



SUPPORT GROUP LEADER TRAINING:

PART 4 – Q&A



PART 4: Q&A

Assessment

Question

7?

List two additional WhatsApp rules, that we didn't mention in the training, that you feel would better your supplementary WhatsApp Group's functioning?

Please see "WhatsApp Group Rules Examples" attached in a separate pdf for easy reference.

- Leave the news in the newsroom, this Group is for personal support, though it is useful to know what the traffic is doing, please keep posts relevant to the Group intention
- Posts should only be made on Monday to Friday
- The main language to be used is English should it be a mixed Group to avoid alienation or otherwise translation is necessary.
- Confidentiality
- No need to do a thumbs up for every comment
- Wait and listen to each other
- Don't get personal
- No sharing of people's contact details
- Don't private message individual Members without permission
- Don't add random people to the Group
- No personal chats within the Group
- Don't generalise, keep messages to your own experience
- Think before you forward – try to avoid posting of irrelevant information
- This is a place to share and listen, not debate and invalidate. In a Group, Members often view things through the scope of their own lived experience
- Don't be afraid to leave the Group if it is no longer serving a purpose for you. Wishing your peers well before leaving can help Members feel reassured and not have to worry about your well being.
- Only use this platform if all Group members have access to WhatsApp
- Members should support others avoid giving unsolicited advice.
- No private messaging between Group Members
- Disclaimer that this Group offers support, but is not run by a Mental Health practitioner
- Person will be deleted and blocked from Group if found to
 - be offensive / inappropriate
 - Be aware of cultural sensitivities
 - We are a Group run by the Group, if anything on the Group is inappropriate or unhelpful it is each person's responsibility to let an admin Member know so that it can be dealt with for everybody's best interest
 - Only admins should be allowed to post on the Group
 - Don't use the Group to air grievances towards others – let's rather unpack this in the meeting
 - Do not share intent to self-harm or commit Suicide, if a Member is having suicidal thoughts, it is better to contact SADAG directly or a friend/ family Member that are able to assist in their vicinity
 - Do not get angry if someone does not respond to your message as they may have missed the question or do not have the answer.
 - Try to keep to once conversation at a time to avoid confusion
 - You are responsible for what you post
 - When sharing on the Group, provide trigger warnings to any content that may be harmful or triggering to certain Group Members, especially video or news content
 - Treat others as you would want to be treated

Question 8?

Which 1 of the below statements is incorrect

- You can provide medical advice based on your own personal experience with specific medication
- Saying “she/he struggles with Depression,” is more accurate than saying “he/she is Depressed” as it shows that is something the person has, not something the person is
- Saying so-and-so had an unsuccessful Suicide attempt suggests Suicide is a desirable outcome
- Sometimes help resisting behaviour can be a sign that the Member is feeling unheard or misunderstood
- A Support Group Leader should never make someone feel pressurised to share, but allow them the opportunity to share if and when they are ready to do so

We need to be very aware and sensitive when discussing medication and treatment. Our words and opinions can influence others. Avoid conversations where you provide the names of specific medication you have taken or doctors you have gone to. Remember each person's journey is different, and it is not a one-size fits all process.



Question 9?

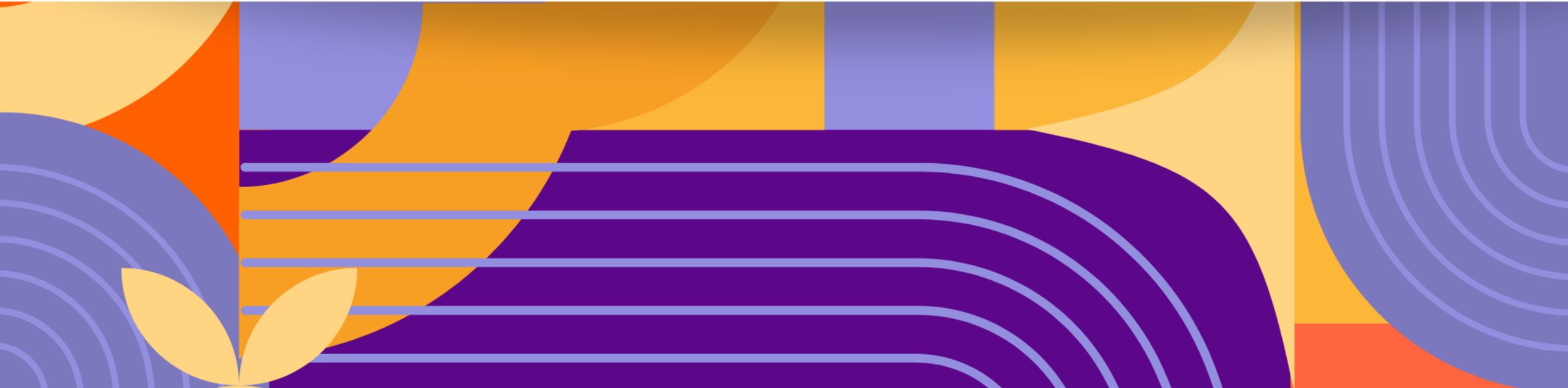
True or False? If ground rules or Group values have been made and agreed on by the Group, it is easy to refer back to them when someone breaks them, and keeps the Group aligned on the same page.

