

Healing for Damaged Emotions Workbook

GROUP GUIDELINES

Adapted from ACOC

Book Discussion Group

- Has only one requirement for participation - each member wants to grow
- Is a fellowship of friends who meet to share their experience, strength, and hope in order to resolve their common problems and help others grow
- Is a separate fellowship from any organized body and does not wish to engage in any controversy
- Is **nonprofessional**, spiritually based, apolitical, and welcomes all
- Has one primary purpose - to grow and help others grow

Book Discussion Groups Do Not:

- Give advice/disciple (unless requested or permission granted)
- Indulge in gossip or criticism

Book Discussion Is a Meeting Based upon Confidentiality:

- Confidentiality is allowed to develop from a sense of trust and honesty.
- **“What goes on here, stays here!”** Sharing information about fellow group members breaks trust and confidentiality.
- The focus is on spiritual principles, not personalities, which leads to a fellowship of **equals**.

Notes:

- Meetings are confidential, and we do not disclose what we hear from others at meetings to anyone.

The Importance of Confidentiality

The positive values of confidentiality soon become apparent.

1. First, we know from experience that many people might hesitate to turn to a group discussion for help if they thought their problem might be discussed publicly, even inadvertently, by others. Participants should be able to seek help with assurance that their comments will not be disclosed where they are connected to their identity outside the Fellowship.
2. Then, too, we believe that the concept of confidentiality has a **spiritual significance** for us — that it discourages the drives for personal recognition, power, prestige, or profit that have caused difficulties in some societies. Much of our relative effectiveness in group discussions might be impaired if we sought or accepted public recognition.
3. While each member of our group is free to make his or her own interpretations of our groups' tradition, no individual member is ever recognized as a spokesperson for the group. Each member speaks only for himself or herself.
4. A group member may, for various reasons, "break confidentiality" deliberately at the public level. Since this is a matter of individual choice and conscience, the Fellowship as a whole obviously has no control over such deviations from tradition. It is clear, however, that such individuals do not have the approval of the overwhelming majority of members.
5. Meetings are generally where others who share your common problems and growth goals gather together to share their experience, strength, and hope with others in order to solve their common problems, and help others achieve greater maturity.

WELCOME

We welcome you to our Book Discussion Group and hope you will find in this fellowship the help and friendship we have been privileged to enjoy.

The meeting will run from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon and is "open" (until after the 2nd or 3rd chapter). **Should you have a problem, please feel free to stay and talk with someone after the meeting.**

We who live or have lived with the desire to grow emotionally understand your feelings. In our Discussion Group we discover that no situation is really hopeless, and that it is possible for us to find contentment and even happiness no matter our current circumstances or situations.

We urge you to consistently participate in our Book Discussions. The discussions will guide us to find solutions that lead to greater spirituality and serenity. **So much depends on our own attitudes.** As we learn to place our problems in their true perspective, we find they lose their power to dominate our thoughts and our lives.

Our personal situations are bound to improve as we apply the Discussion Group ideas. Without such help, living with "unfinished business" is challenging. Our thinking can become distorted and we can operate as emotional children or adolescents as opposed to emotional, mature adults.

The Book Discussion Group is based on Biblical and some 12-Step principles, which we, one day at a time, apply to our lives. The **loving interchange** of help among group members, daily reading, and "working through" anything that stands in the way of our personal growth makes us ready to receive the priceless gift of serenity.

CROSSTALK

We believe that each of us has the right to feel and to express our feelings freely, unless doing so would harm another. Therefore, we **discourage crosstalk.**

Crosstalk is replying directly to another person in a judgmental way.

This includes: evaluating, disciplining, interrupting, giving advice, lecturing, rescuing, or denying.

We do this for two reasons. **First**, when we were growing up (or even in adult life) we may have not been listened to. We may have been told that our feelings were wrong or our feelings may have been denied altogether. **Second**, as adults, we may have become accustomed to rescuing or taking care of others, and not taking responsibility for our own lives.

So, we speak about our own experiences and feelings, and accept without judgment/shame what others say because it is true for them. And we work toward taking more responsibility in our own lives, rather than giving advice to others.

Helpful practice:

Thanks for sharing – group states after each person shares

Thanks for listening – speaker/sharer responds to group

SUGGESTED CLOSING

In closing, if anyone has experienced emotional flashbacks or has something to say, please stay and talk to someone after the meeting.

We would like to say that the opinions expressed here were strictly those of the person who gave them. Take what you like and leave the rest.

The things you heard here were spoken in confidence and should be treated as confidential. If one generally shares about the group, do not disclose the identity of each others' specific comments.

If considering emotional health is all new to you, whatever your problems, there are those among us who have had them, too. You will come to realize that there is no situation too difficult to be bettered, and no unhappiness too great to be lessened.

Talk to each other, reason things out with someone else, but let there be no gossip or criticism of one another. Instead, let the understanding, love, and peace of God grow in you one day at a time.

Will all who care to join me in closing with a prayer join hands.

National Suicide Prevention Hotline:
1-800-273-8255

Help is available

Speak with a counselor today

<https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>

We can all help prevent suicide. The Lifeline provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and best practices for professionals.