Welcome! We are here to bring together a group that is helpful, respectful, nonjudgmental, and kind.

Support Group General Guidelines

1. Confidentiality: What is shared in group, stays in group.
   - If you have them, please wear headphones/earbuds to keep others in the room from hearing what’s being shared.
   - If there is distracting activity around you, the facilitator may temporarily mute your mic/turn off your video.
   - An exception to confidentiality: if a facilitator has reasonable indication that you or someone else is at imminent risk of lethal harm, we’ll take available steps to access help.
   - Sharing worries about suicidal thoughts is welcomed in support groups, however, this peer-to-peer group is not a qualified crisis service. If you’re experiencing a crisis, please access these available resources: call 1-800-273-8255, 614-276-2273, or text 741-741.

2. This is not professional group therapy. This is a peer-to-peer support group. Immediate clinical concerns must be addressed by a health care professional, not the facilitator(s) or other group members.

3. Respect, non-judgment, compassion: It’s everyone’s responsibility to make the group a safe place to share. We listen to each other with respect, non-judgment and compassion knowing we each have different values, lifestyles and experiences. You may hear things different from your worldview—but we are here to pay attention to the feelings behind what someone is saying because feelings are often most relatable. We agree to use this time to share our thoughts and feelings related to our own experience of the group’s topic (e.g. depression) and not to debate or convince others to take our point of view.

4. Listen without interruption: We listen quietly and respectfully to each person without interruption or comment. Listening and being present are the most important things we can do for each other. Silences are okay! They give us time to process, build up nerve to speak, and unmute ourselves. However, we want to hear from you; please don’t stay silent the entire meeting.
5. **Advice-free space:** Although well-meaning, advice can often be heard as implying judgment or criticism. If someone really wants advice, they may ask for it and discuss it after opening check-in. Our primary goal is to be empathetic, not to try to “fix” one another.

6. **Share the air:** The group is on a fixed amount of time. Facilitators need to make sure everyone has an opportunity to speak. **Please avoid long stories and do not take it personally if you are asked to wrap up.**

7. **All emotions are welcome:** Laughter and tears are welcome. We trust every person’s ability to navigate their feelings. Feelings are neither right nor wrong. If you feel strong emotions stay with them, breathe and take your time. (If you feel concerned or upset by something that happened during group and don’t know how to contact the facilitator directly, call Grace Zafasi at 614-221-1441, ext. 118 or email gzafasi@mhaohio.org or Tonya Fulwider at ext. 104 and tfulwider@mhaohio.org.)

8. **Self-care:** Please take care of yourself while you are with us. If you need to leave the room or move around for a moment, consider turning off your video/audio until you’re ready again. We all know what is best for our own selves, and carry the primary responsibility for our well-being during the group.

**Participants who disregard any of the above guidelines may be removed from the group.**