

6 Ways to Get the Most from Your Support Group



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An incredibly important part of addiction recovery is support groups. Whether you have completed a rehabilitation programme, are currently in one, or are getting through addiction with solely support group sessions – these meetings are an integral part of your recovery. Many recovering addicts find it helpful to attend for life. But if you want to get the most out of these sessions, you need to do a little more than just drink the coffee and listen politely.

To be sure you're reaping the most benefits from your support group, be sure to follow these tips:

1. Get involved

Support groups are not meant to be passive gatherings. While you may be shy at first (that's totally understandable) it's important to work towards taking part in the sessions. Once you are comfortable, you must open up and share your stories. We know it is not easy for any of you – but without the brave members who do – the support group would not be of much help to anybody.

2. Be completely honest

If you're going to share your story, share everything! Opening up about your true feelings will be difficult, but sharing some of your most difficult moments will not only help to release the negativity trapped inside of you; but it will allow others to realise that they are not alone in what they are going through.

3. Actively listen

We've all been in a situation where we should be listening attentively, but we get distracted by the birds outside the window, the stain you just noticed on your trousers, or the fact that the lady beside you can't stop sniffing. But passively listening to your peers will not help you get the most out of what they're saying. Try to stay in the moment with them. Watch their body language, focus on the feelings they are conveying through tones, pauses and words in their speech. Give your fellow speakers as much attention as possible, because only then will you truly reap the rewards of their stories.

4. Work with and become a sponsor

Many support groups will offer the option of working with a sponsor. For those that are new to sobriety, having a chosen sponsor to mentor you through your journey of recovery can be life-saving. Sponsors are people who are willing to be there for you whenever you need a nudge of encouragement to keep going. Sponsors also truly understand what you are going through - because they were just there, themselves. And once you have been sober long enough, give back to your peers and become a sponsor yourself. Think how proud you will be when you are in a position to do so.



5. Don't just attend. Assist.

Become part of the support group from start to finish. Volunteer to help set up or clean up. If you have been sober for a while, you could even volunteer to lead some meetings, or start new groups in new areas. Being involved in a healthy activity where people count on you will not only give you something to feel good about, but it will hold you accountable and responsible for showing up to the meetings each time – even on those days when it's the last thing you feel like doing.

6. Engage in new relationships

Going back to old friends with bad habits once you've gotten sober is one of the biggest triggers for relapse you can encounter. That is why it's important to use this opportunity to develop healthy relationships with people who know what you are going through – people who can support your sobriety 100%, and people who wish to live the same lifestyle as you.

Essentially, support groups are what you make of them. Get involved, open up, support your peers, and be willing to embark on a healthy lifestyle, free of addiction.



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