

# Developing Loving Relationships Confidential Group Mentoring Participation Agreement

Welcome to our confidential group for developing loving relationships!

## What This Group Is

The weekly Developing Loving Relationships group is a safe and confidential forum for learning to create loving relationships in your life. This is a group for learning to reduce loneliness and increase relationship satisfaction. It is a forum for learning how to manage and resolve relationship conflicts. It is also a forum for receiving support and guidance in restoring your sense of your lovability and for learning how to safely and effectively love and be loved. This is not a clinical group and it is not intended to treat psychiatric illness. The group leaders are mentors and facilitators and are not acting in a clinical role. In attending the group, you are not engaging in a professional treatment relationship with the group leaders.

Each group may have a short teaching and may also have an exercise. You will have the opportunity to share personal experience, to give and receive supportive and constructive feedback, and to experiment in the group with new relationship practices.

For the group to work, a safe and confidential environment must exist, and you must understand expectations for members and leaders. To ensure a safe environment for personal growth we ask that you agree to the following guidelines.

## Confidentiality

Sharing in group can be anxiety-provoking; therefore, we ask that you keep all information discussed in this group confidential. This request means that you may not discuss the identity or identifying information or share the reactions of any member of this group with anyone outside of the group. You may talk about your own personal reactions and are even encouraged to do so outside of group, but not about others' identifying information or reactions.

## Attendance

Group members are expected to make a commitment to attend the group weekly. Members are also expected to arrive for the group on time every week. The group will always start on time. If you are running late or have an emergency/illness that prohibits you from coming to group, we ask that you notify us to let us know. If you know ahead of time that you will miss a later group session, we ask that you share the date of your absence with the group beforehand. The group will also always end on time, no matter what is being discussed. Weekly attendance will allow everyone to continue the discussion. Members often feel anxious about participating in groups, and seeing the results can take time. Although the expectation is to complete the group experience, in the event you decide not to continue and have explored your concerns with the leader and other members, we ask that you come back to the group to say goodbye. Though perhaps hard to imagine, members begin to care about one another and will feel unresolved if you leave without explanation.

## Relationships with Other Members

The group is not a place to make social friends, and if you use it this way, you may not experience the intended benefits. Group is an opportunity to have therapeutic relationships in which you learn more about yourself and the ways in which you relate to others. You may have strong feelings toward some members of the group, as you do with other people in your life. However, group can be a safe environment to explore those feelings and the way you act on them. If you do have contact with someone outside of group (e.g., see someone), we ask that you share that contact with the group at the next meeting.

## Active Participation

Members are not required to talk in group, but we know that the more you put in, the more benefits you will receive. The only time we ask that you do speak is when a new member is added to the group and introductions and goals for group are shared. We will encourage you to talk honestly about your feelings as opposed to sharing details of stories. We will ask you to do this because not everyone can relate to a life

experience, but everyone can understand feelings (e.g., fear, happiness, anger). We realize that asking you to focus on your feelings can be difficult or frustrating at times. However, part of the challenge and benefit of group is to learn new ways of making deeper connections with others.

**Respect for Human Dignity and Diversity**

The challenge in this group, as with all relationships, is to find ways to be honest, appropriate, kind, helpful, and not harmful in our speech and behaviors. You agree to abstain from harmful speech or behaviors, for example, to not humiliate or abuse group members or leaders in any way.

We encourage you to engage in **active listening**, with the aim of listening for deep understanding as opposed to listening to respond. You agree to respect others’ differences, beliefs, cultures, sexual identities, and all other forms of intersecting identities that comprise who we are as unique individuals and as members of various groups. Rather than re-capitulating a culture of silence, in group we strive to recognize and acknowledge the impact of stereotypes, prejudice, discrimination, oppression, power and privilege as they surface both inside and outside of the group environment.

We, as facilitators, commit to embracing diversity in all its richness, and invest in creating a group based on mutual respect, understanding, and openness. As a part of the group, you agree to support your fellow group members in the process of self-exploration around issues of diversity and other personal difficulties, challenging our own biases and engaging in courageous dialogues for growth.

Date: April 24, 2024

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# Signature Certificate

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