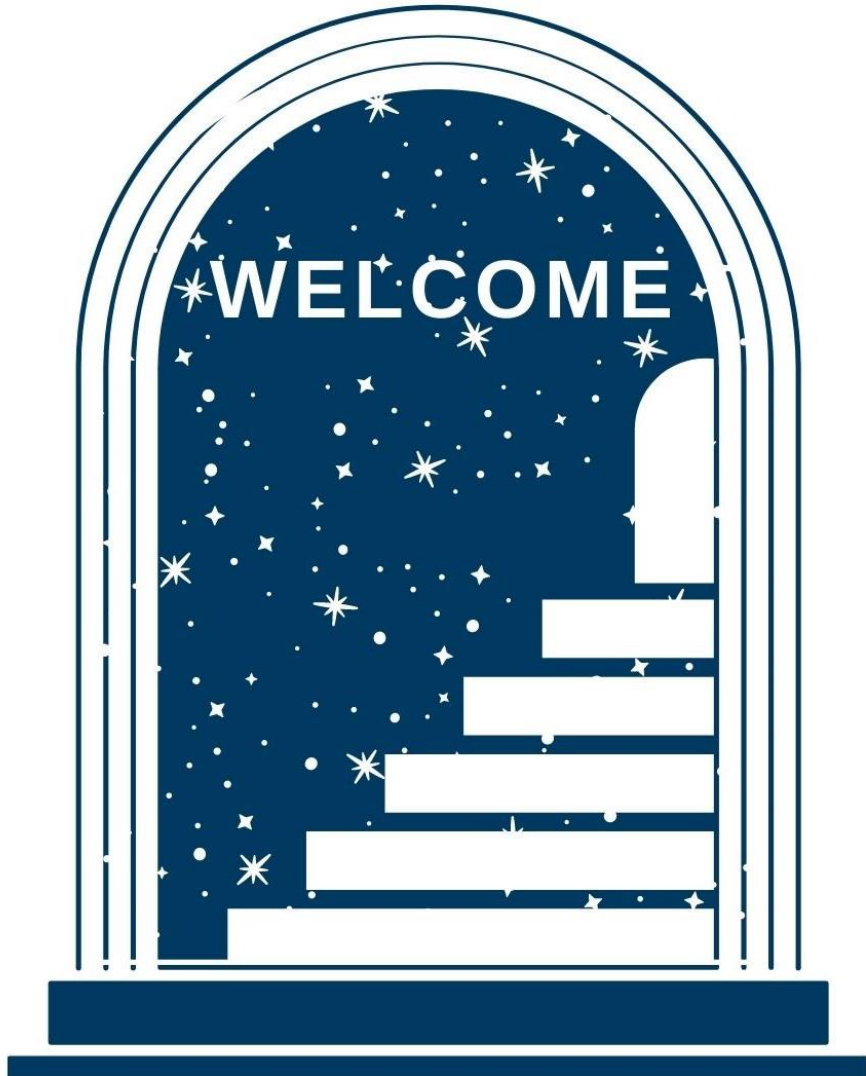


A decorative floral wreath made of green leaves and small blue and purple flowers, framing the central text.

Support Group Facilitator Training

mecasa
MAINE COALITION AGAINST
SEXUAL ASSAULT

2023



Training Overview



Who we are

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SEXUAL ASSAULT



Technology Plan

Training Purpose



Provide the skills and knowledge necessary to confidentially co-facilitate an outreach, traditional, or experiential support group



In-person or online



With an experienced co-facilitator.

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Training Objectives

SKILLS:

- Prepare, plan, and facilitate a support group.
- Work with a co-facilitator.
- Assess & respond to common group dynamics & participant needs.

KNOWLEDGE:

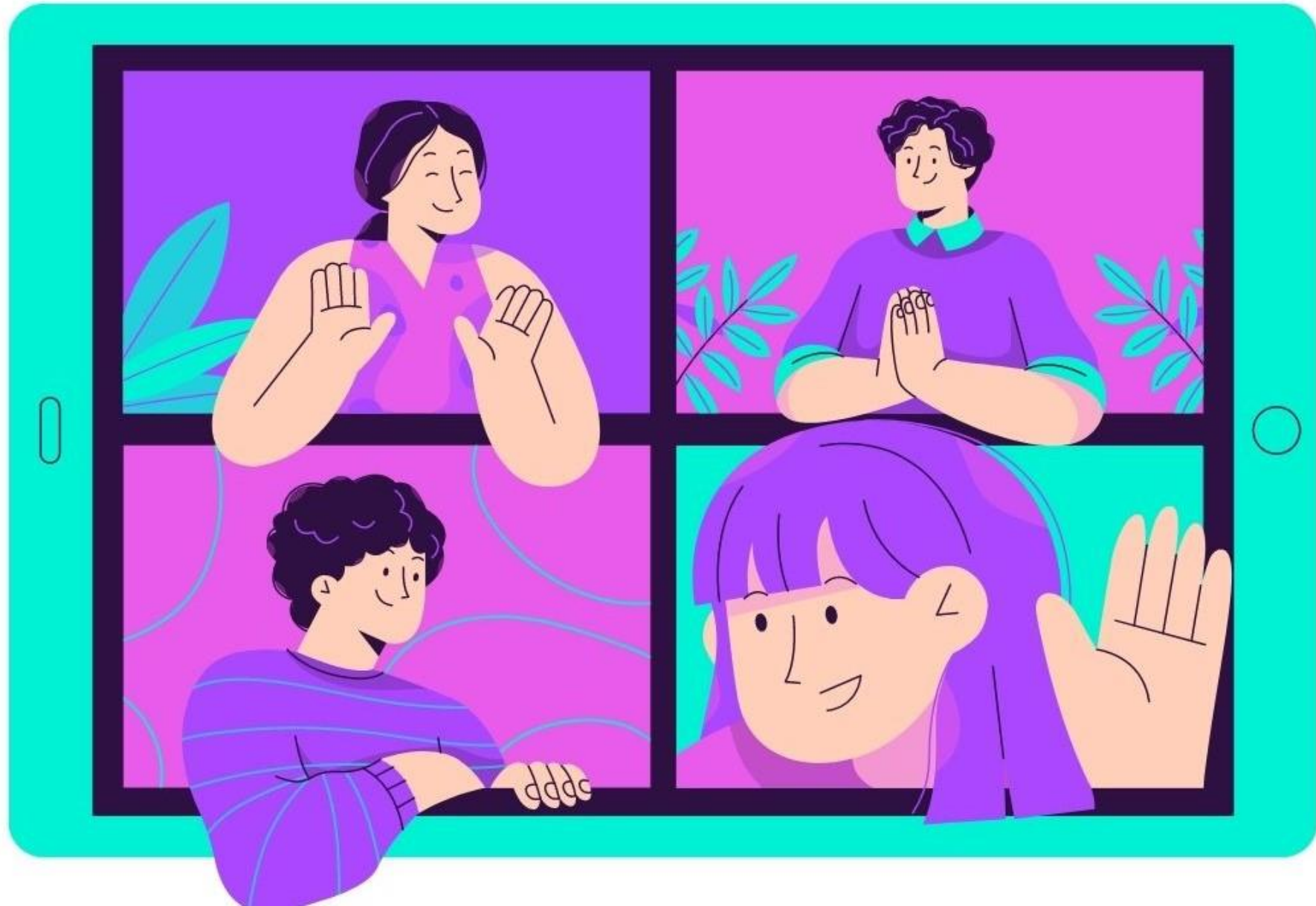
- Understand the purpose and value of a facilitator in a support group, including the characteristics, skills, and role.
- Describe the characteristics, purpose, and value of a different types of advocate-facilitated support group.
- Recognize self-care strategies.
- Understand how to build a support group session agenda.

TRAINING ACTIVITIES

- Whole Group – Lecture and Discussion
- Facilitator Modeling
- Group Reflection
- Small Group Conversations
- Whole Group – Report outs from activities
- Individual Reflection
- Facilitator Manual – Written Reference
- Practice Facilitation – Skill Building

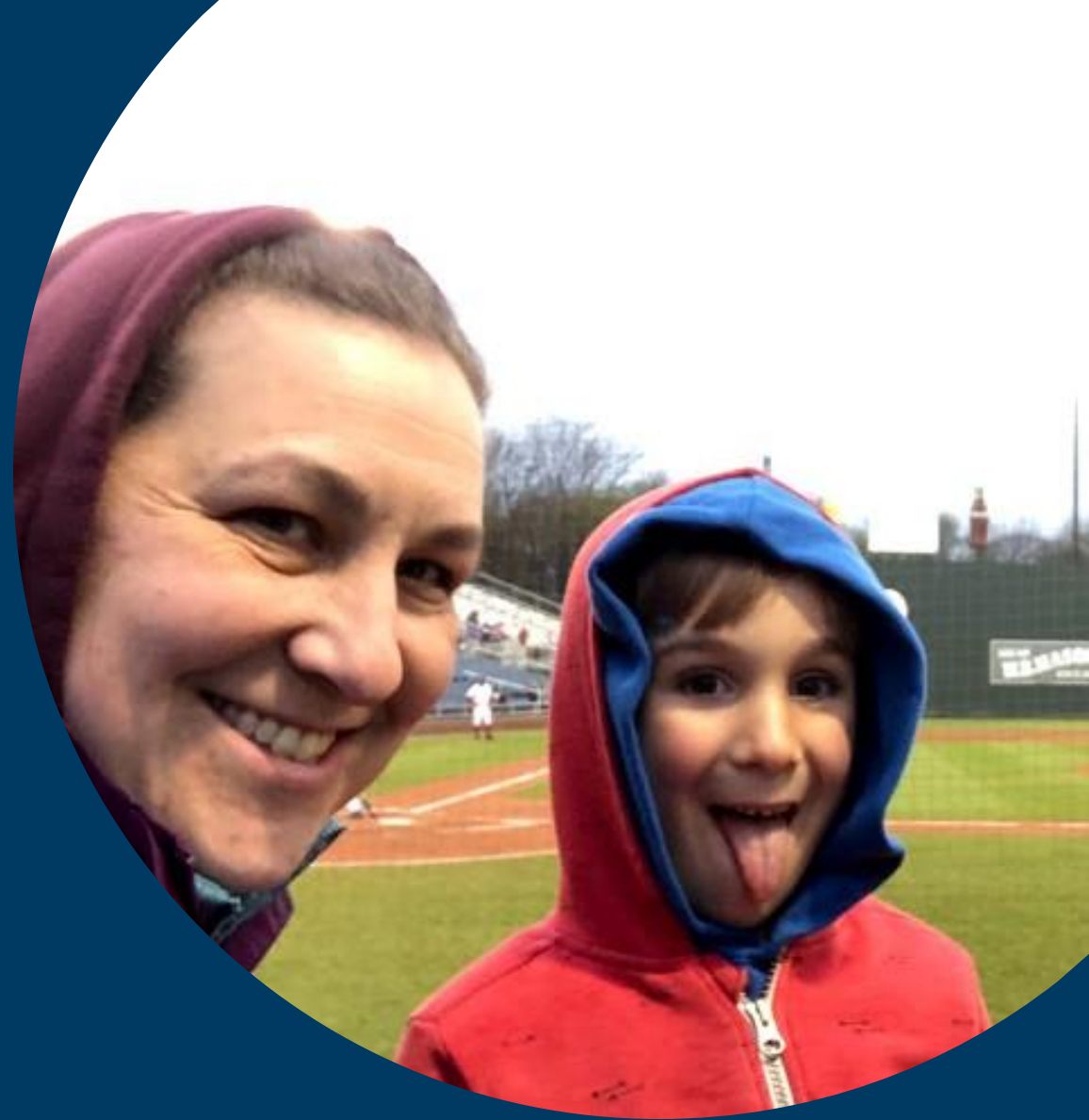


Who We Are



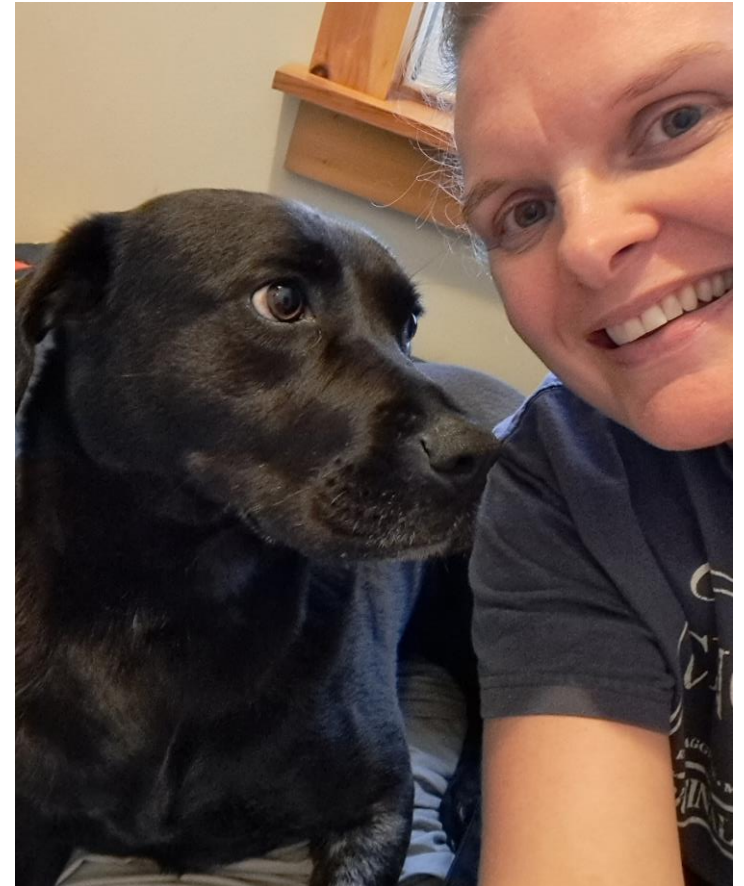
Katie Kondrat

- Katie she/her – Equity & Access Coordinator at MECASA
- Grew up in the California Bay Area (go A's).
- Been at MECASA for 5 years – SARSSM & Caring Unlimited prior to that.
- Is a Leo married to a Leo.
- Finds joy & respite in open water swimming and growing food. Wants to talk to you about the Repair Shop, your dog, and house projects.



