**Support Group Facilitator Training**

**FACILITATOR’S GUIDE for Interim Training**

**PURPOSE**

This training is intended for advocates who have completed the Core Advocate Trainingto acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to confidentially co-facilitate an outreach, traditional, or experiential support group with an experienced co-facilitator.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

**SKILLS**

1. Prepare and plan for a support group.
2. Able to work with a co-facilitator.
3. Able to manage behaviors and dynamics in a support group.

**KNOWLEDGE**

1. Understand the value of a facilitator in a support group, including the characteristics, skills, and role.
2. Understand the characteristics, purpose, and value of a support group
3. Understand group dynamics within a support group
4. Recognize self-care strategies and resources for building a support group curriculum.

**CONTEXT & PHILOSOPHY**

In the fall of 2017 a workgroup made up of member center Client Services Coordinators identified the need for a regular statewide Support Group Facilitator Training. Together and in accordance with the statewide Quality Assurance Standards, the group designed a day-long training and supporting content materials.

**Time:** 7 hours

**Handouts:**

Support Group Purpose and Definitions

Support Group Structure and Content

Questions to Ask When Starting a Support Group

Screening Interviewer Guide

Skills and Characteristics of Facilitators

Group Stages

Intervention Strategies

Your Limits and Boundaries

Co-Facilitation Best Practices

Quality Assurance Standards

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| Topic | In person time |
| Overview  Starting a Support Group | 1 hour |
| What is a Support Group?  Meeting Structure and Screening | 45 minutes  20 minutes screening practice |
| The Art and Practice of Facilitation  Your Limits and Boundaries | 45 minutes |
| Group Dynamics & Interventions  Co-facilitator Discussion and Best Practices  Self-care and Support for the Facilitator | 1 hour |
| Support Group Observation when appropriate | 2-3 hours |
| TOTAL | 7 hours |

