



**National
Multiple Sclerosis
Society**

Peer Connections Volunteer Training

Group Leadership

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

- The National Multiple Sclerosis Society is a movement by and for all people affected by MS.
- Our voices and actions reflect diversity, equity and inclusion.
- We welcome diverse perspectives.
- We actively seek out and embrace differences.
- We want everyone to feel respected and be empowered to bring their whole selves to ensure we make the best decisions to achieve our vision.



MIKE
DIAGNOSED IN 1983



ANGELA
DIAGNOSED IN 1992



JOVANY
DIAGNOSED IN 2016



TRACEY (R)
DIAGNOSED IN 2009

Inclusion Policy

At the National MS Society, we are committed to embedding diversity, equity and inclusion in everything we do, and we have zero tolerance of any ill treatment towards any person in the MS movement.

Everyone who shares our vision of a world free of MS is welcome here. Hatred is not.

This work is a journey requiring commitment, accountability, transparency and courage. We know it will not be easy, but we are going to do it anyway. We are not striving for perfection, only intention and action as we move forward. We extend grace and empathy to everyone who wants to join us on this journey of learning, growth and change. However, **we will not tolerate acts of harassment and discrimination.**

The National MS Society is here for **every** person with MS — we always will be — until we find a cure. We embrace and are committed to bringing our entire MS community together, representative of all the dimensions of diversity, so that everyone feels at home and supported by their National MS Society.

Community Disclaimer for Peer Connections Participation

The National MS Society respects the rights of people with MS to obtain any and all information they want related to MS including information on wellness, medical treatments or complementary therapies, products and services. The information shared during community connections does not necessarily reflect the views or official position of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, nor carry the endorsement or support of the Society.

By choosing to participate in National MS Society-governed self-help groups, MSFriends® paired connections, and social media and online communities, you are agreeing that the Society can contact you directly in response to any posts or content that suggests risk to self and/or others. The Society reserves the right to contact you in the event that “at risk” statements or content occur.

To protect your privacy and the privacy of others, please do not record, take screenshots, or share personal information with anyone other than your staff partner.

For specific medical advice, contact your physician. For the opinion of the National Medical Advisory Committee of the National MS Society on any therapy, treatment or product, please contact an MS Navigator at 1-800-344-4867 or visit our website at www.nationalMSSociety.org

Group Leader Resources & Society Policies

Peer Connections Volunteer Resources

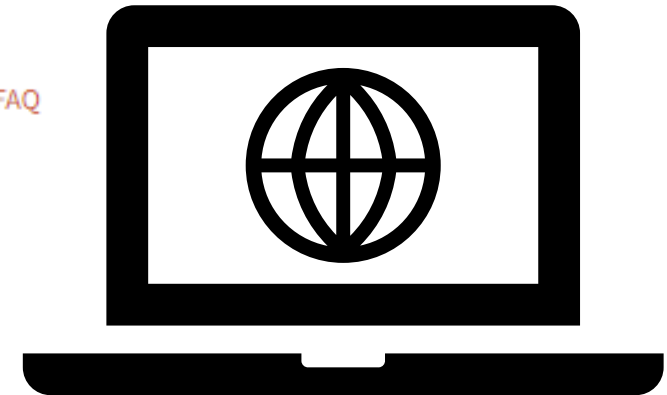
Resources designed to support the work you do as a Peer Connections Volunteers.

- › **New!** Group Volunteer Leadership Slide Deck (PDF)
- › Active Listening
- › Challenging Conversations & Crisis Support
- › Disability Language and Etiquette
- › FAQ's About Hosting In-Person Group Meetings (PDF)
- › Grassroots Marketing Resources for Group Leaders
- › Guest Speakers for Self-Help Groups (PDF)
- › MSFriends Conversations Quick Guide
- › MSFriends Establishing Boundaries
- › National MS Society Self-Help Group Safety Flyer (PDF)
- › Self-Help Group Meeting Structure Guide (PDF)
- › Self-Help Group Meeting Topic & Conversation Guide (PDF)
- › Solution Focused Conversations
- › Tips for Hosting Virtual Online and In-person Groups
- › Virtual Meeting Resources

Society Policies

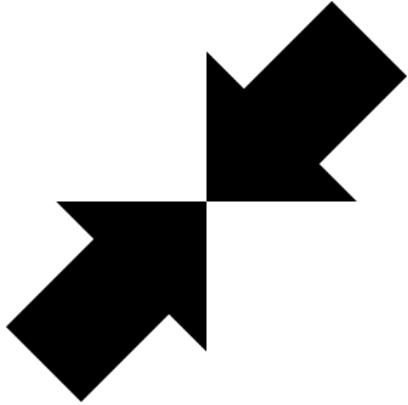
Comprehensive listing of Society policies that all Peer Connections Volunteers are expected to utilize and uphold within their volunteer work.

