

Small Group Guidelines

1. Keep your sharing focused on your own thoughts and feelings. Not your spouse's, child's, friend's or any family members' (others) hurts, habits and hang-ups, but your own. Stick to recent observations in your life as it relates to recovery. Limit your sharing to 3-5 minutes, so that everyone has an opportunity to share; and to ensure that one person does not dominate the group sharing time.

2. There is NO cross talk. Cross talk is when two people engage in conversation excluding all others. Each person is free to express his or her feelings without interruptions.

No comments or questions while the person is sharing, you are free to speak with them after our sharing time. Additional types of cross talk would be handing a tissue or tissue box while someone is crying during their time of sharing. This interrupts feelings. Remember, there is healing in tears.

3. We are here to support one another, not "fix" one another. This keeps us focused on our own issues.

We do not give advice or solve someones' problems in our time of sharing or offer book referrals or counselor referrals. We are not licensed counselors, psychologists, or therapists, nor are the group members. Mercy Street is not designed for this. It is up to each person to include counseling to their program when they are ready.

4. Anonymity and confidentiality are basic requirements. What is shared in the group stays in the group. The only exception is when someone threatens to injure themselves or others.

We are not so share information with our spouses/family/co-workers. This also means not discussing what is shared in the group among group members. This is called gossip.

5. We also avoid graphic descriptions. We must remember that your sharing descriptions may potentially trigger another and cause them to act out. If anyone feels uncomfortable with now explicitly a speaker is sharing regarding his/her behaviors, then you may indicate so by simply raising your hand. The speaker will then respect your boundaries by being less specific in his/her descriptions.

6. If you are under the influence of mood altering substances we ask that you would pass and feel free to talk with others after our sharing time. We are so glad you are here. Each new day begins now.

These Group Sharing Guidelines stay intact as we leave and share with each other after the meeting.