

Procedures and guidelines for group therapy

Detailed procedures and rules members of group therapy must adhere to.

1. Confidentiality

Anything said between any two or more group members at any time is part of the group and is confidential. I understand that everything said in the group is confidential. I agree to keep the names of other members of the group and what is said in the group secret. I agree to keep anything that occurs between or among group members secret. I understand that there is an exception to this confidentiality, which applies to the group leader. If the group leader believes that someone is in danger, the leader has a professional obligation to take direct action in order to keep everyone safe.

I agree not to keep anything that occurs within the group a secret from the group. Anything that occurs between or among any members is part of the group is kept secret from anyone outside the group but is not kept secret from the group. This also applies to any individual meetings you may have with a group leader. I understand that if I violate this confidentiality, I could be removed from the group.

2. Privacy (The Stop Rule)

No group member is ever required to answer any question, to participate in any activity, or to say anything. If I am asked questions or asked to participate in an activity that makes me feel uncomfortable, I understand that I have the right to pass, that is, the right to refuse. I agree that I will never pressure other group members to participate in any discussion or activity after the member has passed or refused. I understand that the group leader is obliged to protect this right. I also understand that I will benefit more from the group the more I am able to take risks in sharing and participating.

3. Dignity

No group member is ever humiliated, hazed, or abused in any way. I agree to avoid this destructive behavior.

4. Violence or intimidation

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Violence or intimidation toward other group members is never tolerated. I understand that I must never be violent or intimidating toward other group members and that if I threaten to harm persons or property, I will be asked to leave the group.

5. Alcohol and Other Drugs

Group members cannot participate in the group under the influence of alcohol or other mind-altering drugs. When under the influence of chemicals, persons do not have access to their emotions and have less control over their behavior. I understand that if the leader believes that I am under the influence of alcohol or other drugs, I will be asked to leave the group.

6. Exclusive relationships

Dating and other exclusive relationships between or among group members are not a good idea. The relationships can make other group members feel left out. When a couple breaks up, for example, this can be most painful and may make it impossible for these people to continue in the group. Since anything that occurs between or among group members is part of the group, members who are dating or in very exclusive relationships may be embarrassed when their intimate moments are discussed in the group.

7. Gossip

Gossip and secret grudges can be very destructive in a group. I agree that if I have something to say to another group member, I will try to say it to the member directly rather than talk about him/ her behind his/her back.

8. Attendance

I agree that I will attend every meeting unless an emergency arises. If an emergency should arise I will notify the group leader prior to the meeting to tell him or her that I will be unable to attend. I understand that the group leader will tell the group what has happened. I understand that if I have three unexcused absences, my continued group membership will be discussed.

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9. Internet Connectivity

I feel very strongly that the members of the group should form and participate in an online group limited to the group members. Of course, the same cautionary notes apply to internet communications in terms of both confidentiality and inter-group sharing. (I have used this model very successfully, and it significantly enhances a healthy form of interconnection.)

10. Responsibilities

I understand that it is the group leader's responsibility to enforce these procedures and guidelines. The group may, when it wishes, propose other procedures and guidelines which will be up to the group to monitor.

11. Termination

Usually, group members decide, within the group, with the leader when it is time to leave the group. Sometimes it is necessary for a group member to leave the group unexpectedly. This can cause group members to wonder if they have harmed the leaving member. I promise that if I must leave the group unexpectedly, I will come to the last group meeting and tell the members that I am leaving and say goodbye. I agree to announce this at the beginning of the last meeting so that the group has time to ask questions and say goodbye. If I decide to leave the group, the group members may express their concerns but also respect the decision of the person wishing to leave.

I have read the procedures and guidelines for the group and agree to be bound by them while I am a member of the group.

Group Member

Date

I promise to enforce procedures and guidelines for this group faithfully.

Dr. Karen Muhammad

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Group Leader