

Obesity UK Peer Support Group

Running a good peer support group **Creating connection within the group**



As group members share their lived experience, this helps to build mutual trust, which leads to people supporting each other within the group and developing connection.

Both peer facilitators and group members can become positive role models, which also makes the group feel more connected.

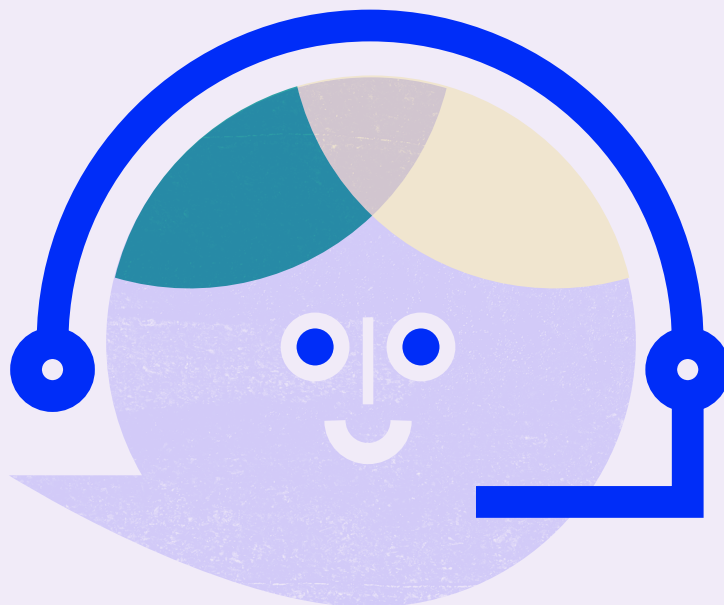
To help build connection within the group, it is important to create a welcoming and supportive environment and create opportunities for people to connect with each other. You could use the following strategies recommended by facilitators at Obesity UK and within the following resources: 'Developing peer support in the community: a toolkit': <https://www.mind.org.uk/media-a/4247/peer-support-toolkit-final.pdf> and 'Let's do Peer Group Facilitation': <https://scottishrecovery.net/resources/lets-do-peer-group-facilitation/>:

- Greet people as they arrive.
- Ensure people are welcomed to the group.
- Try and introduce people to each other. Sometimes people who are shy or nervous may feel at ease if they know a few names within the group.
- Ask people who attend regularly to chat with someone who is new or sitting on their own (during face-to-face groups).
- Kick off peer support sessions with short introductions from the facilitators and each of the participants.
- A connecting exercise can be used to start a peer support group, helping people to share a little of themselves, as well as acting as an energiser. You could use the following check in activities from The Scottish Recovery Network: <https://www.scottishrecovery.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Check-in-activities.pdf>.
- Ask people to remove lanyards and workplace IDs to help people 'come as themselves' and see each other as equals.
- When meeting face to face, think about how you use name badges – first name only, whether it is pre-printed, or people design their own.
- Making tea for each other or sitting with each other over refreshments.
- Active listening – by listening and checking you understand what is being said, you may be able to offer open questions and possible options for the person to help them move forward.

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- Being kind to each other (and to themselves).
 - Having everyday conversations about things that aren't necessarily peer support related, where appropriate.
 - Getting to know each other's hobbies and interests.
 - Being patient with someone who is having difficulty expressing themselves.
 - Offering each other practical help and support.



How to get in touch

At Obesity UK we are happy to chat with you and answer any questions you may have.

We would be happy to hear your feedback and ideas for this resource.

We can also connect you with other people facilitating peer support groups for people living with obesity.

Please get in touch

Contact us: <https://obesityuk.org.uk/contact/>

Contact us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Obesityuk>