True: Group values and rules help form the foundation of a Support Group:

- Make Members feel safe and comfortable
- Helpful in defining and enforcing boundaries
- Give Members a better understanding of what to expect from the Group
- Indicate acceptable and unacceptable Group behaviour
- Remember: The best way to get buy in, is by empowering Members to have their say

Deciding on a Group value statement

- This should be a discussion between your Group
- Opening it to the Group shows that it is the “Group’s Group” not your Group
- If Group Members help make the rules, it is likely they believe in and agree with the rules
- It also means that it will be easier to implement the rules
- You can vote on rules as Group by putting up your hand



Question 10?

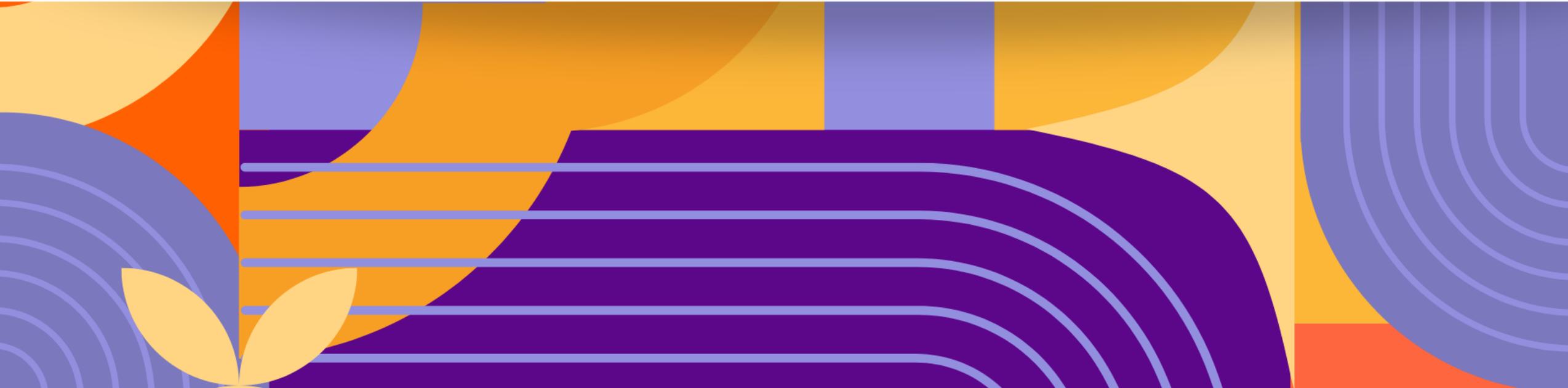
True or False? All Support Groups have identical Group Value Statements

False: Group value Statements help form the foundation of a Support Group:

- Remember: The best way to get buy in, is by empowering Members

Deciding on a Group value statement

- This should be a discussion between your Group Members, and differs from Group to Group.
- Opening it to the Group shows that it is the “Group’s Group” not your Group
- If Group Members help make the decisions, it is likely they believe in and agree with the values
- It also means that it will be easier to implement the Group values.

