



WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT

First Episode Psychosis (FEP) Psychoeducation and Support Groups

These are structured psychoeducational and peer support groups for people experiencing or recently recovering from a first episode of psychosis. A first episode is a psychiatric emergency marking the onset of a psychotic condition, and the early years are a critical period: early, intensive, coordinated care meaningfully improves long-term outcomes and reduces the duration of untreated psychosis. Group psychoeducation and peer support are core components of Coordinated Specialty Care (CSC), the evidence-based standard for FEP. CSC programs like NAVIGATE and OnTrackNY integrate medication, individual and family therapy, supported work and school, and group components within one multidisciplinary team.

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

- A fit for those stable enough to take part in group programming.
- Active acute psychosis usually needs individual stabilization first.
- Family education runs in parallel and is essential to comprehensive care.

What it's for

People in the first two to five years after a first psychotic episode.

For psychosis education, treatment engagement, and early warning signs.

Parallel family education groups cover the same content for caregivers.

WHAT TO EXPECT

1 Groups of 6 to 10 meet weekly or biweekly for 60 to 90 minutes.

2 Psychoeducation follows set content; peer groups are open discussion.

3 Group work sits within roughly two years of CSC team support.

Coordinated early intervention is the evidence-based standard.

- A network meta-analysis of 116 trials (17,706 people) found specialized early-psychosis services with group psychoeducation **beat standard care on symptoms, relapse, and function.**¹
- A Cochrane review found peer support for serious mental illness improved **mental health, quality of life, and hope.**²

MAKING THE MOST OF IT

Earlier is better. The first few years shape the longer trajectory.

Proof people recover. Often the first peer who's been through it too.

It's a team, not a pill. Group work joins meds, therapy, work, and school.

QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE YOU JOIN

- 1** Is this part of a full Coordinated Specialty Care program?
- 2** Are there peer specialists with lived experience on the team?
- 3** Is a parallel family education group available?

Ready to find a group?

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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

First Episode Psychosis (FEP) Psychoeducation and Support Groups · references keyed to the numbers on page 1.

- 1 Williams, R., Ostinelli, E. G., Agorinya, J., et al. Comparing interventions for early psychosis: a systematic review and component network meta-analysis. *eClinicalMedicine* (2024), 70, Article 102537.
- 2 Chien, W. T., Clifton, A. V., Zhao, S., & Lui, S. Peer support for people with schizophrenia or other serious mental illness. *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews* (2019), 2019(6), Article CD010880.

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