Kayce Hunton (she/they)

- **MECASA Intervention Coordinator**
- **Born and raised in Maine**
- **Previously worked at SASSMM and SAPARS, with additional experience facilitating groups in Maine and Virginia**
- **Is a Virgo (let's make lists and organize closets!)**
- **Is very passionate about individual advocacy and support groups and loves talking with other advocates**



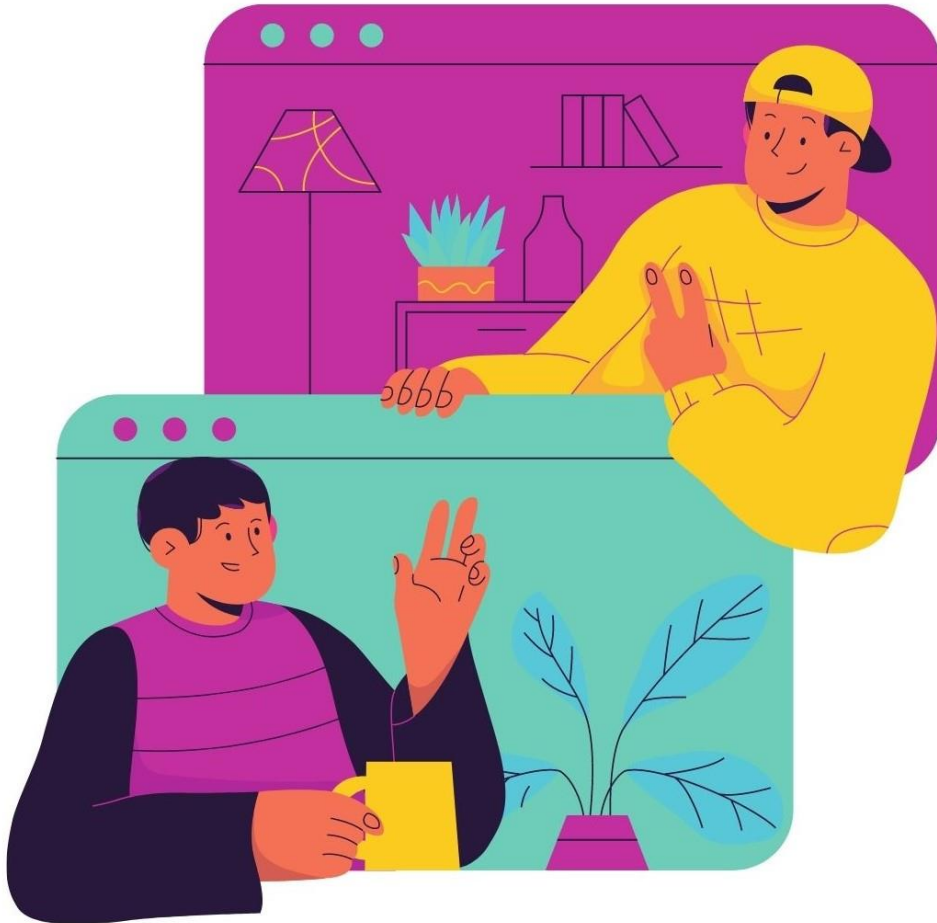
Our Role as Facilitators

- Ensure all content gets covered.
- Keep an eye on the time and adjust when needed.
- Check in with needs of the group and adjust when needed.
- Create a welcoming environment for people to learn
- Seek to provide materials and content that are beneficial for all learning styles
- Uphold Group Guidelines
- Model Support Group Facilitation



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SEXUAL ASSAULT

Participant Introductions



I will call on you



**Name, agency, role, &
pronouns**



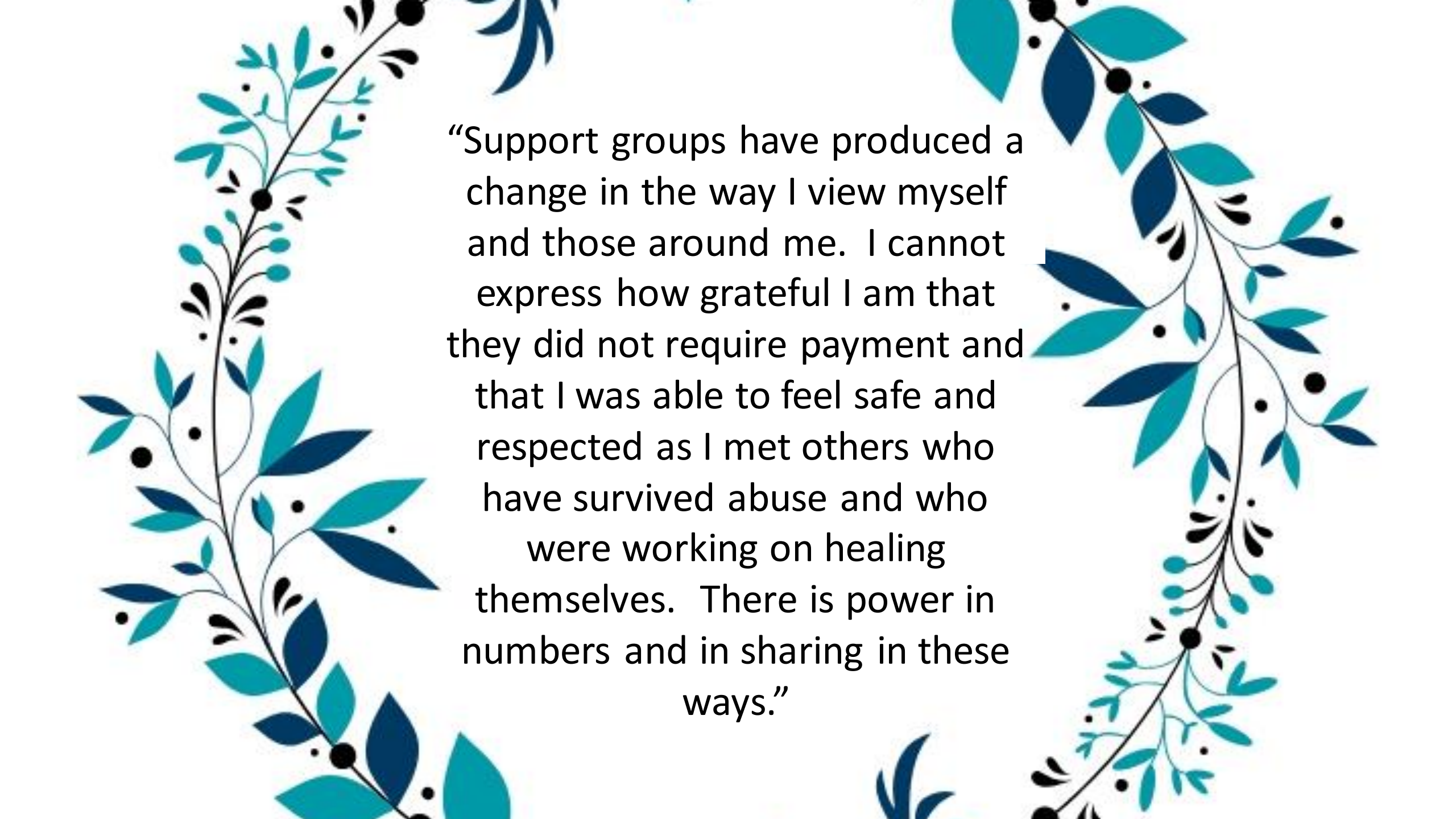
**Hope for the training &
Favorite gas station snack**

Role and Expectations of Participants

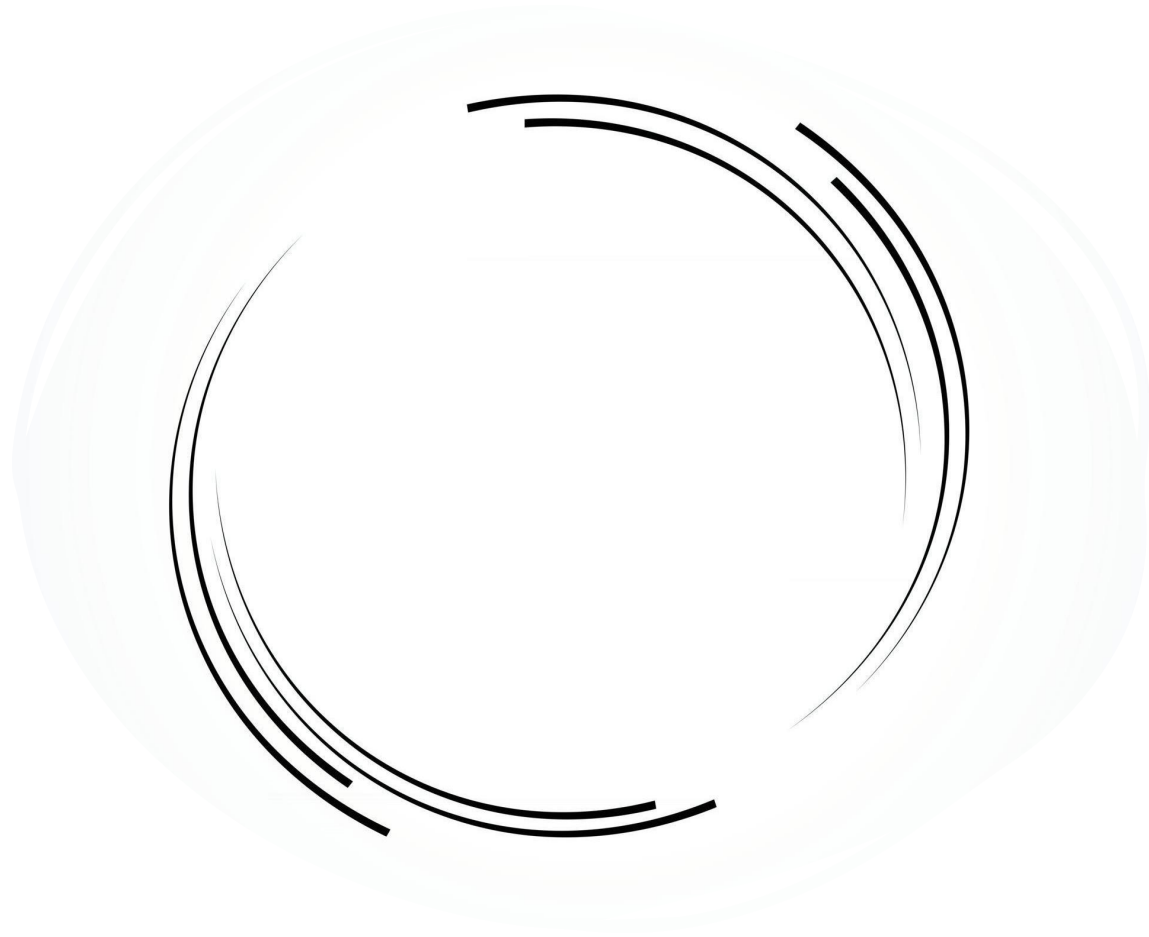
- Be present as you can
- Let us know what you need! Slow down, go back, etc!
- Attend all 3 days of the training and let us know if you need to leave early/come late
- Engage in activities and small group discussions with peers
- Give us feedback at end of sessions and end of training

10-minute Break





“Support groups have produced a change in the way I view myself and those around me. I cannot express how grateful I am that they did not require payment and that I was able to feel safe and respected as I met others who have survived abuse and who were working on healing themselves. There is power in numbers and in sharing in these ways.”



Section 2:

Building Our Container

Building our Container

- Co-creating an intentional space and framing the boundaries of that space.
- Why is this important?
- What is the connection to support group facilitation?



