



Spiritual-Care Groups in a Mental Health Setting

Guidelines for Group Interaction

Establishing group guidelines

- Group guidelines are established in collaboration with all group participants and the group leaders.
- Group guidelines are established in the first group's session and reviewed at the beginning of each successive group or during the group process if necessary.
- Sometimes a suggested guideline will need clarification by the one suggesting it. (e.g. How would you like others to respect you? How do you know someone is actively listening?)
- Keep printed copies of the guidelines on the table or where easily accessed during the group.

Here are some ideas that have been generated by patients from my various groups:

- Be courteous
- Be respectful
- Keep confidentiality
- Allow others to finish before speaking
- Participate in active listening
- Be honest and truthful
- Be accepting
- Give everyone a turn to speak
- Refrain from cross-talking
- Be open-minded
- Be non-judgmental/No negative judgments
- Don't pooh-pooh an idea
- Listen carefully
- Be reflective
- Have an attitude of learning
- Give the option to pass at any time
- Don't interrupt
- Don't sleep in the group
- Give your attention to the person talking
- No "bad" language
- Honor other people's stories
- Don't argue with others' stories
- Don't try to fix someone's story
- Provide a space for people to share freely and feel safe doing so