

## PURPOSES, GOALS, AND GUIDELINES OF GROUP (Long Form)

### Purposes:

1. To have a safe place for us to share our thoughts, feelings, and needs.
2. To give support to each other in dealing with any problems we may have in any parts of our lives.

### Goals:

1. To learn how to express thoughts, feelings, and needs in healthy ways.
2. To learn to resolve problems and conflicts without hurting ourselves or others.
3. To learn healthy communication skills.
4. To learn how to be a good friend to others, by supporting them without trying to “fix” their problems.
5. To learn how to make the best choices for ourselves.
6. **To learn that we are responsible for our own feelings, thoughts, and actions, and that by making good choices, we have the power to change our lives.**

### Guidelines:

1. All beliefs are treated with respect: Avoid making judgments of other people. It is hard enough learning to be ourselves without having others put us down.
2. No “putdowns” to self or others -- even as a joke: We are here to be supportive of each other. Killer statements or putdowns or any kind will not be tolerated, whether they are directed at others or at yourself.
3. Everyone has the right to pass: If you pass frequently, it will keep you from being an active part of group. Your reason for passing needs to be clear to you. You may find communicating this reason helps to keep you feeling close and involved with the group. If you decide to pass, let the group know if you would like them to come back to you later.
4. Everyone’s participation is important.
5. Be on time: Decide to be at group each time and on time. When you are not here, it leaves a gap that cannot be filled by anyone else. Also, being late interrupts the group process and everyone is affected.
6. No side talk or cross talk: Demonstrate that other group members are important by listening carefully without interruption when they talk. Side talk is talking or distracting while another person has the floor. Cross talk is interrupting the person who has the floor, with questions or comments.
7. Use “I” statements -- speak only for yourself: Rather than using “we” or “you,” choose statements like, “I feel comfortable,” “I think,” “I believe,” “I need,” etc.
8. No “shoulds” toward yourself or others. Should = Shaming.
9. **Confidentiality: What is said in group stays in group:** Everything that happens or is said in group is confidential.

Exceptions to confidentiality include: 1) Someone is being physically or sexually abused, 2) Someone is an imminent danger to self or others, and 3) Information must be shared in court.

## PURPOSES, GOALS, AND GUIDELINES OF GROUP (Short Form)

### **Purposes:**

1. To have a safe place for us to share our thoughts, feelings, and needs.
2. To give support to each other in dealing with any problems we may have in any parts of our lives.

### **Goals:**

1. To learn how to express thoughts, feelings, and needs in healthy ways.
2. To learn to resolve problems and conflicts without hurting ourselves or others.
3. To learn healthy communication skills.
4. To learn how to be a good friend to others, by supporting them without trying to “fix” their problems.
5. To learn how to make the best choices for ourselves.
6. To learn that we are responsible for our own feelings, thoughts, and actions, and that by making good choices, we have the power to change our lives.

### **Guidelines:**

1. All beliefs are treated with respect.
2. No “putdowns” to self or others -- even as a joke.
3. Everyone has the right to pass.
4. Everyone’s participation is important.
5. Be on time.
6. No side talk or cross talk.
7. Use “I” statements -- speak only for yourself.
8. No “shoulds” toward yourself or others.
9. **Confidentiality: What is said in group stays in group.**

Exceptions to confidentiality include: 1) Someone is being physically or sexually abused, 2) Someone is an imminent danger to self or others, and 3) Information must be shared in court.

# Sample Support Group Parent Permission Letter

(Use school letterhead.)

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Your child has indicated that s/he would like to join a student support group here at school. There are groups available at most grade levels at \_\_\_\_\_ School, and they meet during the school day, so no extra transportation is required. Our “Purposes, Goals, and Guidelines” sheet is attached so that you can see how we operate, but in general, groups are designed to help students improve their communication skills, handle their anger and other feelings appropriately, resolve conflicts without violence, be more assertive, and take responsibility for their actions and feelings. Groups also provide a chance for students talk, listen, and support each other.

Each group is facilitated by two staff members (usually teachers, administrators, or the school counselor) who have been specially trained as support group facilitators. Groups usually meet once a week, and have six to ten students. Groups may meet for one school quarter, a semester, or a full year, depending on the needs of the students. This is up to the facilitators.

Support group is not intended to take the place of professional counseling or therapy. As facilitators, we do not make any diagnosis, or treat conditions. If we encounter issues or problems that need professional attention (such as abuse, suicide attempts, eating disorders, etc.) we notify parents immediately and can recommend community resources for counseling.

Our confidentiality policy is, “What is said in group stays in group,” and we require that all students and facilitators honor this policy by not repeating what others say about themselves or their lives. However, your son or daughter is welcome to share with you what he or she said and did in group. Also, please note the exceptions to the confidentiality policy in the group guidelines. As stated earlier, if one of these issues surfaces, we will notify parents immediately.

If you are willing to have your child participate in support group, please sign the attached permission slip and return it to the office as soon as possible. If you have any questions about group, please contact our school counselor, Jennifer Jones, through the main office at 602-000-0000.

Thank you!

Jennifer Jones  
School Counselor

Amy Smith  
Principal

## SUPPORT GROUP PERMISSION SLIP

Yes, \_\_\_\_\_ has my permission to be in a support group during the upcoming school year. I have read the parent permission letter and the Purposes, Goals, and Guidelines of group, and I understand how the group operates.

Signed, \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ (parent or guardian)

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