Components of Trauma Informed Advocacy

*Adapted from Throw Away the Menu:
Broadening Advocacy, A publication of the
Sexual Assault Demonstration Initiative
By Kelly Wilt, Resource Sharing Project*

Ensuring individuals feel
as safe as possible in
their current
environment

Acting with an
awareness of potential
triggers

Checking in about
adequate support and
resources and helping to
provide connections to
new resources

Respecting privacy and
confidentiality

Checking in with the
survivor to clarify their
needs

Providing consistent and
reliable communication
and actions

Supporting survivor-led
decision-making

Trauma Informed Spaces

Be clear on the expectations and purpose of the day.

Be clear on our roles for the day.

Be responsive to expressed needs.

Take time to set group guidelines.

Tell people their options for taking care of themselves.

Revisit the training concepts during the day.

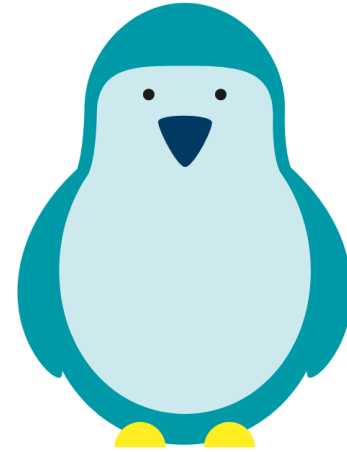
Check in with participants when the schedule needs to change.

Provide available materials and information in writing.

Offer fun and humor as appropriate.

What participating fully might look like for someone:

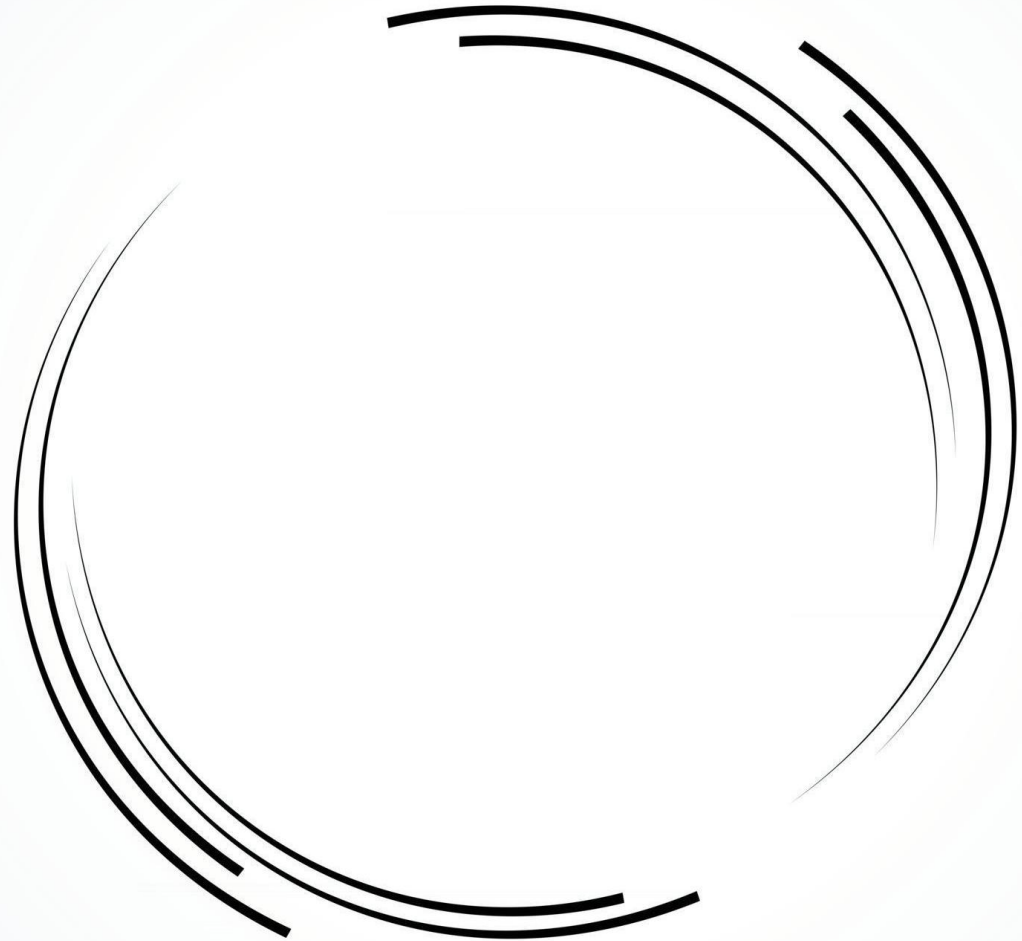
- Needing space and guidance around arriving.
- Knowing what is expected.
- Knowing about breaks.
- Checking in with self periodically to assess additional needs.



How can we edit or
expand our approach to
meet your needs?

What might participating
fully look like for you?

What do you need to
thrive in this training?



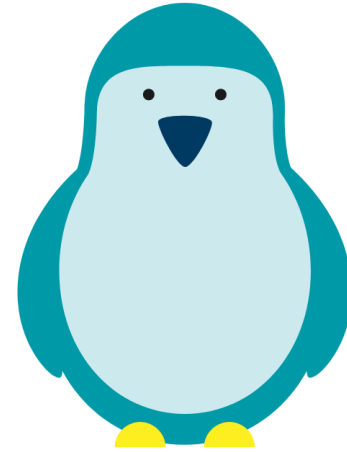
Building Our Container Reflections



- Not a one-time event.
- Consistent practice & regular check in.
- People get more comfortable over time.
- People's needs change.
- Co-creation is a choice and an act of care that demonstrates values.
- Chance to bring authenticity into your role.

Group Guidelines

1. Direct communication
2. Start & end on time
3. Acknowledge and learn from different approaches
4. Refrain from sharing any identifying information
5. What else?



Guidelines Review & Implementation

- Are these guidelines something we can all agree to and uphold?
- Upholding is mainly but not entirely the facilitators responsibility.
- Facilitators hold the space so participants can focus on being present in the space.



Co-Creating safe(r) spaces:

- **Show** values and care by offering trauma informed approaches.
- **Tell or** explain your role as the facilitator and your values on how you want the space to function.
- **Ask and** prioritize opportunities where participants can tell you what they need and ensure their needs will be respected.
- **Offer** opportunities where participants can learn about expressing their needs by including practices participants can experiment with.

Building Our Container Wrap-up

- What has stuck out to you in our process of “building our container”?
- How are you thinking about the balance of modeling, authenticity, and vulnerability as tools for group engagement?



Section 3: Introduction to Support Groups

Support Groups are spaces where people gather to be in community and to share experiences, thoughts, feelings, and skills.



History of Support Groups



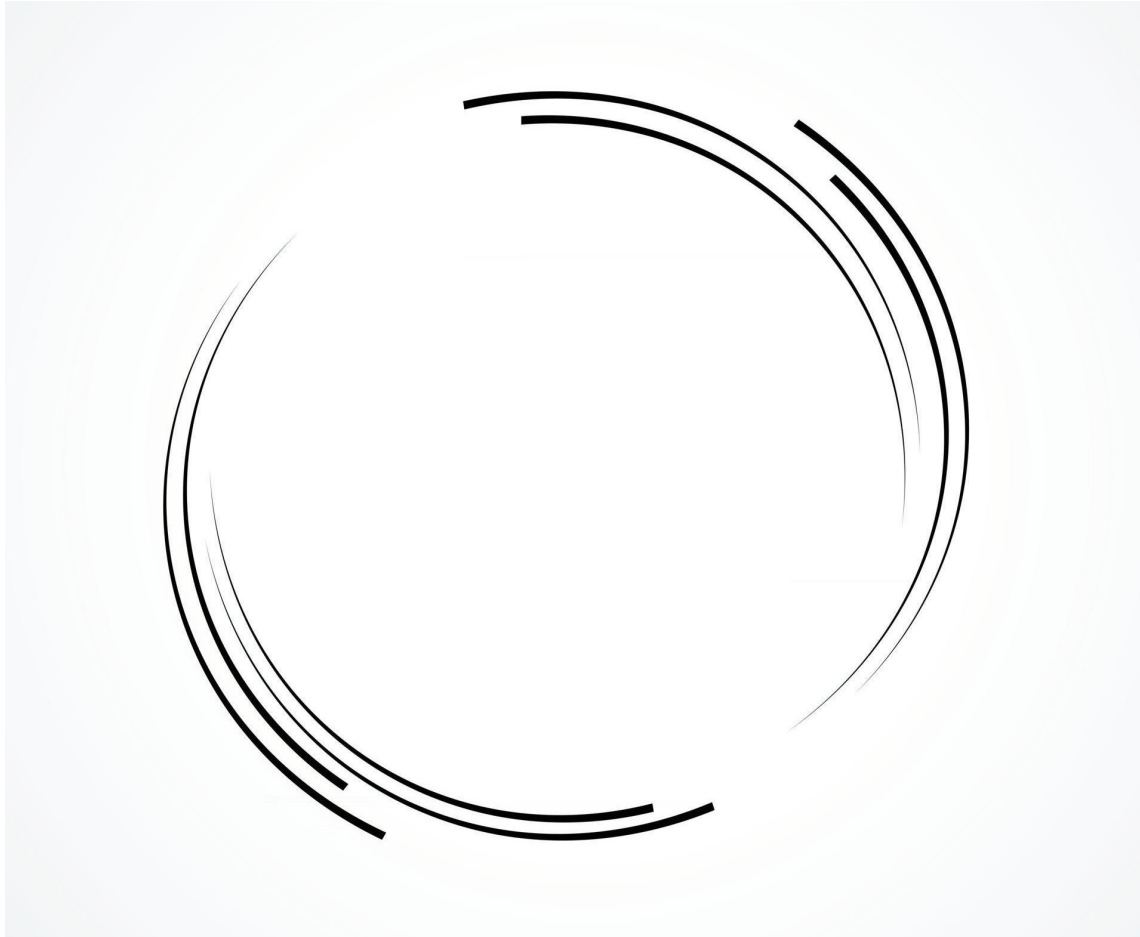
- For centuries communities have come together in groups to heal wounds, celebrate victories, and find humor and love in even the darkest of situations.
- In the early 1970's with the establishment of mainstream Rape Crisis Centers, groups helped address unmet needs.

Advocate-Facilitated Peer Support Groups

- Groups are not clinically led, though may have clinical support.
- People gather for support based on a shared issue or experience.
- May be focused on social connection, peer-to-peer emotional support, or skill building

Purpose of SV Support Groups

- **Safety**
- **Finding a voice**
- **Validation**
- **Being heard**
- **Connection with self and others**



Philosophy and Approach

- When survivors have a safe space to connect with peers, healing can occur.
- Survivors contribute to each other's healing process through the very act of participating, relating, and sharing.
- Survivors may decide the group session topics and inform content.
- Facilitators hold space, aid in creating connection, and provide tools, resources and activities for processing, expression, and coping.
- Facilitators are not therapists and are not practicing group therapy.
- Facilitators do not heal survivors.

TYPES OF SUPPORT GROUPS

Traditional Support Groups:

- Rooted in group process and trust building.
- Typically closed.
- Typically held for a specific amount of time.
- Participants are active in creating goals and shaping the topics discussed

TYPES OF SUPPORT GROUPS

Experiential Support Groups:

- Incorporate holistic healing practices.
- Mind, body & spirit connection.
- Sessions built around a healing centered activity.
- May be closed and held for a specific amount of time.

TYPES OF SUPPORT GROUPS

Outreach Support Groups

- Held in the community where individuals are located
- Remove some barriers to accessing services
- May be co-facilitated with a community partner
- May be drop-in
- May be ongoing

Exploring Pop Culture Depictions of Support Groups

What portrayals from film and television stick with you?

What are the takeaways from these depictions?

- What kind of a person attends a group?
- Are groups helpful to the characters?

BAD-ANON : One Game at a Time





BBC

I'm here to learn how
to avoid being raped.


Pop Culture vs. Advocacy Bubble

- What do audiences learn about support groups?
- What do audiences learn about facilitators?
- What implications do these beliefs have for advocates explaining and inviting potential participants to support groups?





75min
LUNCH BREAK



“This group offered me the support to open up to others about what has happened.”

“What was most helpful about my group experience was the supporting feel of everyone and knowing I am not alone.”