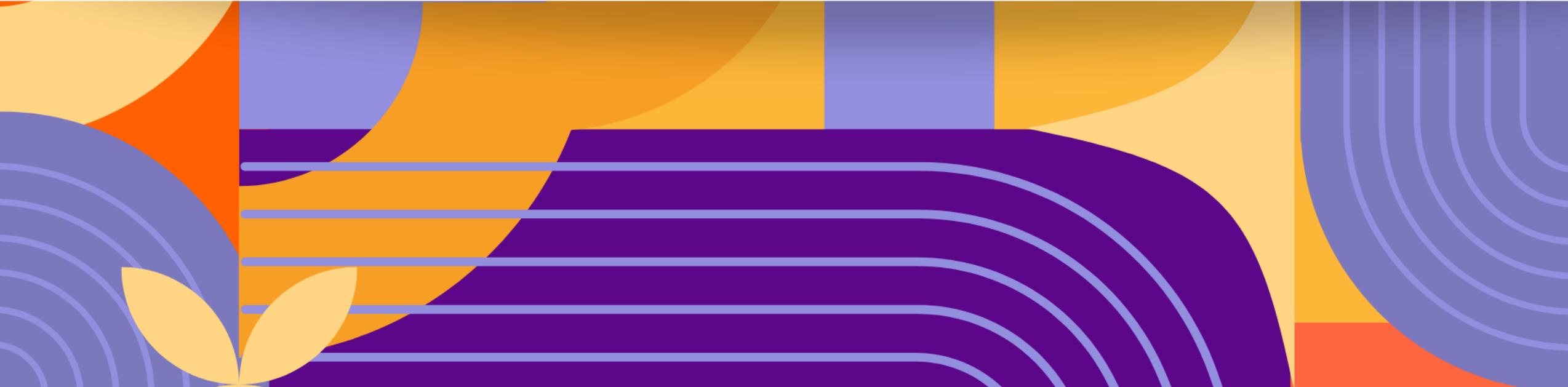


Question

11?

Part of the Support Group Leaders role is to identify relevant and helpful meeting topics. List one meeting topic you feel you would like to discuss with your Group.

Please see "Support Group Meeting Topic Ideas" attached in a separate pdf for easy reference.

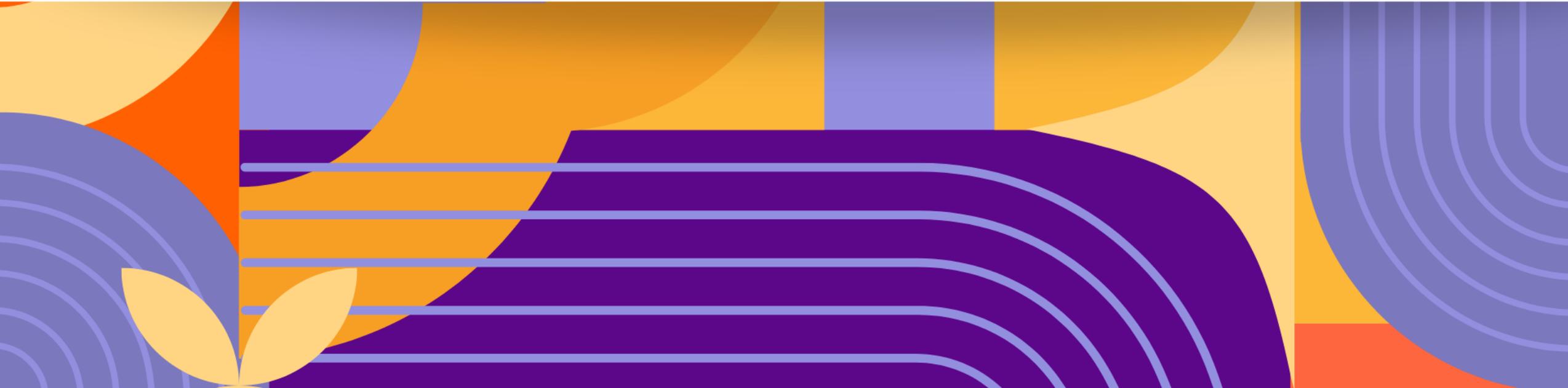


Question

12?

Ice Breakers are a good way to initiate conversation, especially in a new Group. List one icebreaker you would like to try with your Group, and explain how it is executed.

Please see "Icebreaker ideas for Support Group meetings" attached in a separate 'pdf' for easy reference.



Question 13?

Not all your Support Group Members will be referred by SADAG. People can receive your details in a variety of ways, including our Website, Press Releases or Social Media. In many instances, you may need to do your own screening. What are some of the key reasons that screening new Members is so important?

- As the Support Group Leader, screening helps you determine if the person may need one-on-one treatment first, before joining your Support Group. It helps in assessing whether they may need assistance from a Medical / Mental Health Professional. Screening also serves as a reminder that a Support Group is not therapy, it is for extra support, networking and guidance.
- By screening the person, you as a Support Group Leader will be able to tell if the person will make a good addition to your Group, also you will also be able to assess if your Group will be beneficial to them and not be triggering in any way.
- Making sure that the person gets the correct help and information they need is also important during this screening process. If the person is not ready to join a Group or, if your Group is not the correct fit, please assist them by referring them to SADAG Call Center.





