



WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT

Seeking Safety groups

Seeking Safety is a structured, present-focused group program developed by Lisa Najavits for people with co-occurring PTSD and substance use. The core idea: before processing trauma, a person needs to be safe. It teaches 25 standalone coping-skill sessions and never asks you to tell your trauma story.

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

- A fit if you have unsafe patterns and need present-focused stabilization first.
- Not a trauma processing program. It won't ask you to revisit traumatic memories.
- Not a standalone treatment for severe active substance use needing detox. In crisis? Call or text 988.

What it's used for

People with co-occurring PTSD and substance use disorder.

Trauma histories with unsafe patterns: relationships, self-harm, risky behavior.

A trauma-informed foundation for people not yet ready for trauma processing.

WHAT TO EXPECT

1 Sessions usually run 60 to 90 minutes, covering one topic from the curriculum.

2 Structured and predictable on purpose. Predictability is grounding after trauma.

3 No requirement to share or disclose specific traumatic events.

Seeking Safety is one of the most widely implemented trauma-informed group programs.

- The original outcome study found improvements in **PTSD symptoms and substance use** in women with co-occurring disorders.¹
- A 2023 meta-analysis found significant reductions in both PTSD and substance use versus control.²
- Evidence is strongest versus no or minimal treatment; comparisons to other active treatments are mixed.

MAKING THE MOST OF IT

You set the pace. No requirement to share trauma details.

Use the coping skills. Practice them between sessions.

Come as you are. Any stage of recovery is welcome.

QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE YOU JOIN

- 1** Who facilitates, and what is their training?
- 2** Does it run all 25 topics, a subset, or as a rolling open group?
- 3** Can I join midway, and what if I miss a session?
- 4** What does it cost? Is there a free or sliding scale option?

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

Seeking Safety groups · references keyed to the numbers on page 1.

- 1 Najavits, L. M., et al. "Seeking Safety": outcome of a new cognitive-behavioral psychotherapy for women with PTSD and substance dependence. *Journal of Traumatic Stress* (1998).
- 2 Sherman, A. D. F., et al. Seeking Safety intervention for comorbid post-traumatic stress and substance use disorder: a meta-analysis. *Brain and Behavior* (2023).

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