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| **CONTENT** | **SELF STUDY** | **IN PERSON LEARNING** |
| **OVERVIEW**   1. How we got the curriculum 2. Review Training Purpose, Knowledge, and Skills 3. Structure of the training 4. Workshop Norms    1. Model how to come up with Group Norms by walking participants through the practice of setting the expectations they have for each other for the day.    2. Why - Guidelines to help us work effectively together. 5. Hopes for the training | *Review the MECASA Intervention Toolkit on Support Groups to familiarize yourself with what is available, but you needn’t read everything just yet!*  *Read Holistic Healing for Survivors by the Resource Sharing Project (found on the Toolkit). Come prepared to share:*   1. *Something about the reading that stood out to you.* 2. *Something about the reading that you have a question about.* 3. *Come to the first session prepared to share* 4. *“What is a hope you have for today’s training?”* 5. *“What is your experience being in or facilitating groups?”* | 1. *Review training philosophy and context.* 2. *Review purpose, knowledge, and skills.* 3. *Review content to be covered and create a timeline for covering the content in person and self-study.* 4. *Together come up with a list of norms/guidelines for this training. Start with:* 5. *Trainee will come to each session having completed the self-study material.* 6. *Trainer will make time between sessions for questions.* 7. *Etc* 8. *Review trainee hopes.* 9. *Check in on Holistic Healing for Survivors*    1. *Ask them to share their thoughts.*    2. *Ask, “is there anything that is still sitting with you?”* |
| **WHAT IS A SUPPORT GROUP?**   * 1. Review the history of sexual assault support groups.   2. Clinical v. Advocate Facilitated Peer Support - no fee, no diagnosis, no treatment plans, more structure/protocol call, evidence-based curriculum   3. Define the purpose of the group: process as an outcome.   4. Discuss other purposes of groups: safety, finding a voice, being heard, what individual survivor is looking for, connection to each other.   5. Review the differences between Traditional, Outreach and Experiential groups.      1. Remind the group that this is outlined in the Quality Assurance Standards, along with other Support Group standards. | *Read “SUPPORT GROUP PURPOSE AND DEFINITIONS”*  *Review the Quality Assurance Standards related to Support Group Facilitation.*  *Read pages 5-15 of* [*Circle of Hope: A Guide for Conducting Effective Psychoeducational Support Groups*](https://mainecasa.sharepoint.com/Shared%20Documents/MECASA%20Programs,%20Initiatives,%20Trainings/Trainings/Support%20Group%20Facilitator%20Training/Circle%20of%20Hope:%20A%20Guide%20for%20Conducting%20Effective%20Psychoeducational%20Support%20Groups)*, Washington Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs*  *Read pages 7-9 of* [*Power of Social Connection*](http://www.nsvrc.org/sites/default/files/the-power-of-social-connection.pdf)*, North Carolina Coalition Against Sexual Assault* | 1. *Share your agency’s history providing support groups, including changes in programming over the years.* 2. *Ask: “Do you have any questions about the reading?* 3. *Review and define:*    1. *Peer Support v. Clinical groups*    2. *Purpose of support groups.*    3. *Any additional agency philosophy and practice about how and why you do support groups.* 4. *Walk through the QAS, including defining Traditional, Outreach, and Experiential Support Groups – offering current agency examples.* |
| **STARTING A SUPPORT GROUP**   1. Questions to Ask    1. Why are you doing it?    2. What opportunities or partnerships will support it?    3. Any funding or grant considerations?    4. Any agency values and/or priorities? 2. Outreach    1. Outreach is part of the logistics and structure of a support group.    2. You do outreach based on how to group came to be.       1. Jail vs. Shelter vs. Core Service    3. How do you do it when you don’t have a captive audience? | *Read: “QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN STARTING A SUPPORT GROUP”* | 1. *With the trainee, identify a Support Group they and/or the agency might be interested in facilitating. Walk through all the steps in the “Questions to ask…” together.* 2. *Referring to the theoretical you just work on, ask the trainee: what outreach strategies can you think of?* |
| **MEETING STRUCTURE & SCREENING**   1. How to Screen for Support Groups    1. From QAS and safety and success for both the individual and the group.    2. More of a conversation than an interview.    3. Sharing roles and expectations of the facilitator, the participant, and the agency. 2. Group Structure and Content    1. Structure has a purpose - Helpful in planning.    2. The consistency allows for safety and predictability for participants and facilitators.    3. This structure works for all 3 types of groups.    4. Beginning facilitators tend to get worried about how to fill time/have a structured plan.    5. Willing to prep – be willing to flex.    6. It’s really important and not that important at all.    7. Reference places to go for content. | *Read:*  *“SUPPORT GROUP STRUCTURE AND CONTENT”*  *“SUPPORT GROUP SCREENING INTERVIEW GUIDE”*  *“SUPPORT GROUP REFFERAL FORM” SAMPLE*  *“SUPPORT GROUP INTERVIEW FORM” SAMPLE*  *“SUPPORT GROUP GUIDELINES” SAMPLE*  *Review the Facilitator Guide and Curriculum section of the MECASA Intervention Toolkit Support Group.*  *After your in-person learning, use your agency and Intervention Toolkit resources to make a sample Support Group session.* | 1. *Ask the trainee if they have any questions about the reading and is there anything that stood out to them.* 2. *Share the structure and purpose of screening.*     1. *Share some lessons learned about support group screening, highlighting the reason we screen (and how we screen). Ex: self-identification of judgement of other group members, sharing a history of thoughts of suicide, etc.* 3. *Review all agency practices regarding screening, including:*    1. *Documentation.*    2. *Steps when someone isn’t a good fit for group right now.*    3. *Who is doing the screening.*    4. *Where screening takes place.*    5. *Adaptations the agency uses for population-specific or experiential support groups.* 4. *Have the trainee practice a screening interview with you (or with another advocate, with your observing).*     1. *Both share reflections on strengths and challenges of that activity.* 5. *Briefly review Group Structure handout – ask if there are any questions.* 6. *Go over where Support Group content lives at your agency and how it gets developed.* 7. *Ask – are there any groups you’ve been a part of where you really like the opening or closing activities?* |