Q&A

**Part 4: Evaluation questions
& feedback**

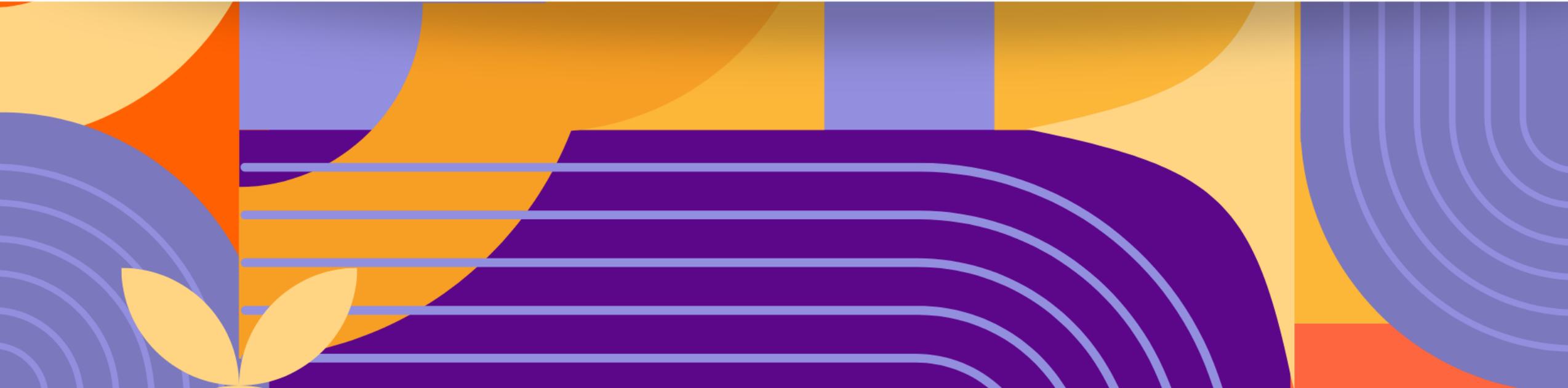
How to handle a medical emergency like, when a Member is epileptic and has an attack?

A possible way to manage this, would be to ask for emergency contacts for each Member when they sign up – so that you have them if needs be

You can also ask your Members if they have any conditions like panic attacks or epilepsy and ask them upfront what you should do in the case that they have one

For more info on panic attacks:

- https://www.sadag.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2970:everything-you-need-to-know-about-panic-attacks-and-how-to-stop-them&catid=32&Itemid=162



How to create more awareness on emotions- and how to name them

Google has so many great handouts, videos and information on this. We have attached an example of some emotional world.

Helpful videos =

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hlfPjCviTxA&t=94s>
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D6_J7FfgWVc

A List of Emotions

Go beyond the obvious to identify exactly what you're feeling.

Angry	Sad	Anxious	Hurt	Embarrassed	Happy
Grumpy	Disappointed	Afraid	Jealous	Isolated	Thankful
Frustrated	Mournful	Stressed	Betrayed	Self-conscious	Trusting
Annoyed	Regretful	Vulnerable	Isolated	Lonely	Comfortable
Defensive	Depressed	Confused	Shocked	Inferior	Content
Spiteful	Paralyzed	Bewildered	Deprived	Guilty	Excited
Impatient	Pessimistic	Skeptical	Victimized	Ashamed	Relaxed
Disgusted	Tearful	Worried	Aggrieved	Repugnant	Relieved
Offended	Dismayed	Cautious	Tormented	Pathetic	Elated
Irritated	Disillusioned	Nervous	Abandoned	Confused	Confident

How to handle people who can be violent. If there is violence how is the situation handled and who do we notify first?

