

Creating a Sense of Safety in a NAMI Support Group

Creating a sense of safety is essential to the well-being of any support group. The NAMI Support Group Guidelines go a long way toward creating structure and safety for participants and facilitators. The following is a list of additional guidelines that will help ensure that participants feel that their emotional, as well as physical, safety is being considered. These guidelines may be shared by facilitators at the beginning of group meetings, or simply on an as-needed basis.

To create and promote an environment of respect and safety in NAMI support groups we request that attendees:

1. Not bring weapons to group, even if the weapon is registered and the attendee is legally permitted to carry it.
2. Not be under the influence of recreational drugs or alcohol during a NAMI support group meeting.
3. Respect the stated personal boundaries of other participants both in and out of group.
4. Respect that religious beliefs are very personal; therefore, religion is intentionally not a part of the NAMI support group structure. Religious beliefs, prayer and other forms of religious expression are not built into any NAMI support group meeting structure.
5. Respect the ethnic and cultural differences among individuals, even when we don't understand another's outlook or experiences. We request that attendees not joke or make derogatory comments on the topics of race, religion, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation or other cultural differences.

We thank you in advance for strengthening our group by respecting these guidelines.