SUPPORT GROUP LEADER TRAINING:

PART 3 – Q&A

Q&A PART 3: ASSESSMENT

Question 9?

List three ways SADAG can assist you after you have launched a 'SADAG' Support Group

- Debriefing
- Advertising your Groups through different channels e.g website, newsletters, social media
- By providing you with presentations/videos/handouts/leaflets
- Screening of potential Group Members & referral of new Members
- Online telephone support and guidance
- Weekly Support Group for Support Group Leaders
- Support Group launch pack
- Help with material and resources
- Assistance in finding a co-facilitator
- Listing your Group in the referral guide
- Assisting in getting guest speakers to give talks at Group Meetings
- Weekly mailer with interesting webinars, articles and links
- Access to other Support Groups
- Will be with the Support Group Leader throughout the Support Group journey
- Take you through the process of starting your own Support Group
- Mentorship, advice and support
- Assist with finding a venue
- Access to other Groups for observation prior to launch
- Training opportunities
- Referral letters to secure sponsorship i.e. venue/refreshments
- Connecting with other Support Group Leaders
- Press releases
- SADAG Newsletter
- Access to call centre and counsellors
- Invitations to various training opportunities
- Training/Masterclasses

Question 10?

Having looked at the list of brochures and pamphlets available from SADAG for your Group. What one focus or topic do you wish was on the list?

A separate word document has been created with links to some of the information we thought would be helpful to you.

Question 11?

Tell us how you think attending other Support Groups prior to your launch could be beneficial to you as a Support Group Leader

Attending Support Group meetings prior to launching your own can be an invaluable experience

- Demonstrates different ways a Group can be run; structured, unstructured, topic based, discussion focused, activity based, general sharing
- Each Leader has a unique style, and will manage situations differently. Great insight into aspects such as encouraging participation, handling conflict, creating a space that is safe and non-judgemental and so on
- Seeing boundaries and Group values put into action
- Attending Groups that have a different focus to your own can be educational, but also helpful in terms of knowing what other resources are available if a member of your Group would benefit from a different type of Group
- A good indication of the different types of Members you can expect as well as some of the problems they are having. It also shows how to manage different personalities
- Get a feel of how Support Groups are facilitated

Question 12?

List two ways that you can identify or find a co-facilitator for your Group

- Pair up with a friend, colleague and even a family member
- Don't have anyone in mind? Reach out to SADAG and they can try and link you with someone else in your area who has shown interest in running a Group
- After starting your Group, you may form a connection with one of your Members, and ask if they may be interested in co-hosting
- Identifying a Co-Leader in your Group can be very helpful if, for whatever reason, you need someone to host for you if you are away or unwell – but also in the event that you can no longer run your Group
- Find someone in the community who has a shared interest in the Group
- Anyone who expresses similar interests in starting a Group, or the focus of the Group
- It can be somebody who you know and trust and who may be able to bring different perspectives within the Group space.

Question 13?

True or False? Face-to-Face Groups are more successful and effective than online Groups?

- This answer is **false,** there are pros and cons to both, and the decision is often made by what works best for the Group.

- Remember deciding on a face-to-face or online Group doesn't need to be a decision that is set in stone, and you can always re-evaluate if you feel it would be more beneficial to change from online to face-to-face or vice versa

We asked a few of our Support Group Leaders to share their thoughts on the topic….

Do you prefer online meetings or Face-to-face

- I prefer **face-to-face** because you can pick up more things when listening and speaking directly to people. It is more real.
- I wish I could host **face-to-face** Support Group Meetings, online Support Group meetings are very passive, and data is a problem. The personal touch is what I miss greatly, as well as eye-contact and body language, tone gives the Group a sense of direction
- Online meetings are good to some degree but for the most part they lack inclusive participation and personal interaction as most of my Support Group Members don't have proper tools to participate, data, smart phones etc. **Face-to-face** meetings are the way to go for us
- I definitely prefer **face-to-face**. Online has felt impersonal and "weird". (One attendee was in his bed when we met!)
- My Group didn't want online. Data, as well as confidentiality are big concerns
- I prefer **face-to-face**. At the start of every online session there are always technical difficulties and this takes time. For some people coming to the Group is almost like a social event, getting out of the house. I am concerned about confidentiality, as some members don't have a private space. Family members walk in and out of the room where the meeting takes place (earphones are not always used). We even had someone's child eavesdropping on what their mom was saying.