Section 4:

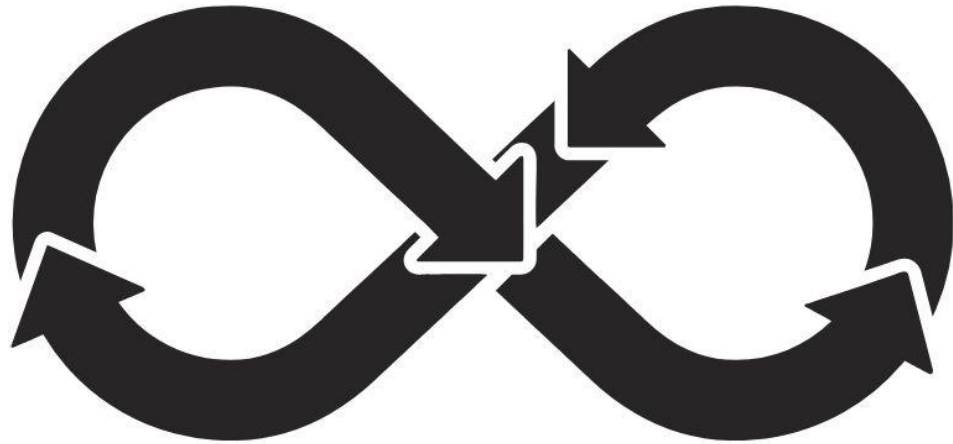
Building Support Groups



Building Support Groups Overview

- Philosophy
- Assessment and Planning
- Outreach
- Screening
- Structure & Session Planning

Philosophy: Advocacy Values in Support Groups



- Support Groups are a foundational and core service.
- Much like the 24/7 helpline, offering support groups requires consistent tending.

A stylized, abstract illustration on the left side of the slide. It features a dark blue, textured area at the bottom, possibly representing water, with a wavy white line separating it from a light orange area. Above this is a dark, solid black shape, and at the top is a light beige area. The overall style is modern and graphic.

Agency Culture and Practice

- Get to know how your agency approaches support groups and the history of what groups have been offered.
- Ask what supports are available. Do specific staff positions do group advertising and outreach or is it a shared effort?
- Gain clarity on your responsibilities.



Organizational Assessment

- How do we know who needs a support group?
- What have we committed to (in grants, partnerships, philosophy)?
- How can we best support this commitment?
- What partnership opportunities exist?
- What funding opportunities exist?

Assessing Capacity

- How many hours per week can facilitators dedicate to SG
 - How much time with co-facilitators
 - How much time for you to work on it personally.
 - How does this shift from starting group, outreach, screening, and weekly facilitation of the group?
- What tasks/projects need to shift to accommodate this
 - Blocking time in calendar
 - Boundaries around helpline coverage if possible
- Similar assessment for partner agency






Audience Assessment

Who is this Group For?

- Specific experiences?
- Specific age range?
- Specific gender?
- Other specific identity?

How will the group structure support your group goals?

- Traditional, Experiential, Outreach?
- In person? virtual?

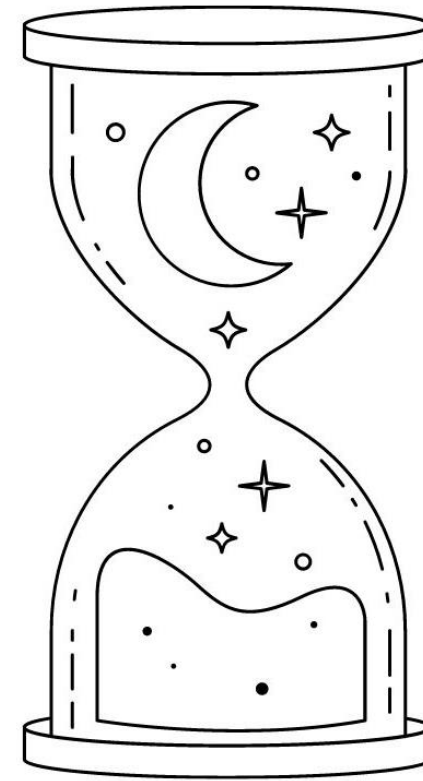


Accessibility Assessment

- Getting there: transportation, childcare, familiar and/or comfortable location
- Physical space: wheelchair ramps, elevators, accessible and non-gendered bathrooms, locked doors, chairs all bodies can fit in
- Emotional space: confidentiality and other people in the building, clear expectations of the participants & facilitators
- Sensory: Lighting, scent and sound considerations

Assessing Time

- How long will the group run for, 8 weeks?
- How long is each session?
- What day of the week and What time of the day?
 - Wait till screenings? Have a window of time that works and ask participants between that window, have multiple days as well?
- What holidays fall in that timeline, school vacations?



Building Support Groups: Outreach

What gets people to express interest & join a group:

- Awareness and perception
- Trust
- Relationships



Outreach Is.....

- Rooted in relationship.
- An agency wide conversation and effort.
- Constant not a one-time event.
 - Support groups can be discussed as an option at every call/meeting/interaction you have.

Relationship- Based Outreach

We're more likely to participate if:

- Trust the person inviting us.
- Know the values & approach of the activity.
- Hear about the benefits.
- Know someone who's had a positive experience.

Everyday Outreach

How we regularly share information about support groups.

- Why they happen.
- How they happen.
- What people like/find helpful about them.
- When they happen.

Table Discussion: Exploring Language for Everyday Outreach

1. What messages about support groups do you want to convey to a potential participant?
2. How might you describe what happens in group sessions to someone?
3. How could you talk about the benefits of support groups to someone?
4. How can you talk about groups as part of core services?



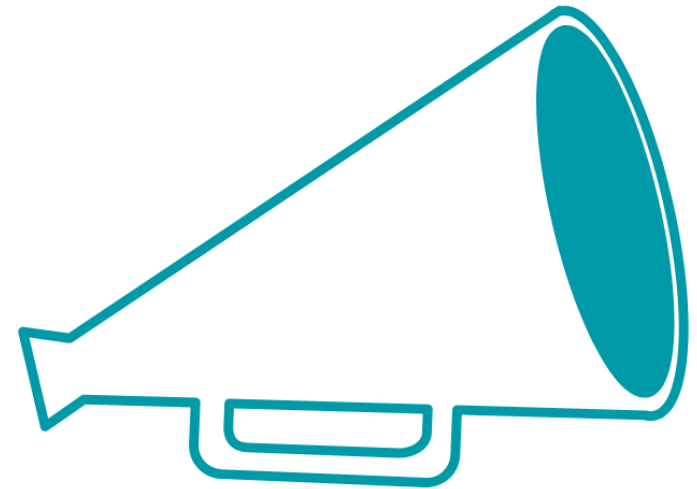
Starting With Your Agency

Assess for interest

- People your agency is current serving
- People who have been on a group waitlist
- People who have recently attended a group and may want to join another

Internal announcements

Utilize existing internal relationships



Agency Waitlists

Contact information for folks who have expressed interest in support groups.

- Why might a waitlist need to be created?
- How could you stay connected to potential group members?

A waitlist may help determine what type of group you will offer and where. It may also impact the resources you spend on advertising and outreach.

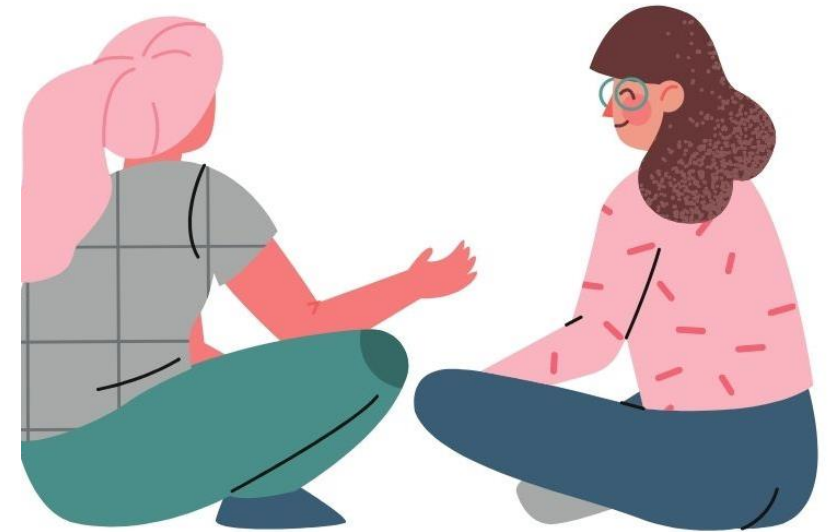
Partnerships & Outreach

The relationships you create with community partners allows them to get to know and build trust with you, your agency, and your services.



Advertising

- Promotional materials that deliver information to people about support groups at your agency.
 - Fliers, brochures, social media posts
- Relationships and trust provide individuals/communities the additional information they need to decide if they want to explore further or not.



Advertising, cont'd

Think about people with no prior relationship to your agency and people not involved in services with community partners.

- What inspires people to notice?
- What inspires a person to make contact?

When you see an advertisement or flier:

- What stands out to you?
- What do you like, not like?
- What would make you more likely to take
- further action?



We are pleased to announce the formation of a state-wide, multi-agency support group open to all survivors of sexual assault.

- Meetings will be held via Zoom
 - Pre-screening is required
 - 8 week closed group
- Beginning in January 2021

Interested parties may contact us by email:

eliza@sarsonline.org

rblack@penquis.org

wpage@amhc.org



**AROOSTOOK
COUNTY**

VIRTUAL SUPPORT GROUP

FOR ALL SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE

**8 WEEKS STARTING JUNE 2021
*PRE-SCREENING REQUIRED***

For more information contact by email:

