



WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT

Family & Caregiver Support Groups

These groups bring together people who love or care for someone living with a mental health condition. Caregiving here is its own experience, carrying grief, exhaustion, guilt, and love in proportions outsiders rarely understand. Members may be parents, partners, siblings, or adult children, affected by another's mental health while having little control over it. They offer a place to be honest and find support that doesn't require managing the feelings of the person you care for.

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

- A good fit for anyone significantly affected by a loved one's condition.
- It works best when you're ready to focus on your own experience, not on fixing them.
- It isn't family therapy. In your own distress, consider individual support too. Call or text 988.

What it's for

Any family member or caregiver supporting a loved one, regardless of diagnosis.

NAMI runs free peer groups and the 8-session Family-to-Family course.

Al-Anon, Nar-Anon, DBSA, and IOCDF offer groups tailored to their populations.

WHAT TO EXPECT

1 Sessions run 60 to 90 minutes, peer-led with check-ins or a set curriculum.

2 Ground rules keep the focus on the caregiver, not on diagnosing the loved one.

3 You can attend without your loved one knowing. These groups are for you.

Caregiver support and psychoeducation reliably ease the burden of caring.

- A 2015 review of caring for people with severe mental illness found support and psychoeducation **reduced burden and improved caregiver mental health**, with group formats notable.¹
- A 2021 peer-support review found gains in **social support, empowerment, and self-management** that apply to caregiver groups.²

MAKING THE MOST OF IT

Keep the focus on you. This is your support, not a fix for them.

Keep coming back. Benefit builds with consistency.

Try more than one. Find the room where you feel understood.

QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE YOU JOIN

- 1** Is it open peer support, or a structured course like Family-to-Family?
- 2** Is it general, or focused on a specific condition?
- 3** Is it in person or online, and how often does it meet?

Ready to find a group?

Browse 2,000+ therapy and support groups in all 50 states.

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

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. Sources on page 2.



Sources

Family & Caregiver Support Groups · references keyed to the numbers on page 1.

- 1 Yesufu-Udechuku, A., Harrison, B., Mayo-Wilson, E., et al. Interventions to improve the experience of caring for people with severe mental illness: systematic review and meta-analysis. *British Journal of Psychiatry* (2015), 206(4), 268–274.
- 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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