

DAI PEER-TO-PEER SUPPORT GROUPS

A Dementia Alliance International (DAI) peer-to-peer support group consists of a small group of people with a diagnosis of a dementia, who meet regularly to discuss their experiences, problems and strategies for coping and living more positively with dementia. There are a many of different types of support groups. The kind DAI provides are weekly online peer-to-peer support groups, and one to one buddying and mentoring.

HOW TO JOIN A DAI SUPPORT GROUP

- Become a member of DAI, which is free - www.join dai.org
- A member will contact you to assist you join an online support group

WHAT DOES A DAI SUPPORT GROUP PROVIDE AND HOW IT WORKS

- The DAI support groups meet online, and the weekly group is restricted to 12 people with dementia who attend regularly;
- Peer-to-peer support groups help to beat the isolation, stigma and discrimination of dementia;
- Learn how supportive it is being part of a support group, with others also living with a diagnosis of dementia;
- There is no need to leave your home, if you have a way to connect to the Internet;
- Your family support person, an advocate, or even a paid carer can assist you to attend; participation is only for the person with dementia; and
- Learn how rewarding it also is to support and empower people newly diagnosed with dementia.

THE ADVANTAGES OF JOINING A SUPPORT GROUP

Research shows that hearing from and sharing with others with similar experiences can be very helpful. A peer support program provides a structured environment in which people who share the same longterm illness or condition can safely share their experiences. An example of a longstanding and very successful organisation that runs peertopeer support groups is Alcoholics Anonymous, which has been in operation since 1935.

George Rook, a person in the UK living with a diagnosis of dementia wrote the following on his blog (2017) about peer-to-peer support groups:

Wikipedia: "Peer support occurs when people provide knowledge, experience, emotional, social or practical help to each other ... I like that.

PEER-TO-PEER SUPPORT GROUP GUIDELINES FOR PARTICIPANTS:

- Confidentiality is imperative;
- Discussions on the lived experience;
- Speak in the first person;
- Focus on how to live positively with dementia;
- Don't speak over others;
- Try not to interrupt;
- Give others time to speak;
- Listen to what is being said by others;
- Treat each other with dignity and respect;
- No verbal, emotional or other form of abuse or bullying
- We do not challenge anyone's diagnosis
- No medical advice is given at these meetings;
- Being personally transparent and avoid hidden agendas;
- Members can leave at any time; it is an individual choice;
- We avoid politics or religion, due to the diversity of personal beliefs;
- Topics such as death, suicide and euthanasia are not generally discussed;
- We ask you are willing to be visible on the screen; not to be visible may cause others to feel uncomfortable and is not conducive to an open and transparent meeting for all members;
- NO RECORDING OF ANY KIND, DIGITAL, AUDIO, OR WRITTEN, IS PERMITTED.

DAI SUPPORT GROUP HOSTS AND MENTORS RECEIVE ANNUAL PROFESSIONAL TRAINING



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