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helping support groups & individuals



How to Find and Keep Members

There are three things you should think about to make sure you have enough members in your group.

1. How to find members
2. How to make members feel welcome
3. How to keep members

If you can find, welcome and keep members, it will help your group be active, stay vibrant and meet the needs of your members.

Finding New Members

Where will you find people who are interested in your group?

Think of places where people might find out about your group.

A new member could see a flyer at a hospital, library, specialist, alternative therapy clinic or a community centre.

They could read about your group in another group's information email.

Or a local newspaper or radio station could run a story about your group. Get to know your local media contacts and find out which ones are



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interested in health, disability, or community activities.

You might also have a 'human interest' story that would be of interest to a newspaper or radio station.

Welcoming new members

It is hard to walk into a room on your own for the first time if you don't know anyone else there.

Make sure it is easy for new members to come along. Be warm and friendly when they get there.

Here are some tips to welcome new members.

- Make sure your meetings are welcoming. If you meet in a place with a lot of rooms, make sure there is a sign to show people where you meet (and make sure you have given the new member clear directions beforehand)
- Some members might need help finding the meeting room (for example, people with a vision impairment or another type of disability). If they do, ask if they would like another member to meet them outside and welcome them in.
- Think about having a small booklet or handout to welcome new members. You should also make sure that it is in different formats (on email or on a thumb drive). Give them information about what to expect at a group meeting, the group's rules and what you do.



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- Ask the members if they'd like to try coming along to see if they like the group first, with no pressure to join.
- Make sure all of your members are friendly towards the new person.
- Think about having a buddy system where one person helps the new person feel welcome, shows them where things are, tells them about the group and introduces them to other members.
- Make sure your seats are set up so it is easy for people to join in – a circle is good.
- If the group goes to a social activity after the meeting make sure the new members are invited
- Think about ringing the person after the meeting and finding out what they thought about the meeting. You can use that information to find out if you need to change anything.

Keeping members

- Make sure the group is meeting the needs of the members. Ask them what they think.
- Your group should be friendly and accepting and safe. Your members should feel like they are being supported.



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- Offer ways to relax, arrange for treats like going on group outings, having interesting speakers and thinking about ways to include family members.
- Make sure the group shares the work. That means there is less work for one or two people, more ideas, more skills and a better team.
- Remember that not everyone will be active in the group, because everyone has different lives. Be flexible and understanding.

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New and Existing Support Group Development, Telephone Information Line,
Information Forums, Facilities and Equipment Hire

On-line Directory of Support Groups and Community Organisations, E-News

People With disabilities WA:

1/37 Hampden Road, Nedlands WA 6009

Telephone (08) 9485 8900 Rural Freecall 1800 193 331

Email: info@pwdwa.org Web: www.pwdwa.org