

Twin Cities Men's Center

Facilitator Training



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Welcome to Facilitator Training!

In a way, the facilitators are the core of the Men's Center. For many, the facilitator is the only "management" they will ever see. Some men come to support groups frightened, uncertain, and anxious. But they all come in need of support. And they all look to a facilitator's leadership.

Please attend carefully to today's training. Group leaders at TCMC are given significant flexibility with which to conduct their groups, but some components are required in each group and are not optional. Please ask questions. We always have experienced facilitators at annual training...learn from their experience.

TCMC thanks you immensely for your commitment. Without volunteer facilitators, the Men's Center could not exist.

The Twin Cities Men's Center is an incorporated, 501(c)3 educational, non-profit, volunteer organization that began in 1976 as an outgrowth of the Men's Awareness Network. It has provided peer-facilitated, community-based support to the metro area since then.

TCMC has also hosted Men's Conferences 1978-2001 as well as weekly workshops, and began offering Anger Management classes in 1996.

Overview of Support Groups

A TCMC support group is a safe place for men and women to share experiences, feelings, perceptions, fears...in a chemically-free, non-judgmental environment of mutual respect and confidentiality.

TCMC provides two types of support groups:

- **Open Groups** do not require mandatory attendance but encourage regular attendance for a period of time.
- **Closed Groups** require mandatory attendance with a start and end date and some form of registration. Anger Management is an example.

Groups are led by a trained, volunteer facilitator who does not act as a therapist—even if he/she may, in fact, be a therapist.

"The difference between 'support' and 'therapy'? Support is where you are right and the world is wrong; Therapy is where the world is right and you are wrong." - Hank Bruns, long-time Men's Center Support Group facilitator and coordinator, 1987.

Further reference:

A Circle of Men: The Original Manual for Men's Support Groups, by Bill Kauth, St. Martins Press, 1992, 139 pages.

Facilitator Qualifications and Duties

1. Maintain TCMC membership and have been a group member for 3-6 months.
2. Attend facilitator training.
3. Housekeeping tasks such as opening, coffee, room arrangement and cleanup.
4. Active engagement in the group.
5. Monitor group dynamics.
6. Demand mutual respect.
7. Assure Confidentiality
8. Arrive at group 15 minutes early.
9. Begin group promptly.
10. Make announcements.
11. Read Mission Statement.
12. Read Guidelines.
13. Begin check-in process.
14. Distribute sign-in and donation forms.

15. Conclude group on-time, cleanup, lights out, lockup.

16. ***Do Not Start and/or Run Groups Late.***

And further.....

1. Create a safe, supportive and confidential environment enabling intimate, personal discussion.
2. Remain non-judgmental, because judgments destroy the trust needed to invite personal sharing.
3. Invite and encourage participation.
4. Model good group behavior.
5. Provide positive feedback.
6. Discourage advice and therapy. We cannot solve everyone's problems.

Core Facilitator Skills

Good facilitation requires certain core skills:

1. Nonverbal attending.
2. Asking open-ended questions.
3. Active listening with paraphrasing for clarity.

Core skills help you to:

- * Show concern and interest...provide validation.
- * Create rapport.
- * Encourage group participation.
- * Provide constructive feedback.

1. *Nonverbal Attending*—lets others know you are listening.

- * Sets a comfortable tone.
- * Encourages others to talk.
- * Shows interest.

“How To Do” *Non-Verbal Attending*

- * Remove physical barriers.
- * Eye contact.
- * Brief verbals.
- * Nods.
- * Attentive posture.
- *

2. *Asking Open-Ended (non yes-no, non-why) Questions*

- * How is that for you?
- * What do you mean?
- * Tell us more about your feeling?
- * Describe/Explain.....?

3. *Active Listening with Paraphrasing*

Defined:

- * Brief rephrasing of main points.
- * Stating the essence of the speaker's message.
- * Clarifying members message...

Value:

- * Shows your correct understanding.
- * May help other group members clarify their own understanding.

Understanding when to talk and when to listen comes with experience.

FACILITATOR RATIONAL BELIEFS

Rational Beliefs help us become better leaders.

1. *“We All Have Potential For Growth, Change and Improvement.”*

Group members are responsible for their own growth.

Facilitators help set a positive environment conducive to growth.

2. *“Facilitators Are Resources, Not Authorities and Not Experts.”*

We do not have all the answers.

3. *“Learning Can Be Cooperative.”*

Positive, constructive feedback and challenges can help generate change and provide support.

4. *“Participants’ needs, concerns and questions drive the group.”*

Facilitators provide focus and structure.