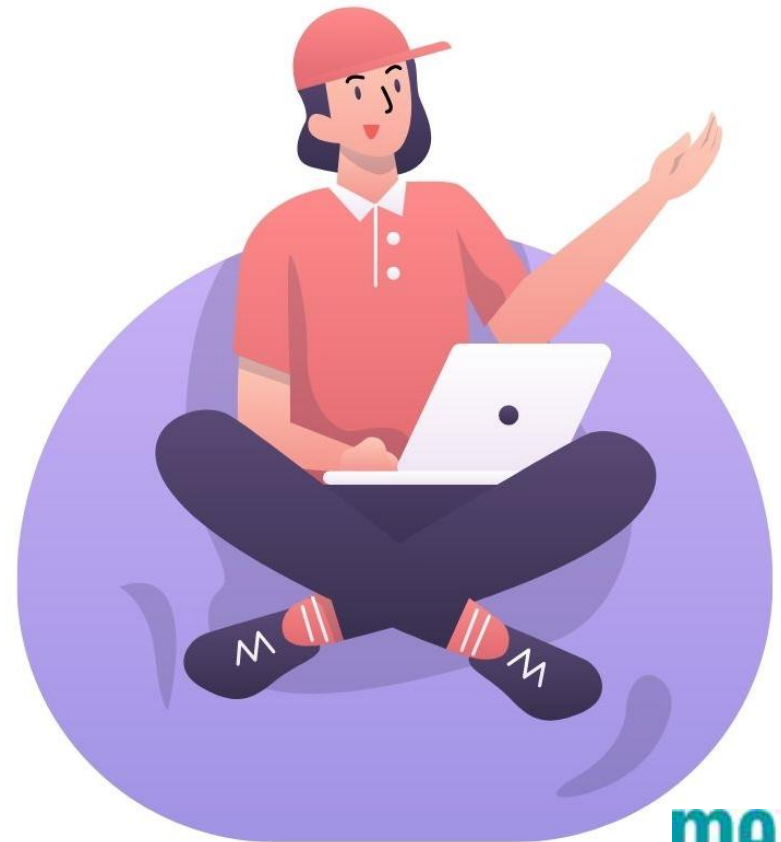
SAS-Info@amhc.org

24/7 helpline 1-800-871-7741

Advertising, cont'd

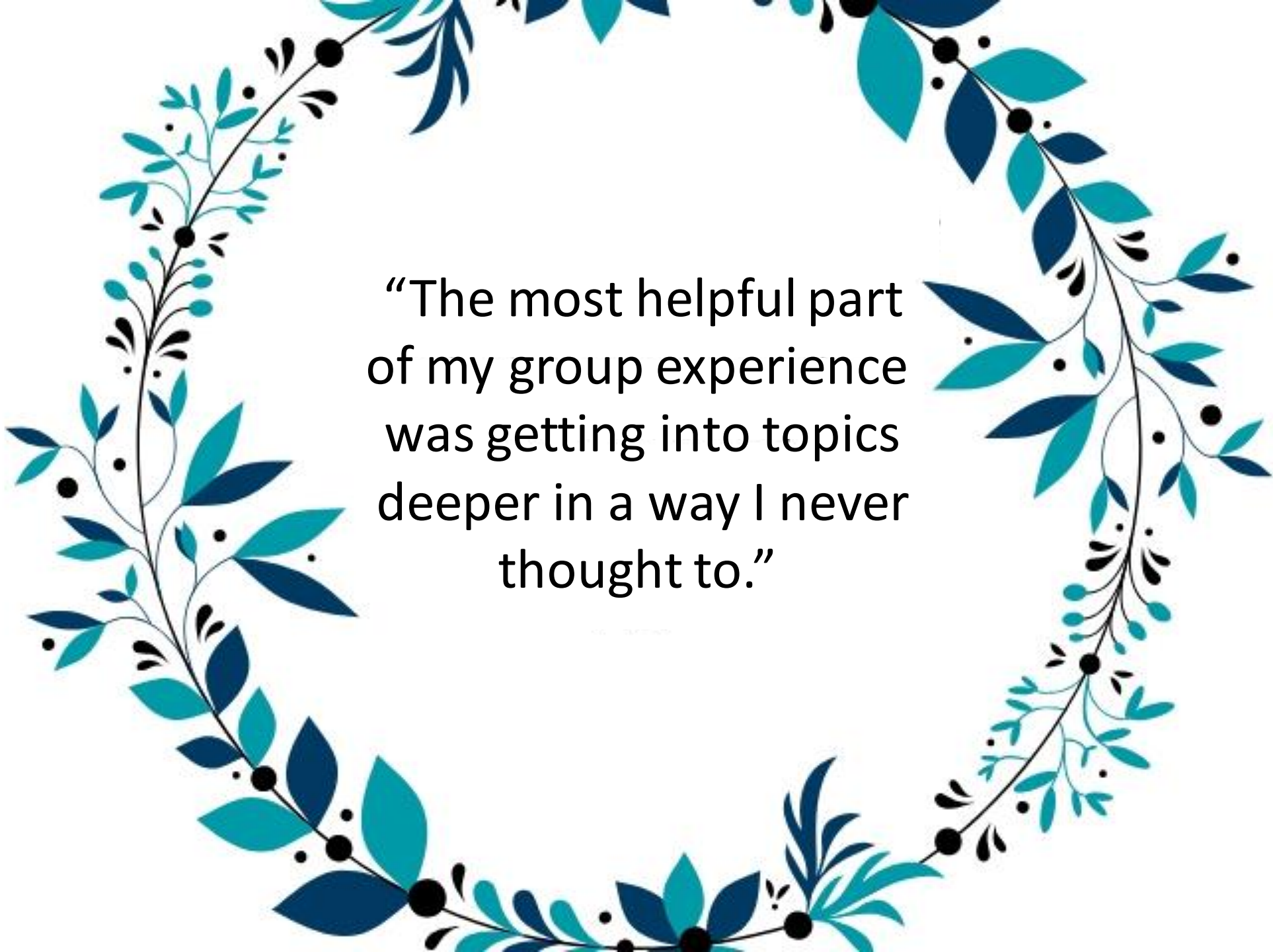
Format and Location:

- Fliers/brochures
 - Tabling events, Libraries, Peer Center
- Social Media
 - Could ask partners to share
- Online and print newspapers
 - Community events, announcements
- Paid Advertisements



10-minute Break



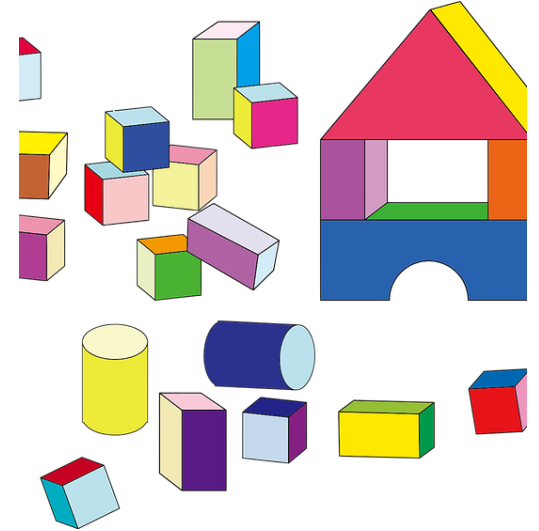


“The most helpful part
of my group experience
was getting into topics
deeper in a way I never
thought to.”

Building Support Groups: Screening

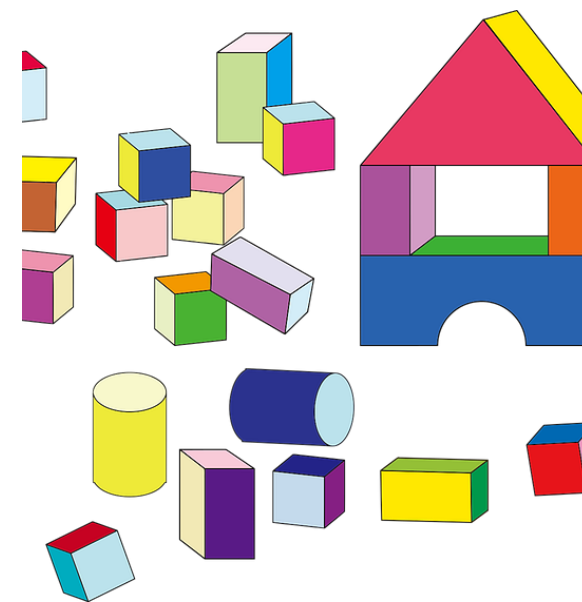
A meeting/call with someone interested in support group.

- Provide information.
- Build relationship and connection.
- Help determine if a person is ready for the group process.
- Help determine what is needed to create a safer space.
- Help facilitators gain insight into how the person might engage in the group and what needs they have.



Screening Considerations

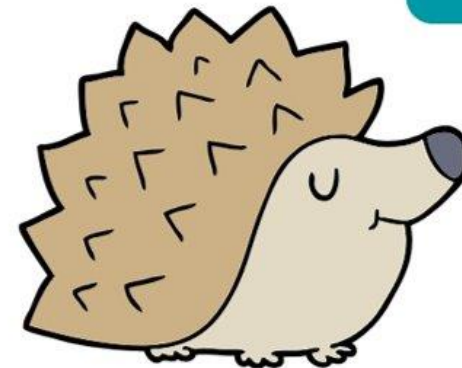
- MECASA Quality Assurance Standards
- Type of group
- Who will do the screening
- Style of the screening
- Documentation



SCREENING FOR SUPPORT GROUPS

Survivors should leave knowing:

- Group format
- Group process
- Facilitator roles & expectations
- Confidentiality
- Participant roles & expectations



Screening is
for survivors
too!

Screening Language Discussion

What are your strategies for being authentic and building trust with the individuals you serve now?

- How might you bring those strategies into a group screening?

What are some ways to begin the conversation in a screening?

What are some strategies for potential participants who answer screening questions with “yes” or “no”?

Screening Out Discussion and Practice

- What might make someone not a good fit for a support group?
- What supports can help you make this decision?
- How could you communicate the decision to the individual?

Wrap-up

- Table Discussion
 - What stuck with you today?
- Flip Chart Feedback
 - Anything we change/implement for tomorrow?

A decorative floral wreath made of green leaves and small blue and purple flowers, framing the central text.

Support Group Facilitator Training

Day 2

mecasa
MAINE COALITION AGAINST
SEXUAL ASSAULT

2023

An artistic background on the left side of the slide featuring several stylized human silhouettes in various colors (yellow, orange, red, blue) standing on a green grassy surface. The silhouettes are semi-transparent and layered, creating a sense of depth. A thin white vertical line is visible near the first silhouette.

Group Guidelines

1. Direct communication
2. Start & end on time
3. Acknowledge and learn from different approaches
4. Refrain from sharing any identifying information

Arriving Activity: Box Breathing





Building Support Groups Overview

- Philosophy
- Assessment and Planning
- Outreach
- Screening
- Structure & Session Planning

Building Support Groups:

Structure and Session Planning

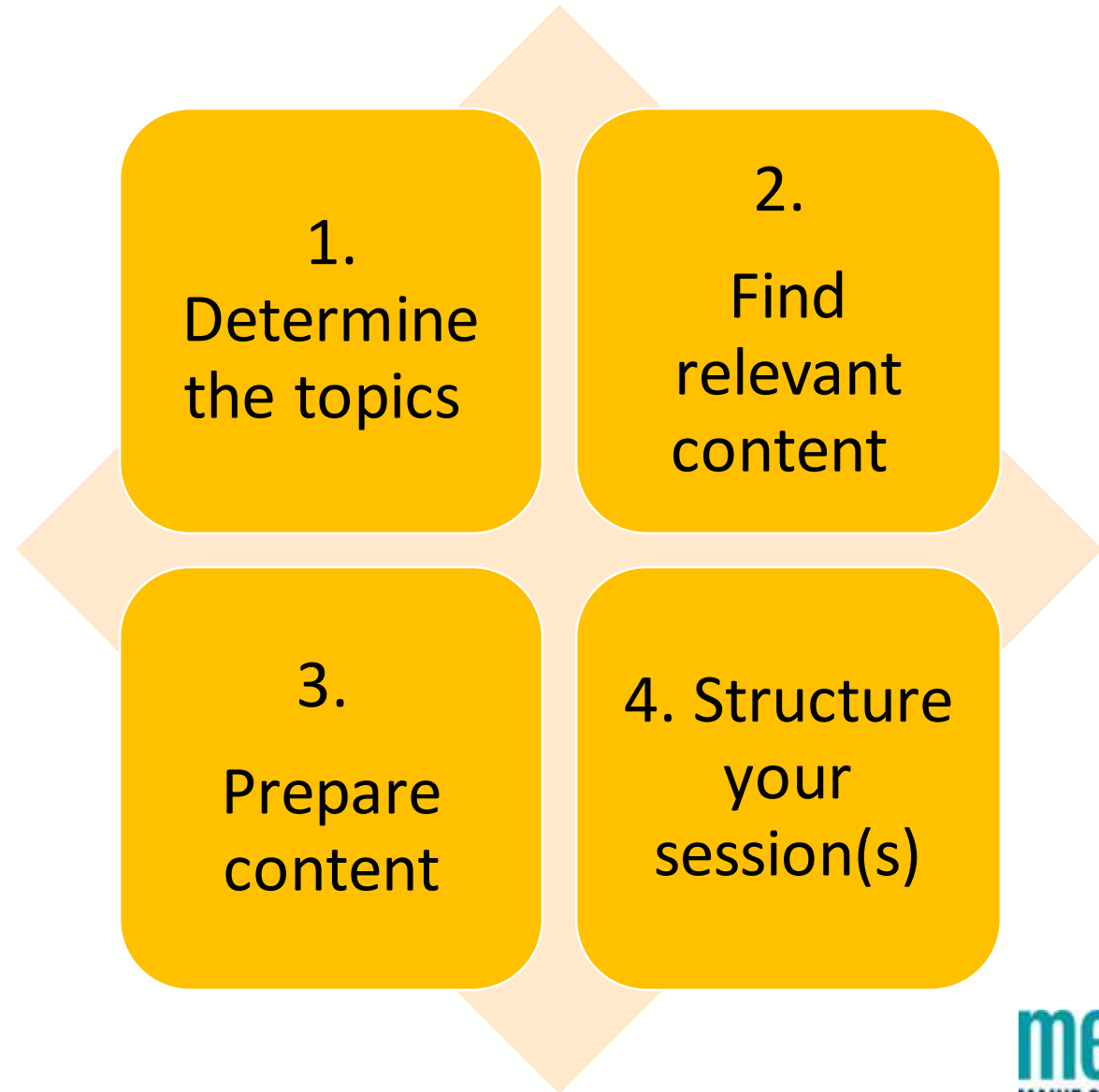
An **Agenda** is a plan of action about what will happen in the group session.

The **Structure** is the design and flow of your plan.

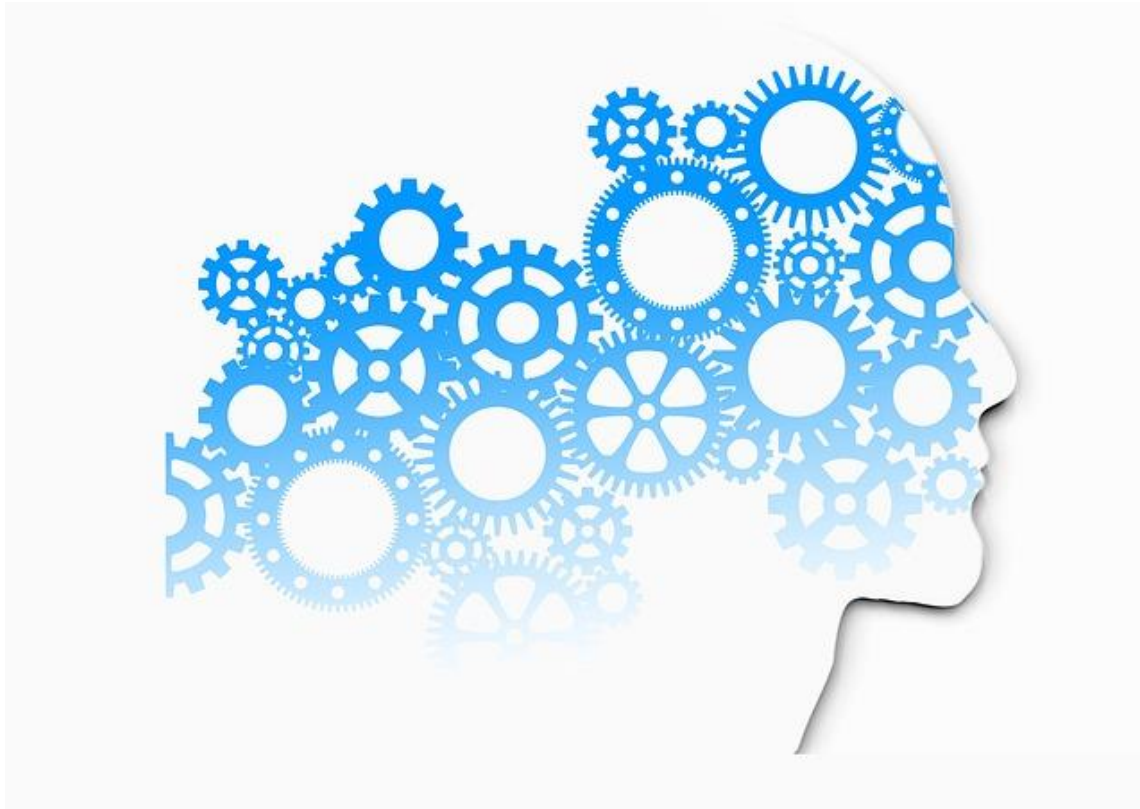
The **Content** is the details of how you will carry out your plan.