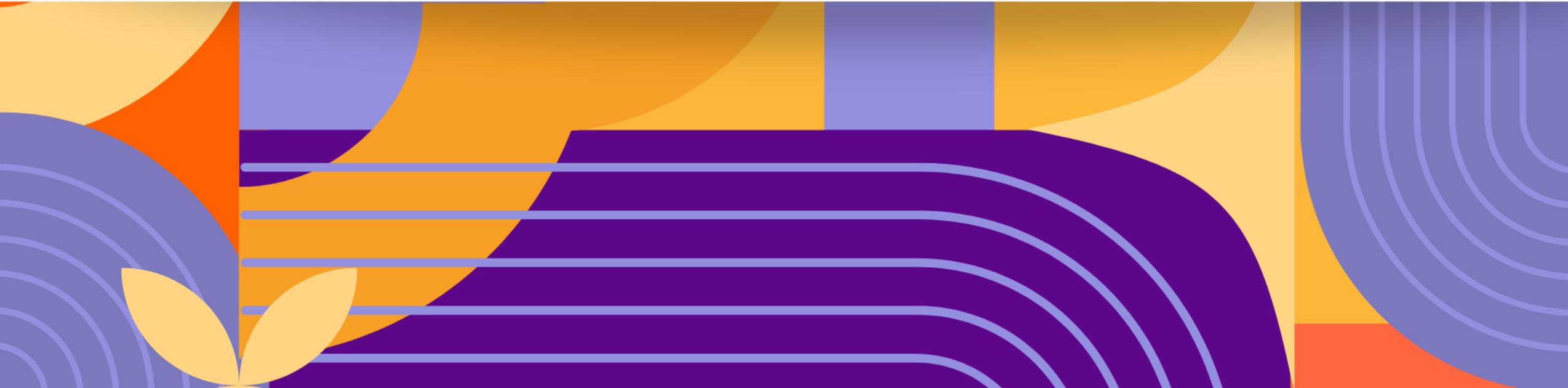
In my time of being the Support Group co-ordinator I have never had a Member who became violent in a Support Group. However, I think it is always better to unpack possible problems or difficulties.

There have been a case or two where a Member became angry and aggressive over WhatsApp. We do not tolerate violence or abusive behaviour, and encourage Leaders to block anyone who infringes on these boundaries.

It may be difficult to reach out for help in the moment, but you can always let us know what happened and we can come up with a plan of action going forward.

I would suggest nipping any heated tension you may sense in the bud.

We want to keep things real, and showing emotion is healthy, but when an emotional reaction is aimed directly at someone that is not okay.





You may want to diffuse the situation by encouraging the Member or each party to talk to you directly. Reflect what they may be feeling in that moment. You can also ask them to describe the feeling they are having – on a scale from 1 – 10 how strong is it. What colour is it. Where in your body can you feel it? What does it feel like. You could then explore what happened that made them feel that way.

When it comes to a dispute between two Members, ask them to explain what each Member is feeling. Focus on the more agitated person first.

Allowing them to express what they are both feeling, while not having to confront each other but rather unpack it with you, can allow for each party to hear what is being said, without feeling the need to step in and defend themselves.

While it may sound a little intimidating – labelling an emotion will never make the emotion stronger – rather it will make the person– I

can see you are really angry right now, can you tell us more about what is going on for you right now.

You may also suggest taking a mindful pause, with a grounding exercise to regulate emotions for more rational reaction.

I think most importantly, it is essential that you try to remain as calm as possible. It is hard to shout at someone when they are replying in a calm tone. Speak a little softer and even more slowly than usual, try to remain neutral – even if that’s not what you may be feeling on the inside.

Remember you are not the teacher, and you certainly aren’t there to take sides, so make sure that both Members feel heard and understood. You don’t need to agree with their behaviour to unpack their emotions.

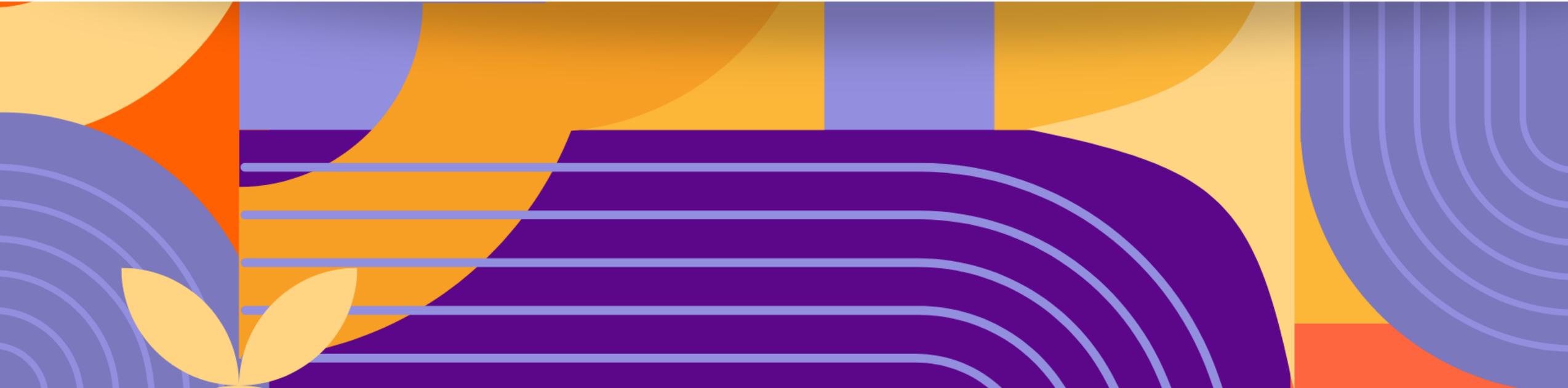
How to deal with challenges within the Group, if they arise

You don't always need to address challenges right away, you may also need to take a pause. You can always give us a call to debrief and discuss possible options or ways forward.

