



WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT

Body Dysmorphic Disorder (BDD) Support Groups

BDD is a preoccupation with one or more perceived flaws in appearance that others can't see or consider minor. It isn't vanity: it's persistent and distressing, driving compulsions like mirror checking, skin picking, reassurance seeking, grooming, and social avoidance. Structurally close to OCD, it responds best to CBT with exposure and response prevention (ERP). Support takes two forms: clinician-led CBT groups deliver that treatment together, and peer support groups offer community and shared experience, often where clinical care is hard to reach.

WHO IT'S FOR, AND WHO IT'S NOT

- A fit for people stable enough to engage; CBT groups suit those ready for ERP.
- Not a sole response for very severe BDD or housebound impairment.
- BDD carries high suicide risk. In crisis, get individual care. Call or text 988.

What it's for

People with BDD, whether insight is good or the perceived flaw feels entirely real.

Also muscle dysmorphia, the subtype focused on not being muscular enough.

Often alongside depression, social anxiety, and OCD.

WHAT TO EXPECT

- 1 CBT groups: structured, 90 minutes, 12 to 16 weeks, with cognitive and ERP work plus homework.
- 2 Peer groups: open, ongoing, discussion-based.
- 3 Norms protect recovery: no describing flaws, no appearance reassurance.

CBT is the most evidence-supported psychological treatment for BDD.

- A 2026 review (19 trials, 978 people) found CBT **significantly improved BDD symptoms, body image, and functioning** across delivery modes.¹
- Peer groups aren't tested directly, but peer support broadly **reduces isolation and builds hope and self-management**.²

MAKING THE MOST OF IT

Resist reassurance. Seeking it, or giving it, feeds the disorder.

Do the ERP. Facing the urges is where CBT groups work.

Showing up is exposure. Attending the group is part of the treatment.

QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE YOU JOIN

- 1 Is it a clinician-led CBT group or peer support?
- 2 If CBT, is the leader trained in BDD-specific ERP?
- 3 What crisis referral pathways are in place?

Ready to find a group?

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If you're in crisis, call or text 988.



Sources

Body Dysmorphic Disorder (BDD) Support Groups · references keyed to the numbers on page 1.

- 1 Abdalla, M., Mukhtar, R., Elgamal, S. E., et al. The efficacy of cognitive behavioural therapy in the management of body dysmorphic disorder: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Clinical Psychology and Psychotherapy* (2026), 33(1), Article e70218.
- 2 Lyons, N., Cooper, C., & Lloyd-Evans, B. A systematic review and meta-analysis of group peer support interventions for people experiencing mental health conditions. *BMC Psychiatry* (2021), 21(1), Article 315.

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The Group Guide is a directory, not a clinic. This handout is general education, not medical or mental health advice. Listings are written by group leaders and are not endorsements. Confirm details, cost, and fit with any group you contact.