Building Support Groups:

Structure and Session Planning



1. Determine the Topics



- What type of group is it?
- What do participants say they want to talk about?
 - Hopes and goals
- What topic themes have come up for you or your colleagues when working with survivors?

Examples of Topics from Actual Groups:

MTN/SARSSM Group

- Coping Strategies
- Addressing Guilt/Shame
- Navigating seeing your abuser(s)
- Sex and Intimacy
- Family Relationships
- Establishing Boundaries
- Connecting between sexual trauma and gender identity
- Resilience

Outreach Group in a Jail

- Grounding techniques
- Boundaries
- Community services
- Support a friend
- Defining sexual assault
- Child abuse prevention
- Self-care
- Impacts of trauma

2. Find Relevant Content

The content is the details of how you will carry out your session plan.

Each topic will use a prompt or activity as a conversation or reflection starting place.

This is your content.

What is
content
and
where do
you find
it?

Where to Find Relevant Content

Media,
articles, music,
& literature

MECASA
Toolkit

Established SG
Curriculum

Brainstorm
with
coworkers

Center
Materials

Online/Other
Organizations

3. Prepare Content

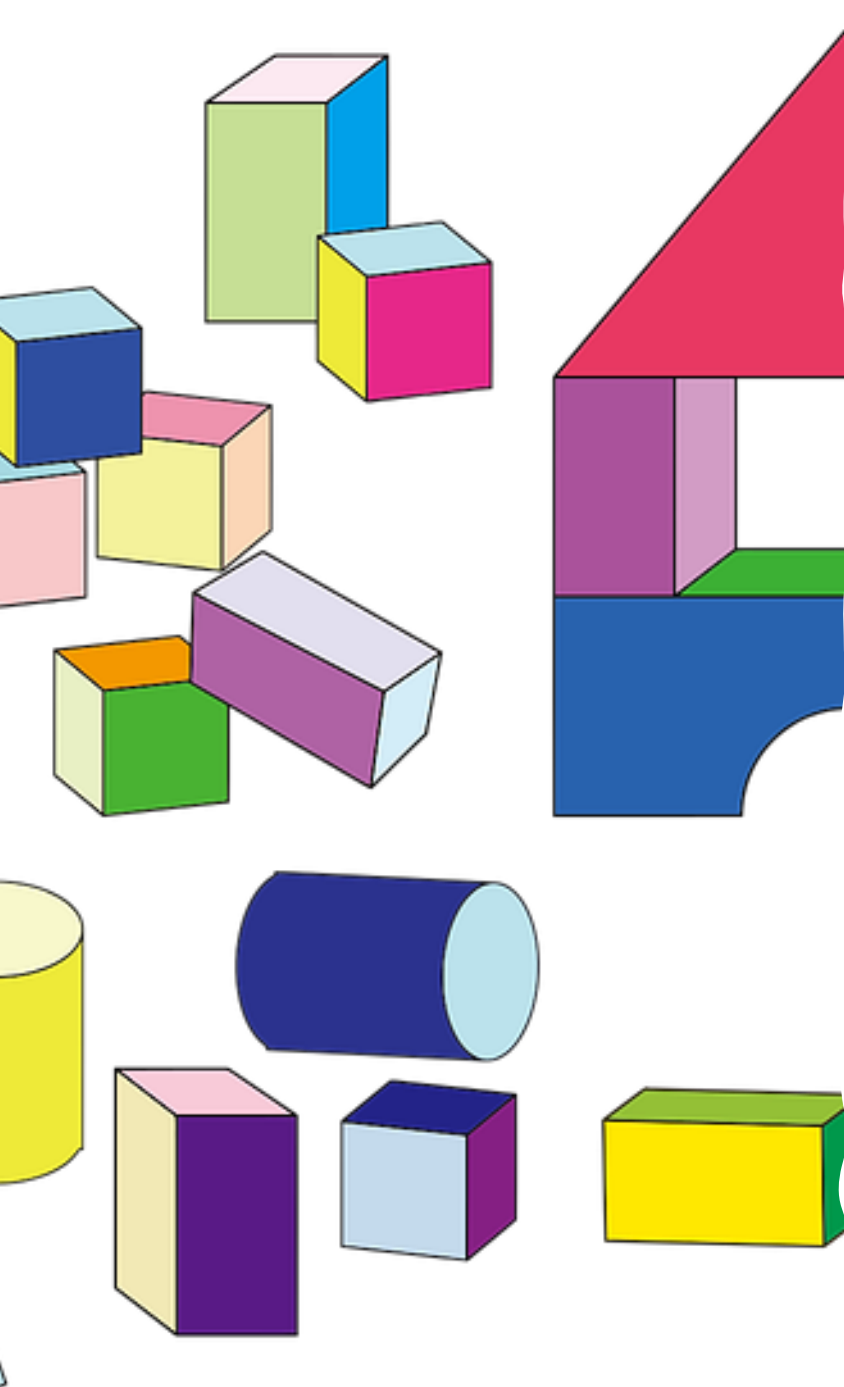
Determine how you will use the content to get the group started in conversation & how you will support the discussion.

There is a difference between preparing & planning.



Supporting and Encouraging Discussion

- Ask open ended questions:
 - How does this connect to your experience?
 - Would anyone like to offer a different perspective?
- Invite people to share their thoughts, feelings, or reactions?
- Share your own thoughts & feelings within the boundaries/parameters set.
- Wonder out loud about connections to other conversations & state connections you notice.
- Acknowledge when it is time to move on.



4. Structure Your Session:

Structure has a purpose:

- Planning
- Trauma Informed Care
- Group Stages

Session Structure

- Opening
- Norms/Grounding
- Topic
 - Discussion/Activity
- Closing
 - Grounding/Check-out

Sample Group Session Agenda

SAMPLE Agenda for 90-minute group:

Welcome and group check-in (15 min)

Review of last week's activity (10 min)

Grounding (5 min)

Session topic (40 min)

Grounding (5min)

Check-out (15 min)

Activity

1. Find a partner.
2. Choose a topic from below.
3. Discuss where you might look for content on that topic.
4. Find one piece of content and review it together.
5. Create (2) prompts you would use to engage group participants based on your topic and content

TOPICS:

Resilience

Grounding and Coping Strategies

Establishing Boundaries

Section 5: Facilitation Best Practices



What is Facilitation?

- Facilitate: To make easier, to help bring about
- Facilitator: Someone who helps to bring about an outcome (such as learning, or communication) by providing, assistance, guidance, or supervision.

Facilitator Roles in SV Groups

- To provide as safe a space as possible for all group participants.
- To ensure that confidentiality is maintained.
- To make sure that each group participant has an opportunity to talk and is not being pressured to talk/share if they do not want to.
- To ensure that all group guidelines are being followed.
- To provide education and information as requested and/or appropriate.

One to one Advocacy vs. Group Facilitation

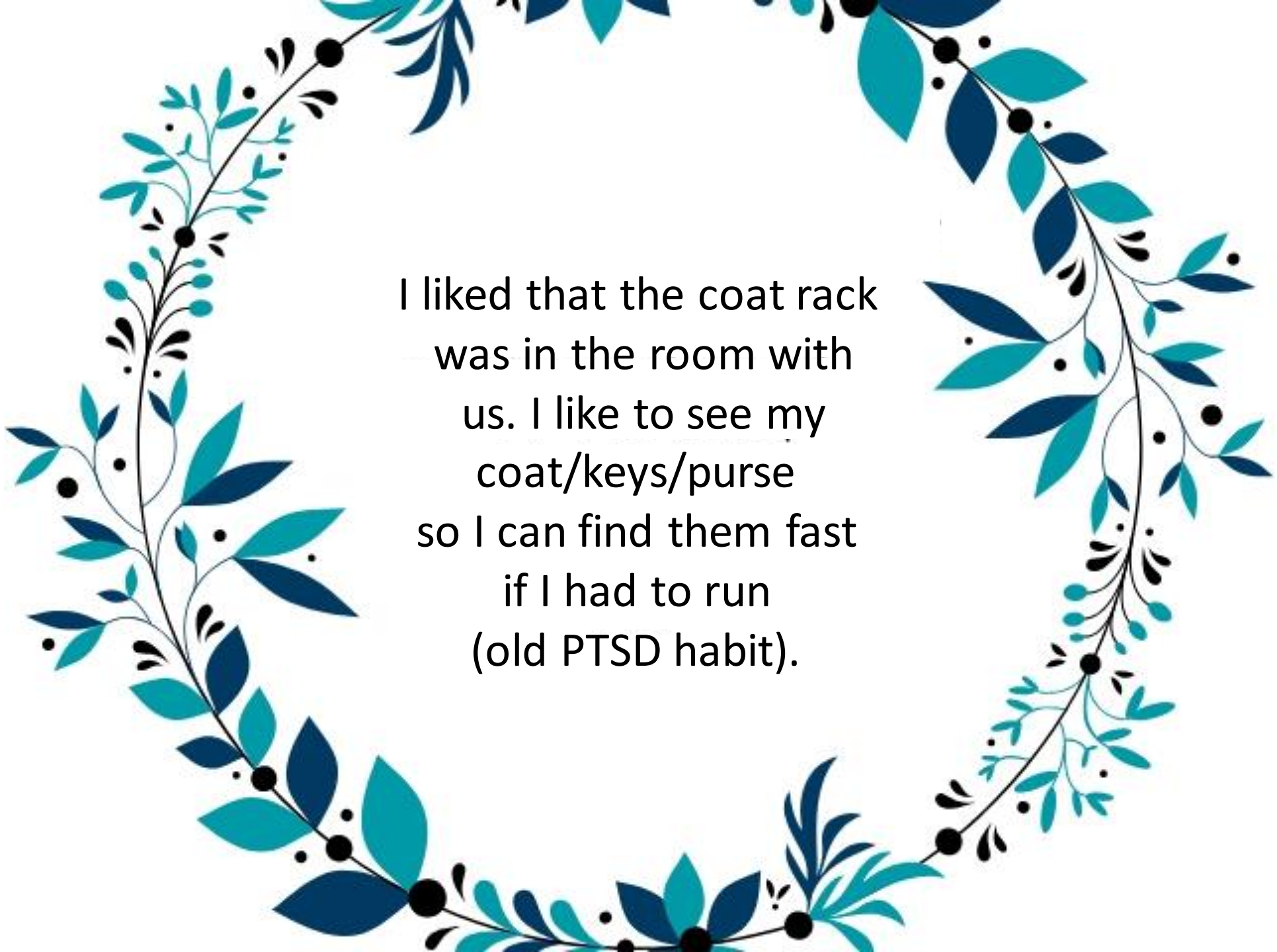
- Holding space and structure for people to have a conversation
- The holding of that space is a lot of things and is more directive than one-to-one advocacy
- Similar skills for a different purpose
- Hold the interest of the group and the individuals – if the needs of the individual take priority, defer to the needs of the group

Table Discussion

- Have you had experiences in your life where someone helped to facilitate a new peer connection? What did that person do or say that helped?
- Specific to SV groups, what are the ways a facilitator could help make peer connections? What practices, skills, or tools come to mind?
- What actions could a facilitator take that might interrupt or deny peer connections?

10-minute Break





I liked that the coat rack
was in the room with
us. I like to see my
coat/keys/purse
so I can find them fast
if I had to run
(old PTSD habit).

Facilitation Best Practice #1

Prompting: Using prompts to start the discussion and to support questions and activities.

Facilitation Best Practice #2

Following the conversation with
active listening.

Facilitation Best Practice #3

Observing how participants are engaging.

Noticing body language and assessing for unspoken needs

Facilitation Best Practice #4

Allowing **silence** and quiet space for an appropriate amount of time.

Facilitation Best Practice #5

Tuning into the energy and mood of the group.

Offering options/change of plans to more align with the current needs of the group.

