

# Online Support Group Guidelines



## Requirements for Participants:

### 1. Technology

- Internet connection requirements - Wifi connected to NBN, ADSL, or a cable service or 4G or 5G mobile service with four bars
- You will need a device with a functioning camera and microphone - the following devices can easily be used –Apple mobile device (iPhone or iPad); an android device (Samsung galaxy phone). If you are using a computer or laptop check the webcam and speakers are working
- Install or download Zoom application/software to your device
- If you already have Zoom check it is an up to date version. You can check this in the “settings” section of your device
- Headphones are great and can be used as an alternative to speakers

### 2. Connecting

- Confirm attendance the day before by responding to a text from your facilitator
- Give yourself at least 10 minutes to prepare and connect through the App prior to the meeting start time - set the camera up so you can have good eye contact with the other participants
- Click on the meeting link in the email sent to you by the facilitator and then click ‘open Zoom.us’.
- You can then click ‘join with computer audio’.
- You will be admitted to the virtual room by the facilitator close to the planned start time.



## Suitable Room

- A private space that is not open to other members of your household
- Try and find a place with no background noise (or at least as quiet as possible) – think about TV, radio, phone on silent, manage interruption from family members
- Try and find the place with the brightest light that shines onto your face (and not behind your head). Light should be behind the camera and shining on you
- Try and get a neutral background behind you.
- Wear headphones to prevent audio issues and facilitate easy hearing. They don't have to be fancy...even a pair of old mobile phone headphones will do.

## Rules of Engagement

### 1. Confidentiality

We respect that what is said at the group and who is seen at the group is confidential. That means we do not share the mee4ting ID number with anyone, we ensure that the online group cannot be seen or heard by others outside of the group. Screenshots and recording of the online group is not permitted.

### 2. Focusing on the group

We give attention to the person who is speaking and avoid doing other activities (e.g. housework, cooking, walking, driving) during the group time. Please switch your mobile phones to 'silent mode'.

### 3. Respect

We respect everyone's viewpoint and life choices.

### 4. Non-judgemental

We accept people, just as they are, and we avoid making judgments about other group members.

### 5. It's OK to pass

We have the right to speak and the right to stay silent.

### 6. Speak for yourself

We speak from our own experience and don't speak for others. Using "I" statements helps with this.



**7. Equal time for all**

We speak one at a time and give everyone the chance to talk and don't talk over one another or 'take over' the conversation. The facilitator may need to 'mute' members' microphones to help make the conversation easier to hear.

**8. Technology fails**

If you are disconnected during the online support group, please try to reconnect immediately or send the facilitator a text to let them know that you are okay. If the facilitator is disconnected they will endeavour to reconnect immediately. Failing this, the facilitator will contact group members by text and then attempt to finish conversations individually by phone.

**9. Distress levels**

If you are feeling overwhelmed, the online support group might not be suitable for you. Please let the facilitator know if you are feeling this way during the group and an arrangement will be made for a private conversation.