- › Accessibility Report
- › Community Disclaimer for In Person Self Help Group Meetings
- › Community Disclaimer for Peer Connections Participation
- › Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Statement & Inclusion Policy
- › Medical Advice & Medicine Sharing
- › Minimizing Risk as a Society Volunteer
- › Non-National MS Society Relationships FAQ
- › Religion & Inclusivity
- › Volunteer Code of Conduct



www.nationalMSSociety.org/PeerConnectionsVolunteers

Benefits of Peer Connection



Connecting with
volunteers & others
who know first-hand
what it is like to live
with MS



Building your network of
friends and reducing
personal isolation

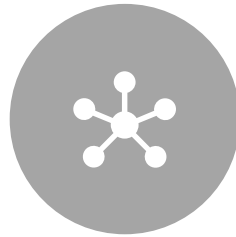


Learn new
information and
strategies for
confronting problems

Key Group Attributes



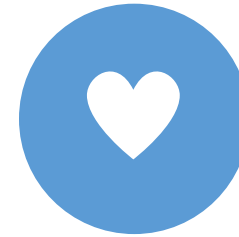
**ACTIVE
LISTENING**



**SHARE
INFORMATION**



**SHARE
RESOURCES**



**EMOTIONAL
SUPPORT**



**PERSONAL
EXPERIENCE**

Group Structure



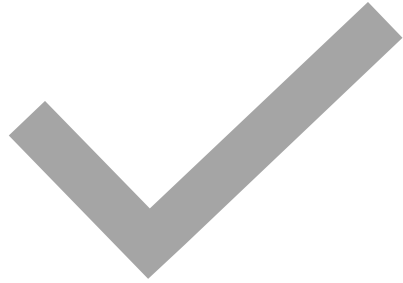
- Overall Structure
- Welcoming Environment
- Encourage Sharing
- Keep Meetings Upbeat

Staying Organized



- Group Leader Organization
 - Email/contact list – what works best for you!
- Meeting Organization
 - Agendas
 - Disclaimer and DE&I statement
 - Review ground rules
 - What to expect during meeting
 - Welcome new members!
 - Potential conversation topics

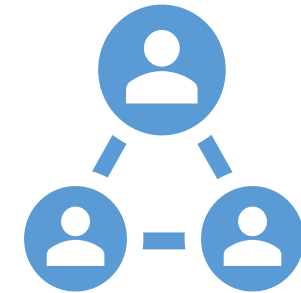
Peer Group Considerations



Ground Rules



Encouraging
Expected
Behaviors



Group
Sharing

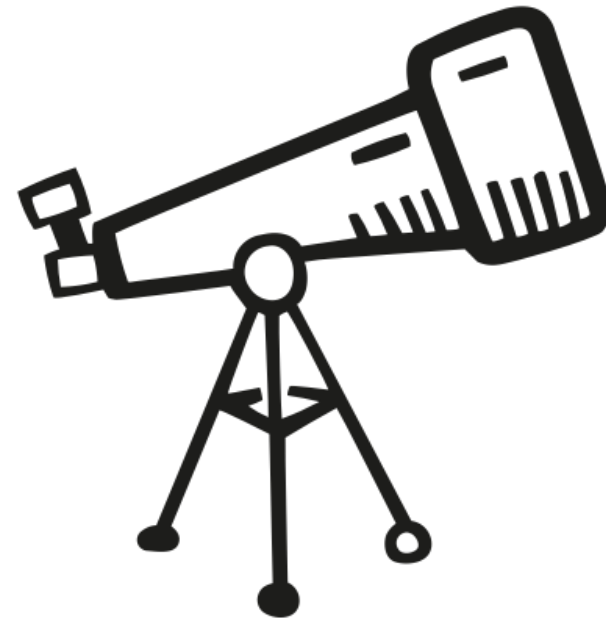
Shared Leadership

- Creates a sense of ownership and responsibility for leadership throughout the whole group
- Get group members involved in determining the direction of the group
- Nurture & grow group members as volunteers



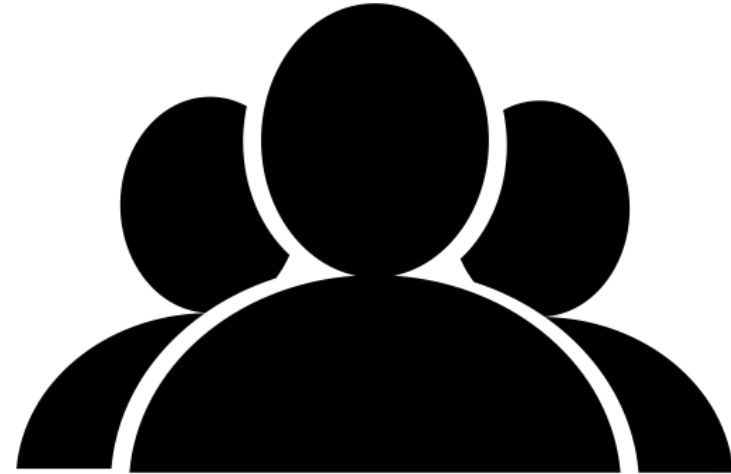
Group
Dynamic:
Perspectives

**Self-Awareness
Personal Limitations**



Group
Dynamic:

Behaviors



Disruptive Behavior
Conflict Management

Solution Focused Conversations

- Focus on possible solutions, not the problem itself.
- Empowerment Model
- Peer Connections Miracle Questions:
 - “How can we help?”
 - “Are you looking for a shoulder or suggestions?”
 - “What’s worked well before?”



Connection Opportunities

Community, education and group conversations

[Find a group in your area or online »](#)



Find community anytime — anywhere
[Find an online MS community »](#)

Listening ear, one-on-one conversations

[Learn more »](#)

Education, resources and support

Call 1-800-344-4867

[Learn more »](#)



Connect with others who understand MS



Build your network of support



Get connected



National Multiple Sclerosis Society

Together We Are Stronger.

Group Leader Resources & Next Steps

Peer Connections Volunteer Website:

www.nationalMSSociety.org/PeerConnectionsVolunteers

Monthly Newsletters & Ongoing Correspondence

Peer Connections Volunteer Facebook Page

MS Warriors Group

Continued Group Leadership Skill Development



Please make note of your questions & thoughts within your worksheets.