Facilitation Best Practice #6

Making Connections:
Between participants

Facilitation Best Practice #7

Making Connections:
Cultural & Liberation Education

Facilitation Best Practice #8

Willingness to interrupt and/or disrupt in order to hold the space and maintain group guidelines.

YOUR LIMITS & BOUNDARIES



Organizational Boundaries



Personal Boundaries



Confidentiality & Privilege



Co-facilitation



Support Group Facilitator Care

- How can you care for yourself before, during, and after support groups?

Self Care and Community Care



Shouting "self-care" at
people who actually
need "community care"
is how we fail people.

Nakita Valerio

Self Care and Community Care



1. Choose a facilitator
2. Read the Facebook post
3. Facilitator reviews guidelines
 1. Can we all agree to those guidelines?
 2. Any questions/concerns about the guidelines?
4. Facilitator reminds the group of the purpose of the conversation
5. Facilitator offers a prompt:
 1. How did this land for you all?
6. See that everyone who wants to talk does
7. Wrap up your time



75min
LUNCH BREAK

Facilitating Virtual Support Groups

- Confidentiality/VAWA Compliance
 - Private Space, Headphones, Video on
- Technology + Safety
 - Password, waiting room, discussion of risks
- Online Co-Facilitation
 - Minimum of 2, possibly 3 facilitators



Confidentiality & VAWA Compliance

- Participants join from a private space
- Headphones
- Video on



Technology and Safety

- Utilize Zoom Meeting Passwords
- Enable “Waiting Rooms”
- “Lock” Zoom Meeting
- Transparent about risk

Online Facilitation

- 2 Facilitators is Essential
- Consider adding a 3rd facilitator as a support person. Allows for advocates to shadow and practice.
- Use technology to communicate with co-facilitators during group



Online Group Activities

- Mail out handouts/coloring pages etc.
- Screenshare as a tool to present content
- Space for journal prompts and music
- Polls, weekly feedback, alternative methods to check in

The Power of Social Connection: A Guide to Providing Virtual Support Groups

- Sharing the risks of engaging in any on-line service
- Internet access barriers
- Safety Planning
 - Emergency protocols
 - Emergency contacts
- Consider your group topics
- Clear guidelines and roles
- Regular check-ins
- Facilitator care

10-minute Break





“I feel less stuck now.”

GROUP DYNAMICS & INTERVENTIONS



GROUP STAGES*

1. Forming
2. Storming
3. Norming
4. Performing

**Except when they're not*

GROUP STAGES: Forming

Characteristics:

- Testing the waters
- Trying to understand what's allowed
- Why we are here
- Working to build trust

Facilitator's Role:

- Clarity about purpose & process
- Modeling participation
- Development of norms
- Leadership

GROUP STAGES: Storming

Characteristics:

- Testing each other and group agreements
- Conflict with each other and the facilitator
- Discovering roles and communication styles

Facilitator's Role:

- Opportunity to express ideas
- Modeling respectful conflict
- Involve all participants

GROUP STAGES: Norming

Characteristics:

- Can work together & resolve conflicts
- Increased trust

Facilitator's Role:

- Challenging the group think
- Connect to the big picture
- Gentle nudges

GROUP STAGES: Performing

Characteristics:

- Achieving common goals
- Motivated
- Participation by all members

Facilitator's Role:

- Good listening & following their lead
- Motivation
- Recognition & celebration
- New goals

Intervention Strategies

When actions/behaviors are impacting the group.



Pre-intervention:

- Consider having an intake (phone, zoom, in-person)
 - To address basic group guidelines
 - To assess for safety and possible trigger areas
- Talk with your co-facilitator about how you will manage a disruption or crisis ahead of time
- Create clear group guidelines and revisit them often
- Talk with the group about how you will address situations before they happen

INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

1. Go inward first.
2. Be curious vs. certain.
3. Determine impact on the group.
4. Consider your options.
5. Gently intervene
 - (Name, discuss, redirect)
6. Determine if further action is needed.
7. Reflect on learnings

1. Go inward: Is this just me?

- What am I bringing to this space today?
- Am I more easily irritated by certain behaviors?
- Am I not feeling my best?
- What is it about this behavior or situation that's bothering me?
- Is my ego getting in the way?
- Is this bringing up some of my personal history or triggering me in some way?

2. Be curious vs. certain

- What story or scenario am I creating in my mind based on the behavior?
- Is it accurate?
- How do I know?

3. Determine impact on the group

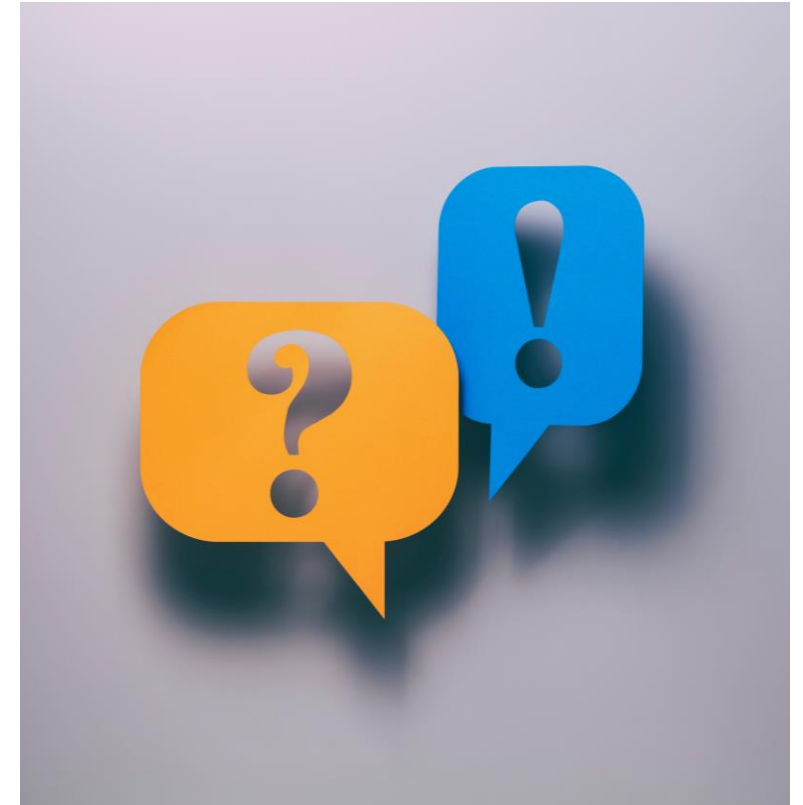
- What are you noticing?
- Did the energy in the space just shift?
- Has safety been compromised?

4. Consider your options

- Wait and see
- Address immediately in the group
- Take a break and check in with your co-facilitator
- If on Zoom private chat with your co-facilitator
- Address with the individual(s) after group
- Other options?

5. Intervene: Name the Behavior

- Acknowledge what's going on
 - *There seems to be some anger and a lot of big feelings in the space today.*
- Validate and normalize, if appropriate
 - *It's understandable to be really frustrated by.."*
- Reframe and/or clarify, if appropriate
 - *It takes a lot of courage to share and a lot of courage to listen.*
 - *I thought I heard you say..... Did I hear you correctly?*



5. Intervene: Discuss In The Moment

- Check in directly with the whole group or with a specific group member
 - *How is everyone doing?*
 - *Kay are you upset with Bea or are you upset at someone else?*
- Invite group members to share feelings or observations, if appropriate
 - *Would anyone like to share their perspective?*
- Bring everyone back to the group guidelines
- Reiterate previously discussed facilitator and participant expectations

5. Intervene: Redirect

Do a grounding exercise

- Breathing together
- Journaling or doodling activity

Take a break

- Group stretch break together
- Move around individually

Switch topics



6. Determine if further action is needed

Discuss with the individual(s) outside of group:

- Assume best intentions
 - I wanted to follow up with you because you seemed distracted in group today.
 - Can you tell me a little bit about how group went for you today?

If someone leaves group abruptly:

- Allow space, follow the person after a pre-established amount of time
- Email, follow-up call, breakout room
- What is the plan you previously discussed with the group?

Make a safety plan if needed

Be clear about guidelines and expectations

7. Reflect on Learnings

Self-Assessment:

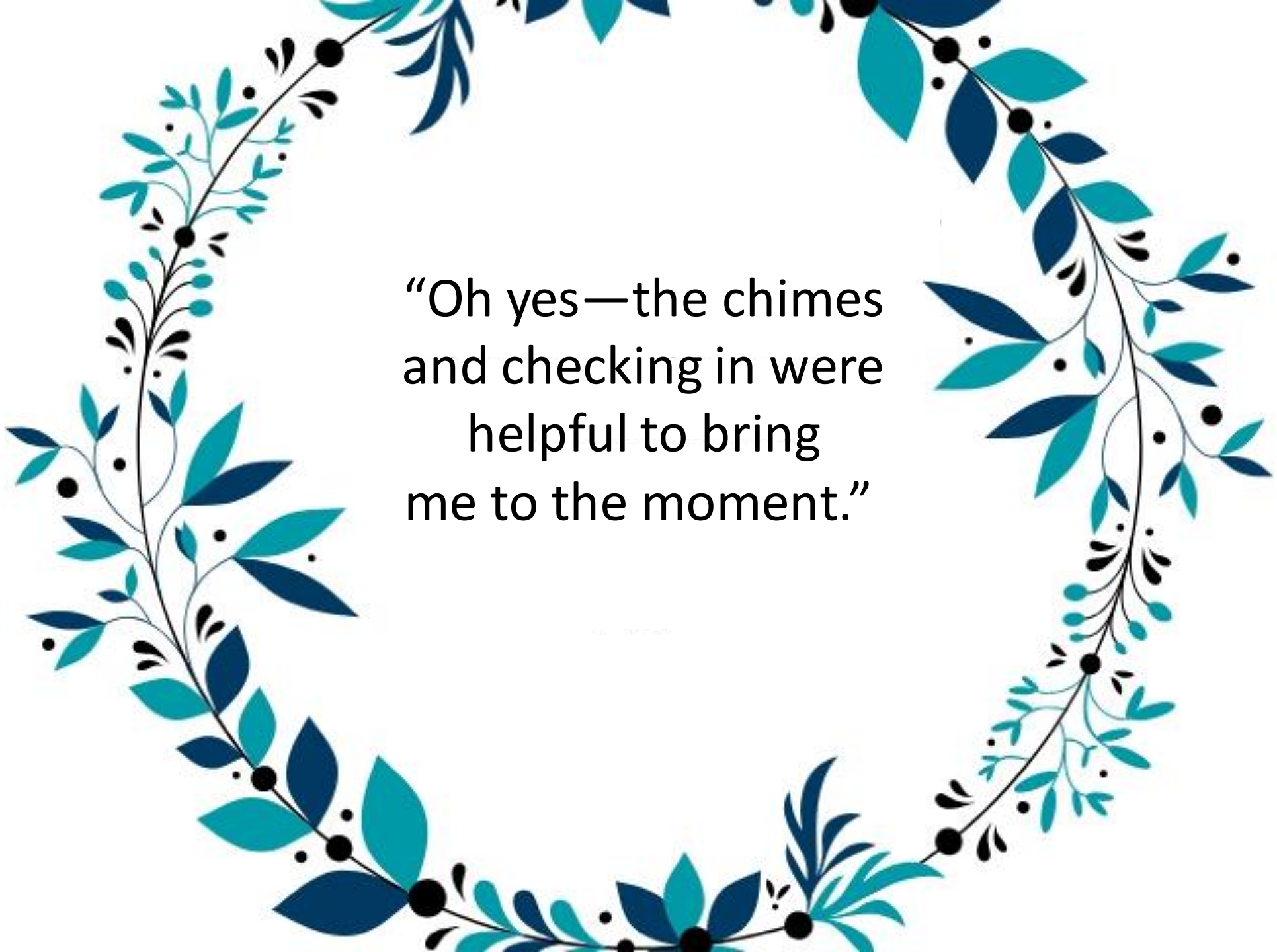
- What could I have done more of?
- What could I have done less of?
- What would I like to do different next time?

Support Network:

- Co-facilitator
- Supervisor
- Clinical Consultant

10-minute Break





“Oh yes—the chimes
and checking in were
helpful to bring
me to the moment.”

Table discussion

Identify 3 – 5 strategies to address one of the following:

1. 2 people are whispering to each other during group.
2. A lot of interest around a particular topic causing you to go off agenda.
3. A group member is expressing thoughts/feelings unrelated to the topic.
4. Lack of verbal participation by several people in the group.
5. A participant's behavior could be read as agitated or aggressive by others.
6. One person keeps monopolizing the conversation.
7. Appears to be conflict between a few participants.
8. One participant continues to give advice or offer solutions.

Skill Building Opportunity

Practicing Intervention Techniques

- In pairs
 - Participant will use the scenarios
 - Facilitator will practice intervention techniques
- Each person will be the facilitator and the participant twice
- Brief large group share out



Wrap-up

- Table Discussion
 - What stuck with you today?
- Verbal Feedback
- Flip Chart Feedback
 - Anything we change/implement for tomorrow?

