

# Obesity UK

## Peer Support Group

### Running a good peer support group

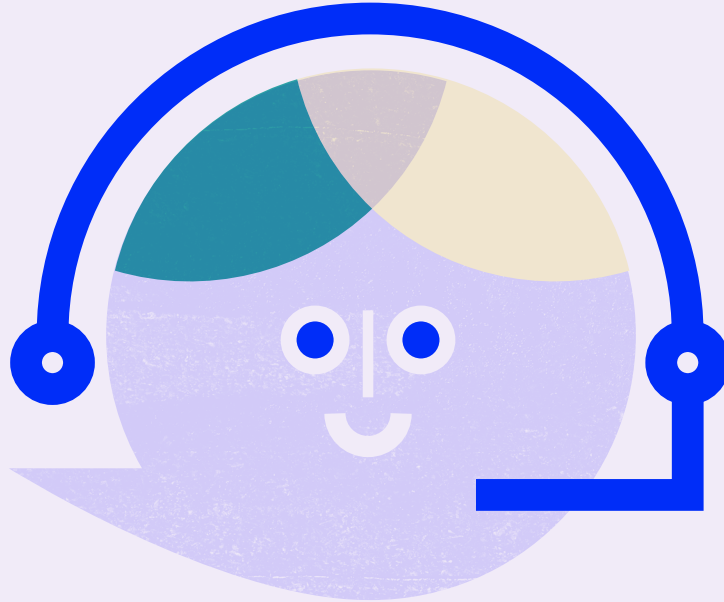
### **Communication within the group**



## Encouraging good communication within the group is another important skill to learn.

The following tips recommended by both facilitators at Obesity UK and within the 'Let's do peer group facilitation' resource from The Scottish Recovery Network: <https://scottishrecovery.net/resources/lets-do-peer-group-facilitation/> may help with this:

- Aim for the group facilitators' voices to be the least heard.
- Silence is OK. Don't rush to fill every pause.
- Give people time to think and come in.
- Try to steer away from people seeing you (the facilitator) as having all the answers. It is always OK to say, "I don't know, but I will try to find out and come back to you."
- If someone asks you a question, put it to the rest of the group. Peer group support will often mean that the answer is often found amongst the group members.
- Don't be afraid of difficult topics, but don't feel that you need to pretend that you know about them if you don't.
- Be careful when using humour. You don't want to offend anyone.
- Ask a co-facilitator to watch the group. Ask them to look for body language, gestures and other non-verbal signals from group members.
- Watch out for people who talk too much or who don't engage with the group. See the 'Managing challenges in the group' resource for ways to deal with this: <https://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/-/media/files/research/obesity-institute/peer-support-toolkit/12-managing-challenges-in-the-group.pdf>.
- Try not to use any complicated or medical language. Challenge any use of it by group members where possible and remind any guest speakers to avoid complex or medical language.
- Try to encourage group members to keep discussions around weight or weight loss to a minimum, so that people don't focus on the numbers on the weighing scales. Discussions around weight loss may cause discomfort for some people in the group and go against the ethos of the support group.
- It is important to consider the level of understanding of group members, particularly if any health information is given out to the group. Make sure that all information is easy to read and understand.



## How to get in touch

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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

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

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