| **THE ART & PRACTICE OF FACILITATION**   1. Role of the Facilitator    1. Facilitator v. Advocate       1. Holding space and structure for people to have a conversation.       2. The holding of that space is a lot of things and is more directive than one-to-one advocacy.       3. Similar skills for a different purpose.       4. Hold the interest of the group and the individuals – if the needs of the individual take priority, defer to the needs of the group. 2. Review Characteristics of Effective Facilitators | *Read: “CHARACTERISTICS OF AN EFFECTIVE FACILITATOR”* | *Prepare some “Lessons Learned” to share with the trainee.*   1. *Tell them about a time in your work when the difference between advocating for one person vs. a support group was really highlighted.* 2. *Share how preparing for one-to-one support is different than preparing for a Support Group.* 3. *Within groups there will be times the needs of the individual will compete with the needs of the group – share a time when that has happened and how to prepare for that.* |
| **YOUR LIMITS & BOUNDARIES**   1. Organizational Boundaries    1. You have them. Know them. 2. Confidentiality and Privilege    1. Role of Advocate to maintain confidentiality.    2. Role of Participant to maintain confidentiality.    3. No privilege protections due to other participants being in the room.    4. Be sure to inform all participants of that limitation, with special emphasis if you know there is an active case or possible (criminal/civil/work place rights/Title IX) 3. Personal Boundaries    1. Shift depending on your role and relationship to others. Requires regular reflection.    2. It needs to be intentional/a decision.    3. Informed by org boundaries.    4. Supervision. 4. Boundaries and Co-facilitators | *Read: “LIMITS AND BOUNDARIES”*  *Make is a list of questions you might ask your co-facilitator to explore your personal boundaries.*  *Example: How do you determine when to share personal information with support group participants?*  *What do you do if a group participant calls your work number for support outside of group?* | 1. *Review organizational and legal boundaries, including:*    1. *Confidentiality*    2. *Privilege*    3. *Privilege and Confidentiality in the context of a Support Group.*    4. *Contact between/outside of group with participants.*    5. *Mandated reporting.*    6. *Agency policy and protocols regarding support groups.*    7. *Community partner policy and protocols (information sharing, space sharing, etc).* 2. *Questions for the trainee to begin to explore their personal boundaries:*    1. *Review their co-facilitator boundary questions.* |
| **GROUP DYNAMICS & INTERVENTIONS**   1. Group Stages    1. Groups and individual’s roles within groups change over time.    2. How the group dynamic changes with time and can be supported by a facilitator – there are concrete things you should do to support this process.    3. Different relationships and outcomes are possible as trust is built.    4. Outreach group participants may not have the opportunity to build trust or go through these stages. 2. Intervention Strategies    1. If there is a behavioral impacting the group, there is a series of questions you are going to ask yourself and then take steps to address it.       1. Is it just me?       2. Gently interrupt/redirect/address.       3. Determine whether further discussion is needed in the moment or later.       4. Make a plan. | *Read: “STAGES GROUPS MAY GO THROUGH”*  *and “Intervention Strategies”*  *Identify 3 – 5 strategies to the following scenarios:*   1. *First meeting of a group – strategies to help create an environment for safe dialogue.* 2. *A lot of interest around a particular topic causing you to go off agenda.* 3. *Members are not supporting the norms.* 4. *Lack of verbal participation by several in the group.* 5. *You feel someone has attacked your credibility.* 6. *One person keeps monopolizing the conversation.* 7. *Appears to be conflict between a few participants.* | 1. *Does this make sense to you?* 2. *Have you observed this process in groups you have been a part of?* 3. *Do you have questions or concerns?* 4. *Lessons learned: share a time when a group moved through a stage and how that happened. Or things the facilitator can do to encourage trust building throughout the group/stages.* |
| **CO-FACILIATION BEST PRACTICES**   1. Co-facilitation is best practice. 2. It is part of the QAS. 3. It requires time and commitment. 4. If possible do the screening as co-facilitators. | *Read: “CO FACILITATION BEST PRACTICES”*  *Answer these questions:*   1. *Benefits –what you are looking forward to about co-facilitating?* 2. *What are some concerns about co-facilitating?* 3. *What are some actions you can take with your co-facilitator before the group meeting?* 4. *What are some actions you can take with your co-facilitator during the group meeting?* 5. *What are some actions you can take with your co-facilitator after the group meeting?* | 1. *Review handout and answers to the self-study questions.* |
| **SELF-CARE & SUPPORT FOR THE FACILITATOR** | *Answer the following questions*   1. *“Why is self-care for a facilitator important?”* 2. *“How do you do self-care now?”* 3. *“What ideas do you have for self-care as a facilitator working with support groups?”* 4. *“What role does supervision play in self-care?”* | 1. *Review answers to the questions.* 2. *Review agency supervision and support structure.* 3. *Lessons learned: share some of your strategies for tending to your needs following a support group.* |

Review *Power of Connection/Circle of Hope for supporting content for self-study*

*Look for boundaries handout*