5. *“Facilitators Are Not Perfect.”*

We do our best with our tools at hand. Accepting personal limitations helps us gain acceptance within the group.

FACILITATOR IRRATIONAL BELIEFS

Irrational beliefs can limit our growth and success as a support group leader.

1. *“Irrational—My Performance as a Facilitator is of Prime Importance.”* Focusing on yourself in any way impedes your ability to meet the needs of the group.
2. *“Irrational—I Must Be An Expert.”*
None of us can be an expert on everything.
3. *“Irrational—I Must Be Liked By All.”* Facilitators who spend too much time trying to be liked forget their responsibilities to other group members.
4. *“Irrational—There is One Right Way to Run a Group.”* An emphasis on right and wrong ways to lead a group can limit growth and effectiveness. Flexibility as group dynamics are established and change will help establish a productive setting.
5. *“Irrational—I Must Give Advice For Others to Grow.”* Members are responsible for their own growth. Advice gives the impression that we know more about another’s life and how to live it than they do.
6. *“Irrational—I Must Lead Every Moment of the Meeting.”* Good groups tend to lead themselves at times. Our own participation may not be needed every moment of the meeting.

SUPPORT GROUP GUIDELINES

1. Read Mission Statement.
2. Groups begin promptly as scheduled and continue for 2 hours or until concluded. Please be prompt. Late arrivals and early departures are disrespectful and disruptive to others.
3. Support groups are not therapy groups. There is often fine line between support and therapy, but we are not here to change or fix anyone. Not that we could. Nor do we give advice. We support members' efforts to change and improve.
4. Support groups are chemically free. Members who arrive intoxicated, from legal or illegal drugs, will be asked to leave.
5. Support groups are safe and confidential. When you attend a TCMC support group, you agree to keep all you hear to yourself. This includes the names of other participants. We require that no notes be taken. Carry away only your own growth material, in your heart and your mind. ***Confidentiality is of Utmost Importance.***
6. Support groups are free from sexual harassment.
7. Discriminatory comments about people are not allowed.
8. Encourage the language of feelings. Feelings are neither good or bad; they just exist. *"Feelings do not need to be logical...they're your feelings and that is OK"*.
9. Stay on a feelings level as much as possible; your story is very important; your feelings are paramount."
10. Support vs. Approval.

CHECK-IN:

Check-in is personal, uninterrupted time. Do not hijack a check-in. A quick, clarifying question or comment is okay, but if you are talking about yourself, you have hijacked a check-in.

Wait until check-in completion is signaled before providing feedback. Feedback is positive and supportive and related to the check-in. It is not an opportunity to extend your own check-in.

Check-in options...

1. Give name, a few words about how you are doing...ask for additional time if needed.
2. Each member takes 5-8 minutes for check-in. Those with pressing needs may use more time.

Feedback and interaction may follow. Each member is given time to check-in.

1. Check-in is related to group topic.
2. Discussion suggestions...
 - * Use “I” statements. When you use “you” or “we,” you are inappropriately speaking for everyone else in the group.
 - * Ask for the time you need.
 - * Challenge, not confront, each other in a respectful, positive and supportive manner.
 - * Do not give advice, even if it is requested.

- * Use non-judgmental language at all times.
- * Minimize detail. Focus on feelings and consequences

3. Feedback

- * Be positive, supportive and be direct, related to the member's check-in
- * Do not start talking about your similar experiences
- * Do not tell group members how you would solve his/her problem; why it is never a problem for you; or how you think he or she should avoid the problem in the future
- * Do not use feedback to add to your own check-in

CONTRIBUTIONS...DONATIONS

Donation materials are passed around during the meeting.

Donations are voluntary, but do provide much needed support for the TCMC. \$3 to \$7 is suggested. Encourage members to become a TCMC regular or patron member.

Using "real" names is not necessary on the Attendance Report.

Disruptive Group Members Policy

TCMC group facilitators may request that a disruptive group member leave. Disruptive behavior includes offensive language, or language that demeans others based on sexual orientation, religion, gender, culture or race. Physical violence will not be tolerated.

911 is an option in case of disruptive emergencies. The Board of Directors should be notified when facilitators believe a member should be dismissed from a group.

Addendum to TCMC Disruptive Group Members Policy, 1995

This revision approved at the Nov. 14, 2022 Board of Directors Meeting.

“The mission of the Men’s Center Support Groups is to create a safe place, in times of personal and social challenge, for any men and women to receive and to give support to one another and share feelings and experiences to facilitate SELF--ACCEPTANCE and PERSONAL GROWTH.”

