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.
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 Volunteer.

› 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

Together We Are Stronger.
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
Self-Awareness
Personal Limitations

Group Dynamic: Perspectives
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 »

Self-Help Group
Regularly scheduled

Online Communities
24/7 online

MSFriends®
Scheduled with a volunteer partner

MS Navigator®
Monday–Friday, 9 a.m.–7 p.m. ET

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

Together We Are Stronger.
Group Leader Resources & Next Steps

Peer Connections Volunteer Website: [www.nationalMSsociety.org/PeerConnectionsVolunteers](http://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.