If you do have a challenging situation, try to focus on addressing the feelings that the Members are experiencing. Don't get caught up with the facts. We're not trying to decide on who is right and who is wrong.

You may want to ask a Member to step out for a minute and go and have some water or splash their faces.

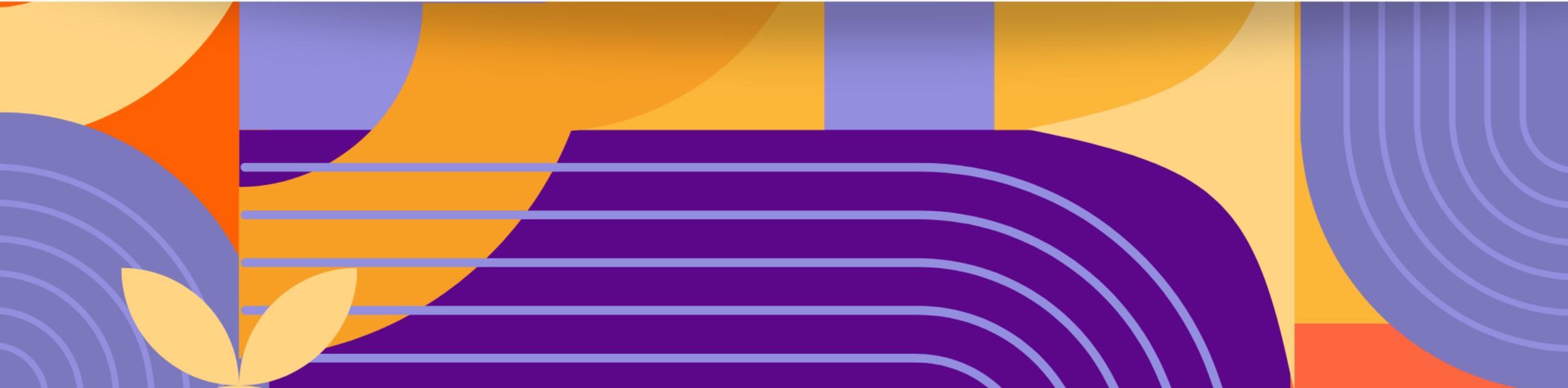
It is so important that you model neutral calm and contained behaviour. If you are really struggling to stay neutral ask the Group to take a pause.



What do we do if a screened Group Member turns out to be bad for the Group overall? Also, how do we deal with someone saying they're having strong suicidal thoughts/feelings and if they demonstrate that they have the means and intent? Do we contact SADAG about the Member in particular or ask them to contact SADAG?

I know that certain situations can escalate very quickly and can be very triggering for the Group as a whole and I would not want to ignore or dismiss a cry for help.

Also, when we first get started, can we ask our Group to perhaps share their major triggers so we can address and tailor our language to avoid triggering them if the topic occurs for a different Member eg. someone struggling with Depression after a sexual assault.

