



WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT

Trauma Survivor Support Groups

These groups come in two distinct forms. Peer-led support groups offer community and shared experience among people who have lived through trauma, without a clinical curriculum. Clinician-led therapy groups apply structured, evidence-based PTSD treatments in a group format, including Cognitive Processing Therapy, Prolonged Exposure, and Seeking Safety. Trauma is not one experience: groups may serve survivors of abuse, assault, disaster, accidents, combat, displacement, or medical trauma. Some are trauma-specific; others welcome anyone with trauma-related distress. Sexual assault and domestic violence groups are listed separately.

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

- A fit for those ready for community, or ready to engage in structured trauma work.
- Acute crisis or early stabilization may need individual support before group treatment.
- Active suicidal thoughts need crisis support first. Call or text 988.

What it's for

Anyone with a trauma history who wants connection with others who understand.

Therapy groups suit active PTSD: intrusive memories, avoidance, hyperarousal.

Both formats work across the lifespan and across trauma types.

WHAT TO EXPECT

1 Peer groups meet weekly or biweekly for 60 to 90 minutes, open discussion.

2 You're never required to share specific trauma details. Pacing is respected.

3 Therapy groups like Group CPT run 12 sessions, a closed cohort with homework.

Group treatment for PTSD has a well-established evidence base.

- A meta-analysis of 22 randomized trials found group psychotherapy produced **large reductions in PTSD symptoms** across trauma types and modalities.¹
- The broader peer support literature shows **meaningful gains in connection, hope, and self-management** for mental health conditions.²

MAKING THE MOST OF IT

Match the format to where you are. Peer community and structured therapy serve different needs.

Details stay yours. You never have to narrate what happened to take part.

Watching others helps. Seeing someone survive the work makes it feel survivable for you.

QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE YOU JOIN

- 1** Is this peer support or a clinician-led, evidence-based therapy group?
- 2** Will I be expected to describe specific traumatic events?
- 3** Is it open and ongoing, or a closed cohort with set sessions and homework?

Ready to find a group?

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

Free to browse · No account needed · thegroupguide.com



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

Trauma Survivor Support Groups · references keyed to the numbers on page 1.

- 1 Schwartze, D., Barkowski, S., Strauss, B., Knaevelsrud, C., & Rosendahl, J. Efficacy of group psychotherapy for posttraumatic stress disorder: systematic review and meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials. *Psychotherapy Research* (2019), 29(4), 415–431.
- 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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