

# HOW TO START A MENS SUPPORT GROUP

## A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

### WELCOME

Welcome to this guide on starting a men's support group. If you've found your way here it's likely because someone shared this with you, or you read [my blog post about the transformative impact such a group has had on my life and the lives of others.](#)

In this guide, we'll walk through the steps of forming and maintaining a men's support group. These groups offer a unique space for emotional support, personal growth, and mutual understanding, specifically tailored to men's experiences. We'll cover everything from selecting the right members, establishing ground rules, to conducting meaningful sessions that truly benefit all participants.

Whether you're in Denver or elsewhere, this guide is intended to empower and assist you in creating a supportive community where men can openly share, listen, and grow together. Let's get started.



### FORMING YOUR GROUP

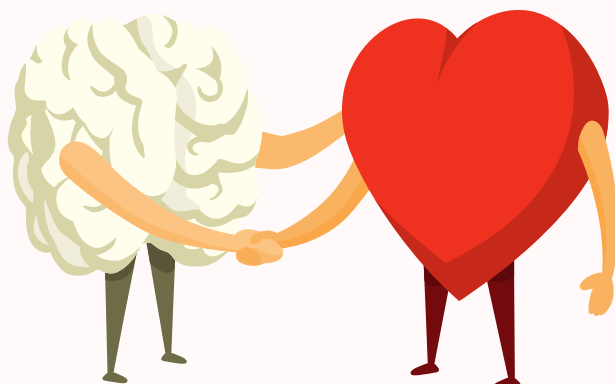
Creating a successful men's support group starts with careful selection of its members. The group's foundation relies on the emotional maturity and self-awareness of each individual. This section delves into two crucial aspects of forming your group: choosing emotionally self-aware members and being selective to avoid negative influences.



### CHOOSING EMOTIONALLY SELF-AWARE MEMBERS

A key to a successful support group is having members who possess a degree of emotional self-awareness. These are men who:

- Recognize and understand their own emotions.
- Show a willingness to discuss and work through their feelings in a group setting.
- Demonstrate empathy towards the experiences and emotions of others.
- Choosing members who meet these criteria creates an environment conducive to open, honest dialogue and mutual support.



## BEING SELECTIVE AND AVOIDING NEGATIVE INFLUENCES

Equally important is knowing who not to invite. Avoid including individuals who:

- Regularly mock or dismiss expressions of emotion.
- Show a consistent pattern of negativity or judgment towards others.
- Lack the willingness or ability to engage in introspective and supportive conversations.

This selectiveness is crucial in maintaining a group dynamic that is supportive, respectful, and beneficial to all members. It's about quality, not quantity, when it comes to the composition of your group.

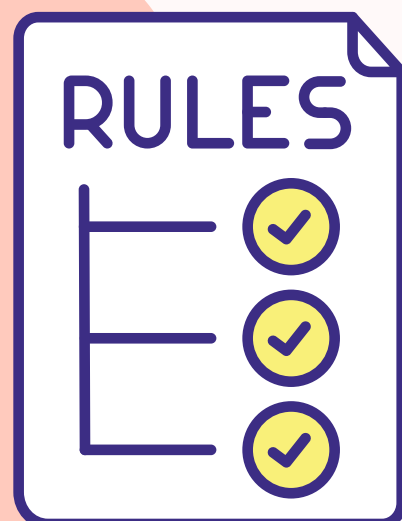


## KEEPING THE GROUP SIZE MANAGEABLE

- Aim for a group size that allows deep, meaningful interaction (ideally 4-6 members).
- Ensure each member can contribute significantly to the conversation.

## ESTABLISHING GROUND RULES

Setting clear ground rules is essential for the smooth functioning and success of a men's support group. These rules lay the foundation for trust, respect, and effective communication. Below are the key guidelines that should be established to ensure a positive and supportive group environment.



## MAINTAINING CONFIDENTIALITY

- Emphasize the importance of confidentiality; what's shared in the group should remain within the group.
- Foster a safe space for open and honest sharing.

## CREATING A SAFE AND COMFORTABLE ENVIRONMENT

- Start sessions in a relaxed manner, perhaps with a casual gathering or meal.
- Make sure the physical space is conducive to open and honest conversation.



## CREATING A JUDGMENT-FREE ZONE

- Establish a no-judgment policy: no mocking, negative comments, or dismissive behavior.
- Encourage empathy and understanding towards all shared experiences.



## FACILITATING THE GROUP EFFECTIVELY

- Assign a facilitator or rotate the role to keep discussions focused and balanced.
- Ensure the facilitator guides the session while allowing organic discussion.



## LIMITING UNSOLICITED ADVICE

- Focus on listening and understanding rather than immediately offering solutions.
- Allow space for members to explore their feelings and thoughts without external pressure.



## ENSURE EVERYONE HAS TIME TO SPEAK

- Implement a system (like a talking stick or object) to ensure each member has an equal opportunity to speak.
- Encourage active listening when others are sharing.
- Avoid interruptions, allowing each member to fully express themselves.





## PRACTICING ACTIVE LISTENING

- Engage fully with the speaker, showing genuine interest and attention.
- Validate others' experiences and emotions through empathetic responses.

## RESPECTING DIFFERENT OPINIONS

- Encourage respect for diverse viewpoints and experiences.
- Foster an atmosphere where differing opinions can be expressed without fear of judgment.



## UNDERSTANDING BEFORE PRESCRIBING



- Use steelmanning to accurately represent and understand another member's perspective.
- In the context of a mens group, steelmanning is when you take the time to understand and articulate someone's viewpoint as clearly and sympathetically as possible, until they agree that you've captured their thoughts correctly.
- This ensures that they know they're understood when you offer them advice or a different perspective.

## SHARING SELF-CARE AND RESOURCES

- Create a channel for sharing useful resources and self-care practices.
- Encourage ongoing support and communication outside of regular meetings.





## CLOSING THOUGHTS

Congratulations on taking this significant step towards fostering a space where men can connect, share, and grow! Remember, starting a men's support group is more than just organizing meetings; it's about building a community of trust, understanding, and mutual support. Your journey may have challenges, but the rewards of genuine connection and personal growth are immeasurable.

As you embark on this fulfilling path, know that you are not alone. You're contributing to a much-needed change, creating a world where men can openly express their vulnerabilities and support each other in meaningful ways.

If you're looking for guidance or need a helping hand in starting your own men's group, feel free to reach out! I am more than happy to share my experiences, provide advice, and support you in any way I can. Together, we can build stronger communities, one support group at a time.

Contact Me:

- Website: <https://brandonolin.com/contact/>

Wishing you success and fulfillment in your journey! Let's make a positive difference, one conversation at a time.