A decorative floral wreath made of green leaves and small blue and purple flowers, framing the central text.

Support Group Facilitator Training

Day 3

mecasa
MAINE COALITION AGAINST
SEXUAL ASSAULT

2023

An artistic background on the left side of the slide featuring several stylized human silhouettes in various colors (yellow, orange, red, blue) standing on a green grassy surface. The silhouettes are semi-transparent and layered, creating a sense of depth. A thin white vertical line is visible near the first silhouette.

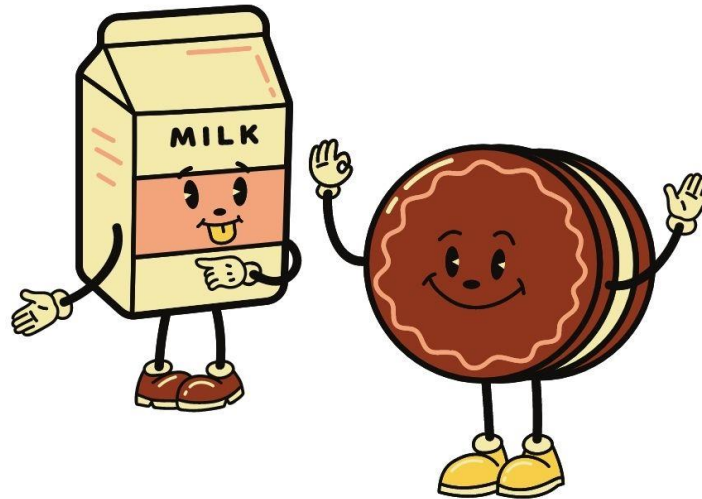
Group Guidelines

1. Direct communication
2. Start & end on time
3. Acknowledge and learn from different approaches
4. Refrain from sharing any identifying information

Arriving Activity: Box Breathing

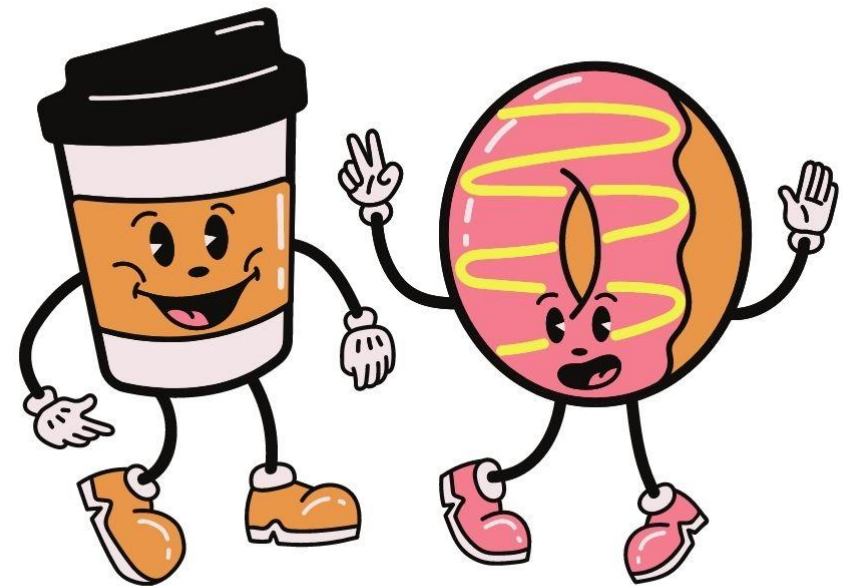


Section 5: Co-Facilitation



Co-Facilitation = Best Practice

- Allows for one facilitator to step out and provide direct support to a participant who needs it.
- Thought partner in assessing group needs and building content
- Additional support to hold the space



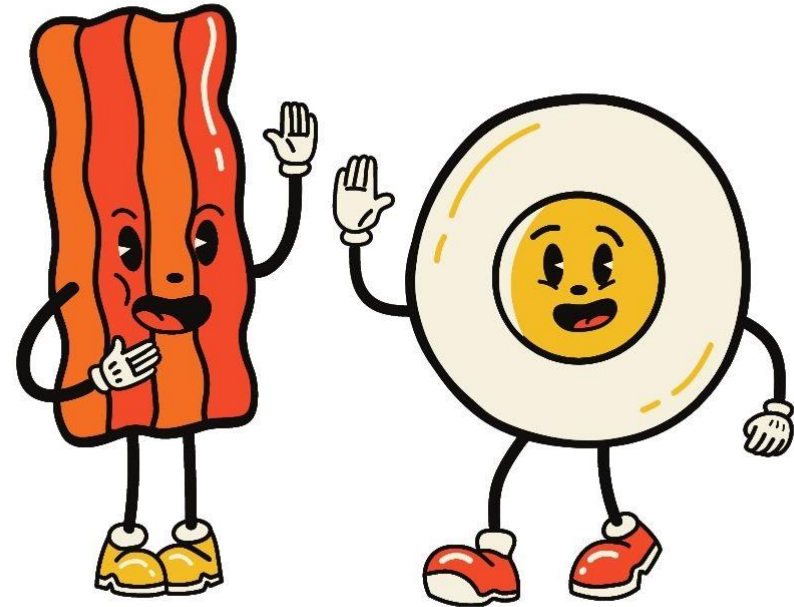
Co-Facilitator Prep time Builds Rapport + Trust

- Co-Facilitator trust is palpable
- Confidence in your Co-Facilitator
- Co-Facilitator trust allows for authentic feedback



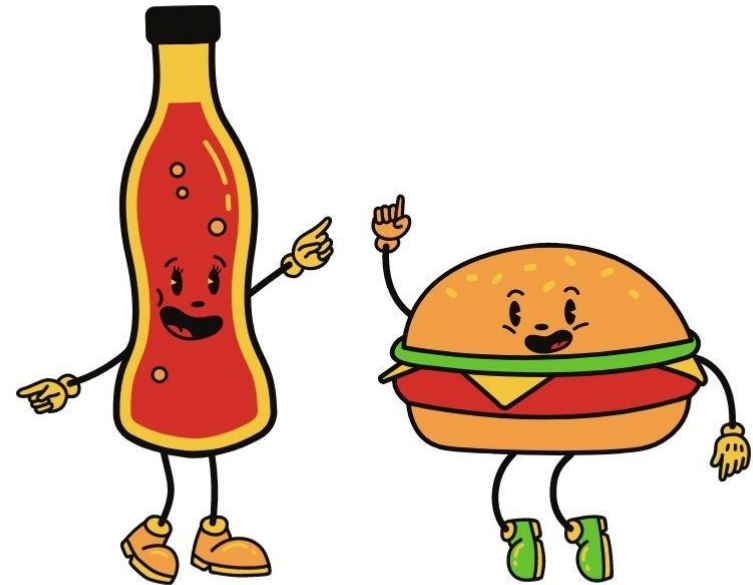
Balancing Each Other Out

- Knowing strengths/challenges of each other
- When I need to step back, they can step in
- Multiple styles and approaches create more opportunities for participants



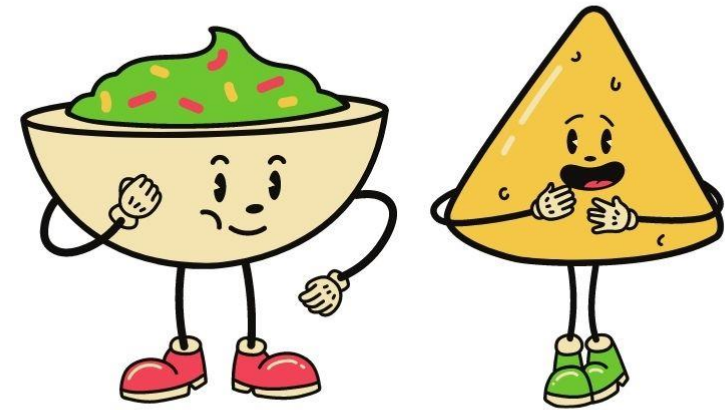
Co-Facilitation ≠ Equal Facilitation

- Lead Facilitator + Support Facilitator Model
- Co-Led Model
- Experienced Facilitator + New Advocate



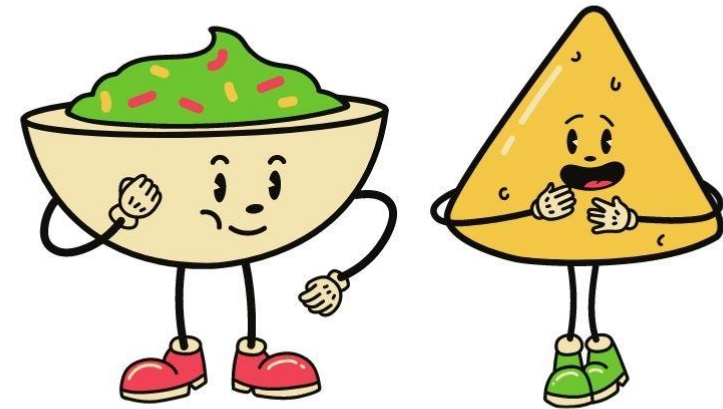
Clear Expectations and Roles

- Who prints the handouts?
- Do we both want to be there 20 minutes early to set up?
- Consistent prep and debrief times scheduled



Clear Expectations and Roles When You're from Different Agencies

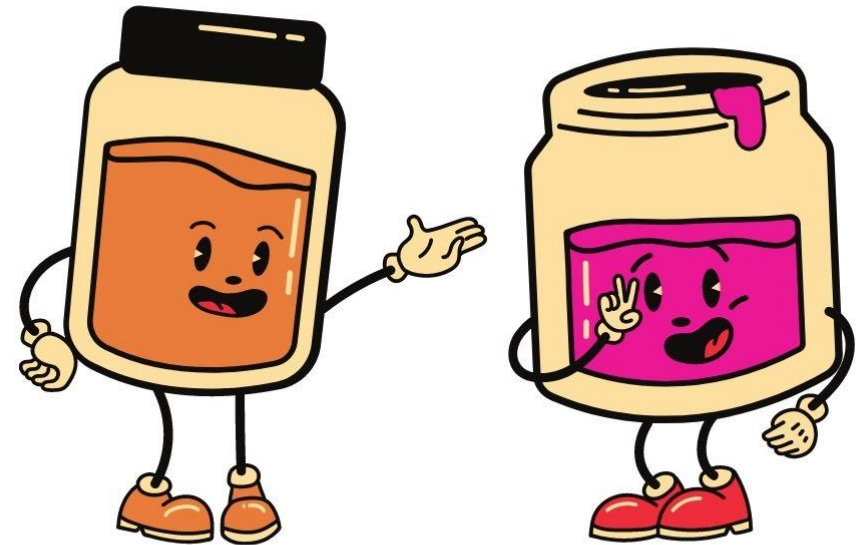
- What are your policies regarding mandated reporting and mental health crisis calls?
- What are your agencies values around X, Y, and Z topics?
- What are your policies regarding communication and boundaries with survivors?



Co-Facilitator Communication Strategies

- Whole Group

What do you think would be some effective communication strategies for co-facilitators to use in group?



10-minute Break





**What was most helpful about
your group experience?**

“The overall positivity and fun
within the group.”

“Being surrounded by caring
people.”

“The diversity of how we were
raped and at what ages, yet we
are all the same in empathy.”

Facilitation Practice Overview

- Final Practice Facilitation (final 2 pairs)
- Group decides the topic
- Prep Time: 20 min
 - 1 pair does the opening and a prompt
 - 1 pair does an additional prompt and the closing
- Mock Group Time: 20 min each group
- Feedback Time: 5 min after each

Facilitation Practice Prep

Topics for prepping content (not playing a character)

- 1. Gratitude
- 2. Supporting a Friend
- 3. Community Care

Questions to prep:

- 1. How will we open the group? (*Group 1*)
- 2. What prompts/reflections will we use? (*Groups 1 & 2*)
- 3. How will we close the group? (*Group 2*)

Facilitation Practice Mock Groups

- Get into your groups.
- You'll have 20 minutes for each round of facilitation practice.
- After each round of facilitation practice take 5 minutes for debrief or take 10 minutes at the end of both rounds.
- We will help you with time management.
- Questions?

Facilitation Practice Feedback Time

Feedback can look like:

- Reflecting on something the facilitator could do more of and something the facilitator could do less of.
- Asking the facilitators what they feel they did well and what they feel they could improve on, and then adding to their self-assessment if necessary.

Whole Group Discussion: Facilitation Debrief



How did this facilitation practice feel?



What did you observe that went well? For yourself or for colleagues



What did you observe that was challenging?

Closing and Reflections:

- What are you dreaming of now when it comes to support groups?
- What comes next for you?
- Advocate wisdom
 - Lessons learned
 - Stories (de-identified)
- Questions?

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EVALUATION

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