Guidelines for Participant Dismissal from Support Groups/ Program Events:

TCMC Support Group Facilitators will be able to request group participants who are disruptive to the group to leave the event. Disruptive behavior includes: non- compliance with facilitator instructions, or other actions or behavior in a manner that the

facilitator deems inappropriate, harmful, or otherwise outside the parameters of TCMC's published Support Group meeting guidelines.

Disruptive participants are subject to a "three strike" rule for disciplinary action at the discretion of a trained Support Group facilitator. After three verbal and/or written notices of behavior or actions that violate TCMC Policy and Procedures for Support Groups, disciplinary action includes probation and/or termination from attending program activities. However, a facilitator, in collaboration with the board, has the discretion to dismiss a participant from the group without three strikes if the facilitator deems the behavior to be egregious. Furthermore, the participant agrees to indemnify, defend and hold harmless TCMC and its affiliates as a result of being asked to leave or vacate TCMC or removal from the group.

Examples of behaviors that violate the Support Group meeting guidelines

include, but are not limited to:

- abusive language
- threatening language
- language that demeans others
- arguing and quibbling to a point of disruption
- continually defending that they are right
- conversation monopolizing
- other attendee(s) have stated they feel unsafe in the presence
- hateful speech or "bashing" (as in: shutting down or criticizing someone present or otherwise for reasons such as sexual

orientation, religious, or political affiliation, gender identity, mental or physical disability, age, sex, race, or ethnic origin).

Per the TCMC Support Group meeting guidelines, Support Group facilitators must report any potential or actual violations of this TCMC Policy to the TCMC Board of Directors. In extreme cases, the board reserves the right to waive the three-strike rule and may seek legal and protective services, including and not limited to, a restraining order specifying the location and times of Support Groups to be restrained from, and/or reinforcement from police or other security officials if the individual in question is non-compliant and/or violent.

Appendix A

Mission of The Men's Center Support Groups

*“The mission of The Men's Center Support Groups is to create a safe place, in these times of personal and social challenge, for any men and women to receive and to give support to one another and share feelings and experiences to facilitate **self-acceptance** and **personal growth**.”*

- Adopted by the Men's Center Board of Directors, 1989.

Appendix B: Suicide Intervention Resources

Whenever attempting to intervene for the prevention of a suspected suicide intention, three (3) telephone numbers shall be given to the person in question.

612-873-2222	HCMC Suicide Hotline
612-873-3161	Crisis Intervention Referral
612-379-6363	Crisis Connection 24h Counseling

For the intervention of a suicide in progress, or a suspected suicide in progress, the facilitator or an assistant shall call 9-1-1 immediately, report that fact to the 9-1-1 operator, and request immediate assistance.

612-873-3000	Hennepin County Medical Center Emergency Center
1-800-764-7661 1-800-POISON1	Poison Control Center
651-254-1000	Ramsey County Medical Center Regions Hospital Emergency
651-266-7900	Ramsey County Crisis Services 24h
612-379-1199	Suicide Prevention Counselors
9-1-1	<i>Call if numbers above do not work.</i>

Source: <<http://www.suicide.org/hotlines/minnesota-suicide-hotlines.html>>

Appendix C: Dealing With Difficult Group Members

By adopting attitudes of “compassionate witnessing” and “assertive engagement” TCMC facilitators can usually succeed in guiding a group past non-group-oriented behaviors by individual group members. Typical examples:

- * **The Reluctant Participant** - Shy, quiet, and hiding in the background.
=> make an effort to call on the shy person with questions about everyday life experiences.
- * **The Conversation Monopolizer** - Consumed with talking endlessly about a topic, seemingly on autopilot. => Politely, firmly suggest the group consider a variety of opinions; steer discussion back to the primary issue or purpose of the group; bring the monopolizer back to a feeling level.
- * **The Sophisticate** - Likes recognition for thoughts and experiences deemed relevant, however tedious and unnecessary. => Assure participant that anecdotes are interesting, but there is urgency to move on to main issues.
- * **The Perpetual Arguer** - Going beyond healthy disagreement, and have need to be “right” above all else. => Avoid debate; paraphrase his/her position, point out time already spent on the issue, & suggest moving on.
- * **The Poor Listener** - Interrupting discussion before others are finished sharing out of strong need to be heard themselves. => Insist on sharing discussion time; ask poor listener to paraphrase other people’s sharing.
- * **The Rigid Participant** - Arguing and quibbling to point of group disruption out of belief he/she has a monopoly on the “truth”. => Encourage rigid participant to consider opposing views; come up with evidence to support alternative points of view, helping them to recognize that such exists.