

DAI PEER-TO-PEER SUPPORT GROUPS

4th Edition, November 2020

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 many 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, at www.join dai.org
- A member will then contact you to assist you to 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; however, participation is only or the person with dementia;
- 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 peer-to-peer 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 focus on the lived experience;
- Speak in the first person;
- Focus on how to live more positively with dementia;
- Don't speak over others;
- Use your mute button when not speaking
- Don't 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 forms of abuse or bullying are acceptable;
- We do not challenge anyone's diagnosis;
- No medical advice is given at these meetings;
- Be personally transparent and avoid hidden agendas;
- Be visible on the screen, when possible;
- Members are free to leave at any time;
- As a courtesy to others, we ask you not to eat during the groups unless absolutely necessary;
- We do not discuss politics or religion in support groups, due to the diversity of personal beliefs;
- Topics such as death, suicide and euthanasia are also not generally suitable topics for support groups,
- **NO RECORDING OF ANY KIND, DIGITAL, AUDIO, OR WRITTEN, IS PERMITTED.**

DAI SUPPORT GROUP HOSTS AND MENTORS RECEIVE ANNUAL PROFESSIONAL TRAINING



email: info@infodai.org

web: www.infodai.org

join DAI: www.join dai.org



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