

We Can DU It: Peer Support Group - Consent & Participation Agreement

I hereby consent to engaging in the We Can DU It: Peer Support Group. By participating in peer-led support groups I have the opportunity to benefit from sharing personal experiences, giving and receiving supportive and constructive feedback, and build relationships with peers. In order for peer support programs to work, a protective environment must be created, and expectations for members and co-facilitators must be understood by all. To ensure a protective environment for personal growth it is asked that all participants agree to the following guidelines. All participants are responsible for creating a brave and inclusive environment. Mutual respect of all members allows for the creation of trust. All participants and facilitators will actively attempt to respect and understand the unique needs and diverse cultural backgrounds of each student. Facilitators do not condone or engage in discrimination based on age, color, culture, disability, ethnic group, gender, gender identity, gender expression, race, religion, sexual orientation, marital status, veteran status, or socioeconomic status. Inability to follow the ground rules may result in being asked to leave the peer support group, referral to alternative resources that are more appropriate for a participant's needs such as one-to-one listening support, counseling services, or other community supports. This program is an outreach effort in collaboration with the Thrive Peer Educators and Health Promotion (Health & Counseling Center) to help students support their peers and is not a replacement for therapy or clinical support services. If you would like to pursue counseling services or group therapy, the facilitators may help connect you to those services.

I. Confidentiality

Your peer facilitators follow FERPA and HIPAA guidelines available at <https://www.du.edu/health-and-counseling-center/aboutus/hipaa.html>. Your facilitators will monitor discussions and maintain a respectful environment to keep safety and trust a priority. The facilitators are also mandatory reporters under Title IX regulations and must report any disclosure of gender-based violence or sexual assault. Members should not engage in discussion of group issues outside of the peer support group. Members should remember that keeping confidentiality allows for an environment where trust can be built, and all members can benefit from the experience. Members may not discuss the identity or identifying information or share the reactions of any member of this peer support group with anyone outside of the group. You may talk about your own personal reactions and are even encouraged to do so outside of the peer support group, but not about others' identifying information or reactions. The only time your information may be released without your consent is in the following situations:

- Indication by a group member of intent to physically harm themselves or another human being;
- Alleged child abuse or mistreatment or elder abuse or mistreatment;
- Any immediate, imminent safety concerns will immediately be reported by the facilitators to their respective supervisors.

II. Attendance

Peer support group members are encouraged to make a biweekly commitment to attend the support group for the entire quarter. Members of the peer support group are also expected to arrive on time every week, since we will always start on time. If you are running late or have an emergency/illness that prohibits you from coming to the peer support group, we ask that you email hcc.thrive@du.edu as soon as you are able. If you know ahead of time that you will miss a later peer support group meeting, we ask that you share the date of your absence with the group beforehand. The peer support group will also always end on time, no matter what is being discussed. Weekly attendance will allow everyone to continue the discussion that may feel unfinished at the end. Everyone's weekly attendance promotes feelings of safety and trust. Members often feel anxious about participating in peer support groups and seeing the results can take time. Although the expectation is to attend all peer support group meetings throughout the quarter, there are situations that cause members to discontinue peer support group participation. In the event you decide not to continue and have explored your concerns with the facilitators and other members, we ask that you come back to the peer support group to say goodbye. Though perhaps hard to imagine, members come to care about one another and will feel unresolved if you leave without explanation. It is expected that peer support group members will stay for the entirety of the session, barring extreme circumstances.

III. Technology-related Guidelines

Due to COVID-19, Health Promotion will be using the Zoom platform for all peer support groups and workshops until in-person meetings can be safely done. Not all people find that they benefit from online peer group support. If you or your facilitator has a concern, it is expected that you will communicate that concern with one another, and alternative services can be explored. In order to participate, you will need reliable internet access, a device with internet access, microphone, webcam and speakers. We understand that you may not have access to this technology—if this is the case, please let our staff know – we will work with you to troubleshoot and/or get you connected with a different modality of service, if necessary. When participating virtually, it is essential that you utilize a private space that is free of distractions and secure (e.g., people walking by, others hearing your conversation or seeing your screen). It is essential to have this private space in order to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of other peer support group members. It is not permitted to record any support group sessions, including recording sound, video, pictures, or screenshot. It is expected that you enable the video function for the duration of the peer support group meeting and disable the mute function to allow for more organic conversation in a virtual setting.

IV. Active Participation

Members of the peer support group are not required to talk at the meeting; however, we know that the more you invest in the support group, the more you will benefit. We will encourage you to talk honestly about your feelings or experiences as opposed to sharing details of stories or giving advice. 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 a peer support group is to learn new ways of making deeper connections with others. The only time that we will ask you to speak, is when a new member joins the peer support group and at the beginning of peer support group when introductions and goals for peer support group are shared. We also ask that you are open to hearing about how your level of participation affects peer support group members. Additionally, we ask that you agree to silence and put away phones and shut off any other distracting technology (television, music, etc.) for the duration of each peer support group meeting in order to display respect for one another.

I have read and understand the information above and by printing my name below I agree to uphold the above guidelines.

Participant:

Printed Name

Date

