

Leeds Mind Peer Support Guidelines for behaviour in online groups

The guidelines on page 1 are for our online groups. They are in addition to our general guidelines for behaviour in groups (see pages 2-3).

They aim to keep us safe in online groups and to help us to be kind, respectful and supportive to ourselves and others.

- 1. I agree to make sure that I am in a safe and confidential space throughout the group, where I feel relaxed and comfortable and I won't be disturbed.**
- 2. I agree to make sure that no other person is in the room with me during the group. If someone else enters the room, I agree to leave the group until they have left the room.**
- 3. I agree not to share my full name or contact details during the group.**
- 4. I agree not to start any private chats through Zoom or any other means during the group.**
- 5. I agree that I will not record any part of the group.**
- 6. I agree that if I need to leave the group for part of the session, I will switch off my microphone and camera on Zoom and turn off the volume on my device until I return to the group.**
- 7. I agree to dress as I would if I were attending a group in person.**
- 8. I agree that it is okay for me to have pets in the room if they help me to feel relaxed and comfortable, but I will make sure that they are not distracting for myself or other group members.**
- 9. I agree that the group facilitators have the right to remove me from a group if I break the guidelines, in order to ensure the group is a safe space for all group members.**

Leeds Mind Peer Support Guidelines for behaviour in groups

Our shared values and the ethos of Leeds Mind Peer Support are embodied in these guidelines.

They can be used in life generally and describe how we aspire to behave during peer support group work. We think of them as aspirations rather than expectations because changing our behaviour takes time and practice. These aspirations underpin the ground rules that are negotiated and agreed within each course, workshop and support group.

They are intended to help us be kind to ourselves.

1. I agree to be responsible for how I feel and how I behave.

Peer Support is underpinned by a clear understanding that we each take personal responsibility for our own feelings and the way we behave.

2. I agree it is okay to make mistakes.

Accepting that we are all fallible helps me take risks within the group as part of my personal development.

3. I agree it is okay to say sorry and make amends.

If someone feels upset by my behaviour then my apology may begin to build bridges. By offering to make amends I can help resolve conflict in my relationships.

4. I agree to share personal experience rather than giving unsolicited advice.

By talking only for myself I show respect for others in the group. Instead of telling others what they should do I am encouraged to share my own experiences by describing what I felt in a similar situation, what I did about it and whether that was effective or not. Working in this way helps maintain equality between all members of the group.

5. I agree to own my feelings using 'I' statements.

Saying "I feel" rather than "you make me feel" helps me focus on my experience, my feelings, and expressing my needs assertively.

6. I agree to treat myself and others with kindness.

Being kind to me is a key step in building self-esteem.

7. I agree to keep within the room any personal information that is shared.

I agree not to talk outside about what others have said or done within the group. If I need to talk about issues that have come up for me, I can focus on how those issues affected me and how I felt without identifying the other person concerned.

8. I agree to respect other people's differences, experiences and life choices.

In life and in groups I may meet people from a wide range of different cultures, age groups, social classes, sexual orientations, religions, etc. Others make different life choices and although I may not agree with them I can respect their choices, as I hope they will respect mine.

9. I agree not to talk over others or interrupt during rounds.

Interrupting is disrespectful and can distract the speaker from expressing what is in their mind.

10. I agree it is okay to leave and come back.

This is empowering. It may help me to deal with my fears about speaking or staying in the room if I feel distressed. I help myself by choosing my own way of dealing with my emotions. It helps group members to feel safe and develop trust in others.

11. I agree that it's okay to ask for help.

When I am struggling emotionally to deal with difficult feelings or situations it is my responsibility to ask for help. I cannot assume that others will automatically know what I need but I can give myself permission to ask for help from those most able to give it. This is not weakness but strength.

12. I accept full responsibility for getting my own support needs met.

I understand that undertaking personal development may bring up difficult feelings, memories and emotions. If this happens I may need extra support.