



PROVIDER ALERT

PROVIDERS OF RESIDENTIAL SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER SERVICES PSYCHOEDUCATIONAL GROUPS

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This Provider Alert is intended to provide Providers of Residential Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Services guidance on conducting Psychoeducational groups.

Psychoeducational groups may be used when treating individuals suffering from substance use disorders. The primary purpose of psychoeducational groups is expansion of awareness about the behavioral, medical, and psychological consequences of substance use. These groups are designed to educate participants about the impact of substance use, the associated behaviors and consequences of chronic use.¹

Psychoeducational groups help participants to:

- Develop an understanding of the recovery process
- Become motivated to enter a recovery-ready stage
- Engage in opportunities towards establishing and maintaining abstinence
- Learn about other resources that can be helpful in recovery, such as meditation, relaxation training, anger management, spiritual development and nutrition

¹ Center for Substance Abuse Treatment. Substance Abuse Treatment: Group Therapy. Rockville (MD): Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (US); 2005. (Treatment Improvement Protocol (TIP) Series, No. 41.) 2 Types of Groups Commonly Used in Substance Abuse Treatment.



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- Gain resources and skills that can help them with their recovery.

Format:

Psychoeducational groups are highly structured and often follow a manual or a preplanned curriculum. The group facilitator usually takes a very active role when leading the discussion. Psychoeducational groups encourage participant interaction and may incorporate audio, visual and other elements to enhance lectures. The group session can consist of **15 – 25 participants** and generally last **15-90 minutes**.

Group Leader's role:

To help participants get the most out of the psychoeducational session.

The group leader must:

- Understand basic group processes
- Understand interpersonal relationship dynamics
- Have basic teaching and counseling skills
- Possess active and reflecting listening skills
- Participate in ongoing training and formal supervision
- Encourage participants to take responsibility for their learning
- Allow participants to practice learned skills (role play)

Group Topics:

Group topics can stand alone or be a part of a series. All groups must have a goal, objectives and a measurement to determine the effectiveness of the session(s). Group leaders should be able to develop group topics based on the needs of the participant population. Topics can include but are not limited to:

- Identifying triggers and roadblocks and developing strategies to overcome them
- Developing coping skills
- Understanding emotions and how to deal with them
- Building self-esteem



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The qualifications and experience of those who lead group will vary. All group leaders who hold a license or certification should abide by the code of ethics set by their professional regulatory bodies, and work within their scope of practice.