Do you prefer online meetings or Face-to-face

- I will probably use **both** modes of Group meetings in the future. There is a place for both
- Our **online** meetings have been good! Members are able to show vulnerability and share.
- **Online** has brought my Group closer together. We meet once a week now and have Members in London and Berlin, so great to have them join us.
- I personally prefer **online** meetings; however not all my Support Group Members are able to dial into our meetings for various reasons.
- **Online** definitely brought my Group closer, the Group meets far more often than before
- I find my Members can attend more regularly with online meetings, as they don't first need to travel to get to the venue.
- My Members prefer online meetings because they can attend from the comfort of their own homes
- I run a very specific Support Group and find that my membership has increased threefold because now people from all over the country can plug in

Question 14?

List two benefits of running an online Support Group

- Maximum use of allocated time. The challenge of logistics is eliminated, no travel time/traffic to contend with
- Group Members are relaxed because they will be in familiar settings
- It does not have to be tied to a particular geographic area so people from all around SA can attend
- Logistics
- Personally, I prefer to attend a meeting from the comfort of my own home
- No venue required
- It is always possible to host even if you are on holiday
- No travelling expenses
- Travel time and organising of venue time is reduced
- Anyone can attend no matter where they live
- People don't have to worry about transport (this is a HUGE one for people like me with disabilities that make travel difficult or not possible

Question 15?

List three things you need to consider when finding a venue for a face-to-face Group

- Making sure you select a venue with easy access to transport
- How safe the venue is
- What facilities does the venue have
- Accessibility
- Safety of the environment
- The availability of resources such as chairs, bathroom facilities
- A warm, friendly environment
- Is the venue big enough
- People must feel safe and comfortable
- Need for a quiet space where people feel safe and comfortable
- Capacity of the venue
- Parking
- Background noise
- Confidentiality and discretion
- Neutral to all attending
- Who do I want to attend and will it be possible for them
- Privacy
- Are there any items or imagery that may be triggering
- Is it booked and available the days and time you use it
- How will you gain access to the venue if your meetings are after hours
- Does venue have parking and sufficient lighting if the power runs out

Question 16?

Which of the below answers is correct? How often can you host your Support Group Meeting?

1. Once a week
2. Once Every 2 weeks
3. Once a month
4. **All of the above**

This answer is ‘All of the above’
The frequency of your Group will be decided on your availability as well as the needs of your Members

Question 17?

Ken is launching his Support Group and is super excited. He asks you as a Support Group Leader, "What do you think of me inviting a Guest speaker to my first meeting?"
How would you reply to Ken?

Having a Guest speaker can add tremendous value, but a 'regular' Support Group Meeting can be just as needed and as beneficial.

- Guest speakers, often accredited Mental Health Professionals, including psychologists and Psychiatrists, can provide relevant and necessary information in their role as Mental Health Practitioners, especially regarding difficult topics, or topics that you, as a Group, will potentially not have the insight or expertise to weigh in on – for example, medication.

- We would never suggest launching your Group with a Guest speaker, as it can create an expectation that all ongoing meetings will be attended by a professional.

- It can, unintentionally, undervalue the role of a Support Group, leaving Members feeling that if there isn't a Professional, they aren't learning. Remember we are not trying to replace the role of a Mental Health Practitioner, rather we are providing a safe space, a community of people with first hand lived with experience who truly know what it means to walk in someone else's shoes

- Often at a launch, important discussion items are often discussed including Group value statements as well as managing expectations around what to expect in the Group going forward. The first meeting also helps with creating a rapport with members who may be feeling anxious or out of place.

For more information, please email
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