

# Peer Connections Volunteer Training Worksheets for Self-Help Group Leaders

## Training Worksheets Overview

To help with your understanding and for the best experience, we have provided Training Worksheets that correspond with your new Self-Help Group Leader training sessions. These worksheets provide space for your reflection and notes as well as easy-to-use reference links on each topic. Feel free to utilize this throughout the training and as part of your onboarding conversation with your staff partner at the conclusion of your new peer connection volunteer training cycle.

**NOTE: This tool is best used when partnered with the following training videos.**

---

### Training Sessions:

1. [Welcome to the Society](#)
  - a. Please also listen to this [short session](#) on diversity, equity & inclusion at the Society.
2. [Group Leadership](#)
  - a. Pages 3-5, 7 accompany this specific training.
3. [Challenging Conversations & Crisis Situations](#)

---

### Important Notes:

- All new Peer Connection Volunteers must complete the Welcome to the Society session and the Challenging Conversations & Crisis Situations session.
- Based on your specific peer connection volunteer role, your staff partner will share the appropriate training session link with you for your required role specific training. As an affiliated Self-Help Group Leader, you must complete the Group Leadership training session.
- This training was created in Summer 2023 and reflects the Fiscal Year 2022-2024 Strategic Plan. We know the information shared in this training will continue to grow and change over time. Continue to visit the [Peer Connections Volunteer webpage](#) for the most up-to-date information, tools and resources to support your volunteer role.
- Accessibility
  - When watching the training sessions via YouTube, be sure to click the CC button in the bottom toolbar to turn on closed captions/subtitles.
  - To slow down or speed up the video, click the Gear icon (⚙️) to adjust the “Playback Speed”.
- Please keep these worksheets for your onboarding call with your staff partner. We’ll discuss your responses during your peer connection volunteer role onboarding session.

Contact your staff partner or [peerconnections@nmss.org](mailto:peerconnections@nmss.org) with any questions, comments or concerns about the trainings or these worksheets.

## Welcome to the Society

In this session, we will cover the Society's vision and mission. Additionally, we will discuss our commitment to diversity equity and inclusion, our cultural values, and the history of the MS Society. As a Peer Connections Volunteer, it's important to understand how your role fits into the different areas of the Society's work.

---

### Reflection:

1. Did you learn anything new or surprising about the National MS Society?

*Answer here...*

2. What area of work mentioned do you feel most passionate about and why?

*Answer here...*

---

### Notes:

---

### Resources

- [Diversity, Equity & Inclusion at the National MS Society](#)
- [2022-2024 Strategic Plan](#)
- [Peer Connections Volunteer Website](#)
- [Virtual brochure- Welcome to the National MS Society](#)

## Group Leadership: Self-Reflection

Your role as a Self-Help Group Leader is part of the Society's network of peer connections opportunities. Self-Help Group Leaders provide community connection in a virtual and/or in-person meeting setting.

---

### Reflection:

1. What excites you most about becoming an affiliated Self-Help Group Leader?

*Answer here...*

2. As a Self-Help Group Leader, what impact do you hope to make in your community?

*Answer here...*

---

### Notes:

---

### Resources:

- [Peer Connections Volunteer webpage](#)
- [Self-Help Group Leader Job Description](#)
- [Community Disclaimer for Peer Connections Participation](#)
- [Volunteer Code of Conduct](#)

## Group Leadership: Leading Group Conversations & Active Listening

Active listening is one of the building blocks for relationship building within the group setting. As a Self-Help Group Leader, you'll create a safe and inclusive space for your group members to talk while also providing opportunities for group members to extend emotional support, share information, and discuss community resources with each other.

---

### Reflection:

1. What are some ways ideas you have that help get the group conversation started?

*Answer here...*

2. What are some things you could do to show you are actively listening within the group setting?

*Answer here...*

3. What are examples of ground rules that you would like to propose and implement within the group?

*Answer here...*

---

### Notes:

---

### Resources:

- [Active Listening](#)
- [Solution Focused Conversations Guide](#)
- [Self-Help Group Meeting Structure Guide](#)
- [Self-Help Group Meeting Topic & Conversation Guide](#)
- [Tips for Hosting Virtual Online and In-Person Groups](#)

## Group Leadership: Establishing Boundaries, Addressing Challenging Behavior & Solution Focused Conversations

As a Self-Help Group Leader, sometimes you might be asked about a topic you are not comfortable covering. Establishing your boundaries early on will go a long way in creating a safe and comfortable space to build trust and rapport within your group relationships. Sometimes conversations do not go as smoothly as we hope for, preparing for how to manage hard conversations is also a crucial part of this role.

---

### Reflection:

1. What topics are you NOT comfortable talking about? How can you support group conversation on this topic?

*Answer here...*

2. How will you respond when group members become disruptive?

*Answer here...*

3. Practicing Solutions Focused Conversations: A group member says, "My heat sensitivity is so bad that I can't even go to my nephew's baseball game." How could you respond with a solution focused approach?

*Answer here...*

### Notes:

---

### Resources:

- [Solution Focused Conversations](#)
- [Emotional Support Resources](#)
- [Managing Derogatory, Discriminatory & Racist Statements](#)
- [Challenging Conversations & Crisis Support](#)

## Challenging Conversations & Crisis Situations

There may be times when you support an individual through a challenging situation or a crisis. We sincerely hope you are never confronted with these types of situations, but your response to them can be a lifeline to someone in need.

---

### Reflection:

1. In your own words, how would you respond to an individual who is using discriminatory or racist statements?

*Answer here...*

2. After participating in this training & reviewing the Quick Glance Crisis Resource, are there any questions you have about how to support a person in crisis?

*Answer here...*

3. Are there any additional questions you have regarding how to identify and connect to emergency services?

*Answer here...*

### Notes:

---

### Resources:

- [Crisis Support Resources](#)
- [Emotional Support Resources](#)
- [Challenging Conversations & Crisis Support](#)
- [Managing Derogatory, Discriminatory & Racist Statements](#)
- [Quick Glance Crisis Situation Resource for Suicide & Harm](#)

## Group Leader Volunteer Support & Training Wrap Up

As you are supporting individuals in the MS Community as a Self-Help Group Leader, we want to make sure you are aware of resources to support **you** within this volunteer role.

- [Peer Connections Volunteer Facebook Group](#)
- MS Warriors Leaders Support Group
- Monthly newsletters & ongoing correspondence from your staff partner
- Quarterly New Peer Connection Volunteer Networking Hours

---

### Reflection:

1. What other resources do you need prior to your first group meeting?

*Answer here...*

2. Do you have any additional questions for us that you'd like to make note of to review during your onboarding conversation?

*Answer here...*

### Next Steps:

1. Keep this worksheet handy for your onboarding call with your staff partner. This call will include discussion about some of the questions in this document. You will also have a chance to ask anything that was not answered during training. As part of your preparation for this onboarding call, begin contemplating your meeting location/platform, meeting schedule & cadence, and your group starting timeline.
2. After you watch all training sessions, submit your Self-Help Group Leader registration by clicking [here](#).
3. Once your self-help group leader registration has been submitted, you will receive an email from your staff partner to schedule your onboarding conversation and to discuss next steps related to group activation. You can expect to receive this email within the business week following your registration.