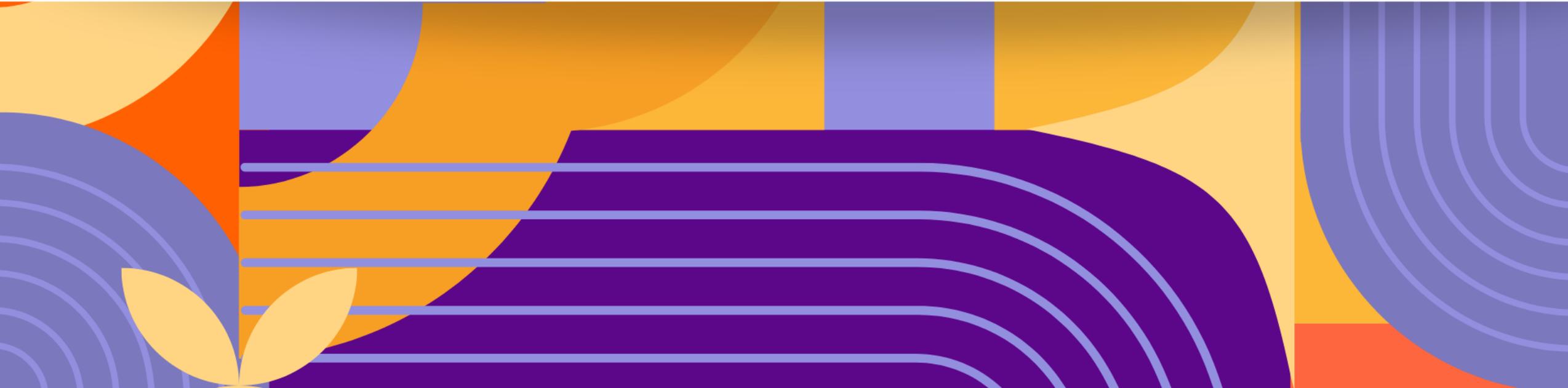


As we know Mental Health is not something we have or don't have. We can be okay one week, and the next week maybe we are really struggling. If you are concerned about a Member in your Group, or you are worried about the wellbeing of the Group because of a specific Member – definitely give us a call. Each situation is unique so it's not always going to be a one-size fits all answer.

But we never want to make someone feel rejected. So we need to manage situations like this gently. You can tell a Member you are worried about them, and ask if SADAG can give them a call – because what's the worst that can happen from taking a call? But we can't just phone someone – we need their permission first. So either encouraging them to call SADAG, or asking if SADAG can call them.

Asking Members what triggers them may sensor the Group. So I would advise against it – it can also be difficult to keep track of. You can remind Members to let the Group know if they find something triggering, and if necessary they can chat to a counsellor.

If someone is being 'triggered' easily – it may be an indicator that they need some more one on one help first – prior to continuing with the Group.





**How to move
from a more
facilitated to a
less facilitated
approach in
which the
Members take
ownership of
their Group**

This is something that we find often takes place naturally as the Group becomes more familiar and comfortable with each other.

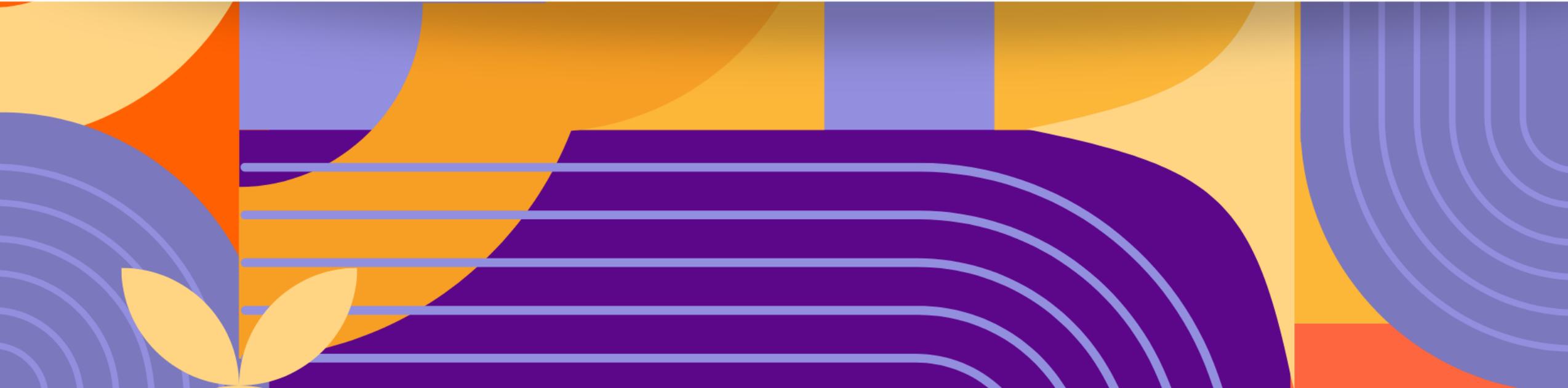
Showing the Group that it is their Group, and encouraging Group participation can help the process along nicely.

**Do you tell
the Group
this is the first
Support
Group
meeting you
have run?**

I would absolutely encourage openness with your Group, chances are they are feeling a little nervous or anxious, and don't know what to expect from the first meeting. Knowing that you are experiencing those feelings with them can be very comforting.

It is also humanising and helps to establish expectations. You are here to unite Members in a safe environment – but you're not an expert and a lot of this is going to be you navigating the Group as a Group.

