

## SUPPORT GROUPS

<b>Definition</b>	Offering meetings to survivors and co-survivors in a safe, supportive, non-judgmental environment on a regular, scheduled basis to share information and techniques for problem-solving, and to explore feelings resulting from sexual victimization and the recovery process
<b>Goal</b>	To foster a sense of empowerment, promote an understanding of the effects of sexual violence, support the recovery process, assist with finding resolution concerning the sexual victimization, and foster survivor connections
<b>Minimum Qualifications</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Support groups are determined by the Program to be an appropriate peer support strategy in their service area and there are a sufficient number of survivors and/or co-survivors to form a group</li> <li>· Facilitated by trained staff or volunteers and are considered peer support groups; a therapeutic group, which is different from a peer support group, should be facilitated by a master's level professional</li> <li>· Written curricula and guidelines specific to each type of group offered by the Program (survivors of specific gender identities, survivors of a certain age group, co-survivors, etc.) are provided</li> <li>· Attendees are offered access to crisis services after and between meetings</li> <li>· Offered to past and present shelter residents and/or community members and available to all survivors</li> <li>· Survivors determine the direction and format of the group</li> <li>· Survivors are not mandated to attend support groups</li> </ul>

# SUPPORT GROUPS

## *Program Checklist for Support Groups*

### 1. Staffing

- Support group facilitators have completed the 40 hours of required training for rape crisis advocates, complete the required continuing education, and have at least one year of experience working with survivors
- Facilitators receive additional training on group facilitation, as needed and determined by Program leadership

### 2. Policies

- Support groups are limited in focus to the management of emotional trauma related to a recent or past sexual assault, or to the management of problems in daily living resulting from sexual violence, and counseling is a component of a support group
- Support groups may be developed for distinct populations served by the Program, including survivors of recent sexual assaults, adolescent survivors, adult survivors of child sexual abuse, secondary survivors of sexual offenses, or others identified by the Program as appropriate
- Support groups may be time-limited or open, based on program discretion
- Group sessions, as a rule, do not exceed 90 minutes
- The Program documents services provided according to an established protocol
- The Program may refuse to provide support group services to persons who are harassing or offensive and will direct them to other appropriate agencies as needed

### 3. Evaluation

- The Program provides a report of the numbers served on a regular basis, per program policy
- The Program collects and regularly analyzes data on requests for the group, number who attend the group, numbers who complete the group, and number of groups attended per person
- The Program makes follow up calls to participants who drop out of the group
- The Program collects satisfaction surveys from participants
- The Program logs/documents progress made by group participants

- The Program collects follow-up surveys of participants at a defined interval
- The Program's Director/lead staff person reviews all documentation/evaluations on a regular basis (at least annually) and makes recommendations accordingly