

Abuse Recovery Network – Meeting Participation Guidelines

Congratulations! You have made a courageous decision to move forward in your healing journey. You don't have to do this alone. We can walk this path together gaining strength from each other and the Lord. In the spirit of teamwork, guidelines are helpful to keep the group a safe place for all participants. Your commitment to these guidelines will help us all heal and grow together.

- 1) **Confidentiality.** All personal feelings and experiences shared within the group are confidential. Nothing said in the group by or about someone else will be repeated outside the group.
- 2) **Participation is voluntary.**
- 3) **Feelings are welcome!** You can laugh, cry, feel angry, or sad. There is no shame in expressing how you feel. You can share your feelings if you choose to share them.
- 4) **No foul language is permitted.**
- 5) **Please do not attempt to “fix” others or give unsolicited advice.** Although it is tempting to try to solve other people's problems, please restrain yourself. The most helpful thing you can do for another is to really hear their heart and express your care and concern.
- 6) **Exercise good listening skills.** Don't interrupt or talk over someone else. If you are not sure if someone is finished speaking, just ask them if they are finished.
- 7) **Keep your comments focused on your own thoughts, feelings, and actions.**
This means focusing on what is going on inside you and what you are feeling, not about your spouse or family member's feelings and issues. This will benefit you as well as those listening. Stick to “I” and “me” statements rather than “you” or “we.”
- 8) **Encourage one another.** Please no shaming, criticism, or judgment.
- 9) **If disagreements arise, please remain respectful and compassionate.**
- 10) **Commit to taking care of yourself.** If you need to take a break its okay. If you need prayer, please feel free to ask for it. If you feel triggered, panicked, or suicidal commit to reaching out for help. Contact your personal therapist, your pastor or present yourself at the nearest emergency room. You are precious and your life is important.