



MEETING FLOW & ORGANIZATION

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There are many kinds of support groups and people benefit greatly from them. But there are some basic ground rules all support groups should follow. When you are starting your group, create a basic description of the purpose for your meeting, name your meeting, and establish basic rules you want participants to follow.

EXAMPLE OPENING

The ____ Vestibular Group was created to offer support for people dealing with vestibular problems. The leaders/facilitators of this group are _____. We are not here to offer medical advice, and we do not suggest anyone change medications without conferring with their medical provider first, but we, as a group, are free to share what we have found helpful personally. We ask that all participants respect the time limits we have on our meeting, which lasts from ____ to _____. Because we want to allow everyone a chance to share, should they wish to, I may limit the time of one person who is sharing in order to be fair to all participants.

Next, ask the group if they would like to introduce themselves. If they would like, they can also mention what kind of vestibular disorder they are dealing with.

GENERAL FLOW OF THE MEETING

If support group meeting lasts 1 hour, start off with an introductory topic, DVD, or guest speaker, and prepare questions to use to start discussion within the group afterward. Be sure to allow at least half an hour for questions and sharing. Support groups should generally be more participatory than simply informational, although at times you may want to design an educational session that is particularly interesting to your group. It's always nice to include the occasional social night, where everyone brings food. This really works well when there is a guest speaker who will take up more time with their lecture.

DESIGN AN ENDING

VESTIBULAR DISORDERS ASSOCIATION



Create a way to close the group at the end of each meeting. You can even write one out and read it each week or ask everyone to say it together. An effective ending is just as important as a strong beginning. Here is an example:

Thank you for joining us here at the ___ Vestibular Support Group. We hope you found encouragement, hope, and support being here with us today. We know that together, we can learn to cope better with our health conditions and stay informed about new treatments and therapies available. Have a safe and steady week!

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