



WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT

Retirement Transition Groups

These groups bring together people approaching, navigating, or adjusting to retirement, offering peer support, psychoeducation, and in some settings structured skills training for one of the biggest life transitions adults face. Retirement is not simply the end of work. It is a reorganization of identity, time, social connection, purpose, and daily structure that can be both liberating and destabilizing. For some it brings relief and freedom; for others, lost identity, reduced purpose, and vulnerability to depression and anxiety. The psychological side is consistently named as harder than the financial one, yet it gets far less preparation.

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

- A fit for anyone wanting peer support through the psychological side.
- Works best alongside financial planning, not as a substitute for it.
- Significant depression or anxiety may need individual care as well.

What it's for

People approaching, in early adjustment, or long retired but still struggling.

For identity and role change, meaning and purpose, and social connection.

Some focus on pre-retirement planning, others on ongoing community.

WHAT TO EXPECT

1 Pre-retirement groups: 4 to 8 weekly sessions, 90 minutes to 2 hours.

2 Post-retirement peer groups: weekly or monthly, 60 to 90 minutes, open.

3 AARP and similar groups offer workshops and resources in person and online.

Group-based support helps with the psychological side of retirement.

- A systematic review found psychosocial programs improved **wellbeing, life satisfaction, and mental health** in the transition, with group-based programs especially valuable.¹
- A meta-analysis of 22 studies found **involuntary retirement, lost social connection, and poor health** raise depression risk afterward.²

MAKING THE MOST OF IT

New structure, new community. A group replaces some of what work provided.

Honesty helps. Peers admit what was harder than they expected.

A reason to show up. Scheduled time steadies the disorienting open days.

QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE YOU JOIN

- 1** Is it pre-retirement planning or post-retirement adjustment support?
- 2** Is it a structured curriculum or open peer discussion?
- 3** Does it address identity and purpose, not just finances?

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

Retirement Transition Groups · references keyed to the numbers on page 1.

- 1 Cassanet, A., McKenzie, W. A., & McLean, L. A. Psychosocial interventions to support retirement well-being and adjustment: A systematic review. *Educational and Developmental Psychologist* (2023), 40(2), 214–231.
- 2 Odone, A., Gianfredi, V., Vigezzi, G. P., et al. Does retirement trigger depressive symptoms? A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Epidemiology and Psychiatric Sciences* (2021), 30, Article e6.

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