

The Embrace Group Members' Experiences

What happens at Embrace?

A weekly group!

Check-in
Members let each other know how the week has been and may share with the group their successes and struggles

Discussion
Members draw on each other's experience and ideas to discuss what is happening for them with other parts of the mental health services, including other therapy groups they are attending, their medication, and care coordination.

Follow-up

Members can offer support, reflect together and feedback on things brought up in the check-in

Lunch

After the first session of the day we enjoy preparing & eating a lunch together! We eat, laugh and relax!

Group decisions

Members think together about the direction they want the group to go in & choices are made collaboratively. Organisation is shared between members.

Summary

- Embrace group members met and discussed the following topics...
- Preconceptions, expectations & preparing for the group.
 - Experiences of the group: What is most valued? What do you gain?
 - What is different about the group? How does it fit in with other areas of the mental health system?
 - Hopes: for Embrace's future and their own future in the group.

Results

- Nervousness prior to starting was dissipated by the comfortable, non-clinical feeling of the group. Current members look forward to meeting new members!
- Check-in means you can get off your chest how the week has been. This offers relief, it helps other members understand what you are going through and it helps with staying on topic throughout the session.
- Supporting others gives a sense of self worth.
- Having this group to attend once a week can help stop a problem spiralling. When things get tough you know it's only a few days until the group.
- The group lifts mood, gives purpose and helps avoid withdrawing/becoming isolated in the face of a crisis.
- There is a lack of pressure and no 'us and them' culture.
- Group decision making means the group is something for members to be proud of. This helps members look forward to the future of the group.

Help others & yourself

"Didn't know what to expect and kept thinking 'who's there?', what type of people are going to go to it, are you going to be the odd one out?"

At the start...

Nervous then comfortable!

"It was difficult because... walking into a room, I found that really scary, but I quickly became comfortable with the people."

"I remember with the anxiety how I felt."

"It's totally different to what I expected much more free-form. It's much more comfortable."

"If I've managed to help somebody else a bit as well, it gives me a feeling a bit of self-respect, self worth, which is what we I think we all do really struggle with."

Self worth

"It's good if you can help somebody else in the group feel relaxed, you do feel like you can do stuff about that."

Isolated?

"You think... I can get through this. Whereas before the groups all there was alcohol anger and drugs... I didn't want to face reality ... not thinking, burying all my problems... I was just projecting anger everywhere to isolate myself."

Comfortable

"This is not as clinical... More comfortable, it's a nice calm setting ... totally different to a hospital setting... everything's very clean, it's like a doctor's office ... And you just think ooo I don't like it! ... I think it's nice that this place is nowhere near hospitals"

Calm

Not clinical

I can get through this!

I'll go onto a real bad three four days, before it'd last weeks, now with what I've learnt, it's not as severe, not as long term, I manage to pull myself out and think look it's not so bad

You can relate to similar problems

Check-in
"Gives people the chance to say there's a lot of things going on, I'm here but I'm struggling"

Keeps people on-topic

"I like (check-in) in a lot of the groups, you can say how your week's been... some groups where you don't check in... you're sitting there wanting to say it!! You get to that point where you wanna pop!" **relief**

You belong

You can speak your mind & people will listen

No judging

Moving forward

"People we've got in the group are people that actually WANT to...move on with our lives, we don't want to struggle the way we have done."

Good days... Bad days!

"You don't have to worry if you're not having such a good day because we all have good days and bad days."

"When we get new people, I do look forward to it for the simple reason that, just to let them know, They're not alone. We might be further down the road of treatment than you are, we're gonna do nothing but try and support each other."

The future

"I think because we do have input into it, I think the future's going to be good, everybody listens to us when we want to change things, and we all discuss between us and come up with a good solution, so I think it's got good prospects this group."

Joint decision making

"They listen to your ideas and put them into plans"

Stepping back Stopping a spiral

"It's not them and us, it's exactly the same here and that's what I love about it and that's what made it at the start to be very comfortable."

Equality No "Us & Them" culture

"You tend to think because you've had all these problems, staff members or whoever it is, you're nuts, you're the doo-lally one ... but it doesn't feel like that here ... Here, you're just a normal human being that's got maybe problems but that's it, you're just equal and that makes a big difference"

Just human

It's not just you! Safe Not alone

"A comfortable safe place to be, you feel like you're not alone, not the only one with these problems. There's people that understand. It's not just you."

Bringing knowledge from other groups & therapies

Relieves burden

"People who actually care"

Support

Finding some clarity

Achieving something & being involved in something good

EMBRACE

Emotionally
Educated
Minds
Bring
Reason
And
Choices
Everyday

Lifts mood

Gives Purpose

"I can keep going 'til Tuesday!"

Pressure?

"You don't worry about sharing that problem, or not being able to share that problem because nobody here is putting pressure on you. What I like about it is, it's not trying to force anybody."

"It's giving people time to feel comfortable in themselves... and be able to communicate and take part. That is the great thing about it... pressure not being piled on people."

Giving time