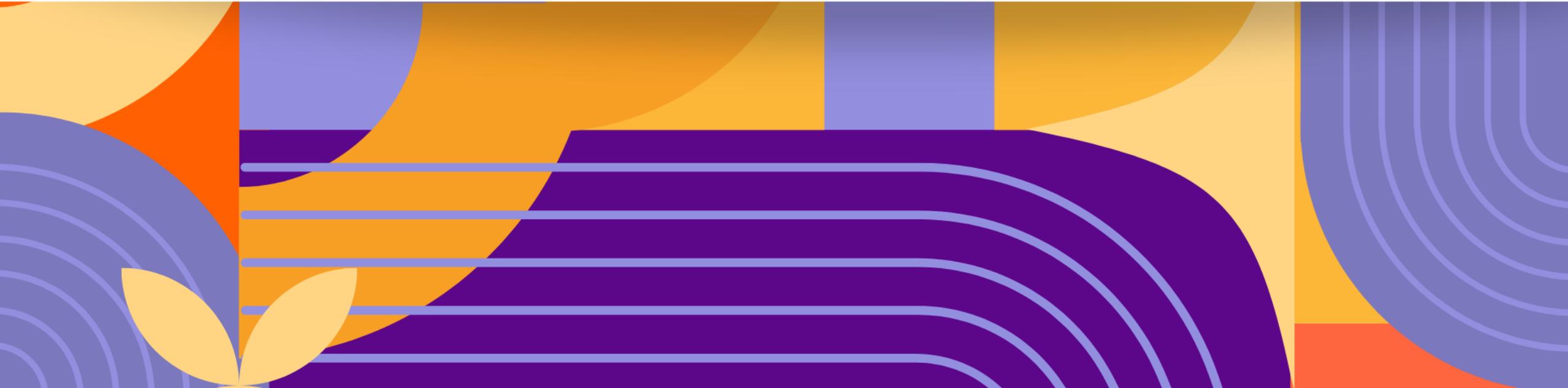
If you want the Group to be open with you, you should model that behaviour and be open with them too.



**Dealing with
psychotic
Member
who may
have
defaulted in
their
treatment.**

Remember we are always considering three things when it comes to Groups – the wellbeing of the Member, the Leader and the Group.

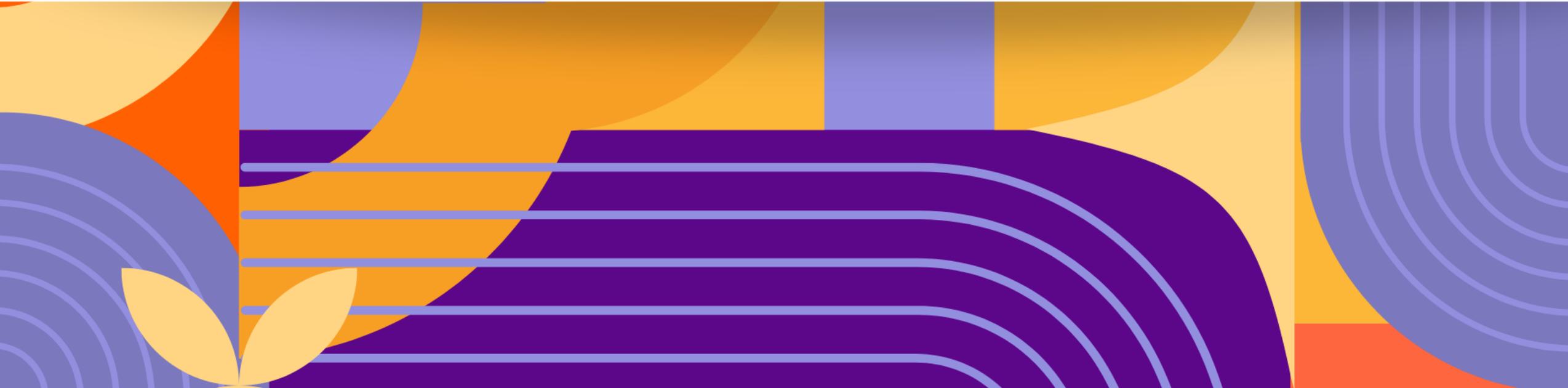
If any of these are compromised we need to step in and see how we can handle the situation. Support Group Leaders are not Mental Health practitioners and if you feel like you are dealing with something you are not comfortable with, call us and we can unpack it. We may need to call the Member to unpack what is happening for them, and perhaps suggest they get some one-on-one help.



Apart from having a WhatsApp Group for Group information, is it absolutely necessary to have a chat Group? Initially, running a new Group I would be nervous about Members chatting individually. Would it be possible to have an info Group and an "urgent matters only" Group?

Most certainly, you are in no way obliged to have a chat Group – or even a WhatsApp Group for that matter. You can always email your Group important information, or SADAG can send them an SMS if you have a contact list.

But yes, you certainly can have an urgent comms Group only. You can even start a Group where you as the Leader are the only one that can post.





For more information, please
email
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