

Guidelines for a Healthy Group

Electronics: Silence your ringers (and vibrators (!) if possible). Keep the integrity of the room as a place for focusing on *you*: if you need or want to check your messages during breaks, please do so outside of the room.

Confidentiality: The success of the group is based on trust. Please hold the sacredness of this trust very seriously. That said, we can't be guaranteed that members might not slip in their intentions, so only share what you feel comfortable sharing.

Consistency: Trust grows incrementally and exponentially. For the best possible outcome of the group, members need to be present to witness and be exposed to one another. Absences from the group create distance between members rather than closeness. Please honor your commitment to the group and prioritize it.

Respect for Individual Worldviews: We all have unique life experiences, so how we view the world and what we value is uniquely personal. The group process has a built-in expectation of tolerance. We may not share other members' values, but we must allow that what is true for them has its own validity.

Listening: Much growth and self-awareness happens when we are given the opportunity to hear ourselves voice our thoughts. Do not interrupt a speaker. Let their thoughts run their full course.

Refrain from Asking Questions: Tempting as it is to interrupt to ask a clarifying question, hold your questions. Take a breath. Ask yourself, "Why do I need to know this? Will it better help me understand, or is it just for my curiosity?"

Restraining Advice Giving Unless Requested: This is not an advice-giving group. But it is a "support" group. As women, we are stereotypically helpers and are inclined toward relieving suffering in others. While you may have a wonderful solution to someone's problem, always ask permission before dispensing advice. "I have an idea that might be useful: would you like to hear it?"

Always OK to Pass: Some days we are more contracted and just don't want to share. This is normal and healthy and acceptable.

Laughter: Laughter is a normal and healthy part of healing. It may be jarring if you are not in a particularly jovial state of mind, but remember that others may need it and it does not minimize the seriousness of what you may be experiencing.

Silence: At times there may be an extended period of silence. This doesn't mean that nothing is happening. We may be thinking about something, formulating how to express a thought. It may feel awkward or uncomfortable, but before interrupting it because of discomfort, pause and allow that it may be a useful time for others.

Awareness of Sharing Time: My job as a facilitator is to be the clock-watcher. Because I want to ensure that everyone who wants to share has an opportunity to do so, I may ask you to pause in order to check in with others to make sure everyone is having ample time to participate. Note if you are always stepping forward or always stepping back and catch yourself at times to allow room for others to switch places.

Attend Clear of Substances: This work is about finding clarity. Please come to group without having used alcohol or cannabis (or other recreational drugs).

Touching: Respecting that we all have different preferences, please ask permission of members if you want to give them a hug for the first time. "Can I give you a hug?"
It is perfectly ok to answer, "Thanks, but no, I'm good," or some version of that.

Promptness: We will start promptly at 6pm. Please arrive early so we can start on time without interruptions. If you are going to be late, please text me so we can expect your late arrival.

Closing from the Group: The level of intimacy of a group leads members to care about one another. When you decide to close from the group, please attend the last session for a formal closing to let other members have the opportunity to say goodbye and share anything they need to share with you before parting.