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How to Be an Effective Contact Person

When people contact someone about joining your group, the way they see your group is influenced by the conversation they have with that person.

That person – the ‘contact person’ – may also be someone who often talks to members, the media and the community.

Groups need to make sure that the contact person isn’t overwhelmed by this role (that they don’t have too much to do).

People who are looking for information about the group may keep the contact person on the phone for a long time.

If the contact person has a lot of calls like this over many months, it can drain their energy.



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Some ideas to stop this happening are –

- To limit the time and length of phone calls, give a little information about the group and encourage the person to attend the group to find out more
- Use an answering machine or voicemail so that you can find out who is ringing, and ring back later when you have more time and energy
- Some groups have a rule that phone calls are only to be five minutes long and they make that rule clear to their members
- If the calls happen too often, then other members can help take calls, depending on what information is needed
- It may be helpful to have more than one contact person who take turns with the others as the person who is listed as 'contact' on publicity material and media releases
- Tell people the best time of day to call the contact person

The contact person has an important job – to educate people who might want to join the group about what the group does and doesn't do for members.

The contact might explain that the group offers emotional support, shares experiences and information, but doesn't fix problems for them or offer advocacy.

Being a contact person can be very rewarding.



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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