



# Setting up a Mental Health Support Group

## Colleague Toolkit

Practical help from the Co-op



Here at the Co-op we recognise that we all have a role to play in supporting each other's wellbeing.

This toolkit provides you with all the things you need to help you set-up a mental health support group where you work.





---

## Step One

### Getting started

- Think about who will be responsible for running the group.
- It works best if you have experiences of your own that you're prepared to share.
- People will want to see familiar faces at meetings - it is best if there are at least 2 of you so that you can cover if someone is on holiday.

---

## Step Two

### What will your rules be?

- You want to make sure that anyone who comes knows what to expect.
- Here's an example of a set of rules - try to keep them fairly brief but specific to your group.

[Click Here](#)



---

## Step Three

### Who can come along?

- Think about your reach. It works best if you have enough attendees to keep the conversation flowing.
- If you're in a Food Store or a Funeral Home then think about joining together with other local Co-op sites to have a shared group.
- Think about how many you'd like to attend as a maximum, to make sure the group works well.

---

## Step Four

### When and where will you meet?

- You'll need to do this in your own time, so think about what will work best.
- It works best if you meet regularly at the same time and place.
- Find a space that people will feel safe in and which is easily accessible.
- Speak to your manager if you need help finding a space.
- Remember the group doesn't have to meet at work. You could use a local coffee shop or other community facilities.



---

## Step Five

Where and how will you let people know about your group?

- Ask the managers on site to help if you're not sure.
- Posters work really well.

[Click Here for examples](#)

- Don't forget word of mouth and direct invitations to those who might be interested can be just as effective.

---

## Step Six

What do you need to think about before your first meeting?

- How will you open the meeting - introductions or ice breakers?
- Make sure you cover the rules and have copies available for people to read.
- Make sure you have time to debrief after the meeting.
- Try to end each meeting on a positive (e.g. something funny, uplifting or inspirational).



---

## Step Seven

How will you tackle problems or concerns?

- Safeguarding - if someone discloses information that makes you believe that there may be a risk of harm, then you'll need to get further help.

[Click Here](#)

- Have the signposting list available and think about whether you wish to add any local services to this list.

[Click Here](#)

---

## Step Eight

Where can you get further support?

- There are a number of support services available to all colleagues.

[Click Here for a list](#)

- You can add local services, charities or other organisations to this list to make it bespoke for your group.
- Let [HR\\_Wellbeing@coop.co.uk](mailto:HR_Wellbeing@coop.co.uk) know that you've set-up your group so that we know you're running and can share details with other colleagues if appropriate.

# Our Rules

Our group is independently organised by colleagues on a voluntary basis, as a space where anyone is free to attend to share experiences and support for other colleagues in similar situations living with, or caring for someone with, a mental health condition.

- **We meet once a fortnight on Wednesdays** (12pm-1pm).
- **You don't need to attend every session** if you feel like it. Simply drop in whenever you feel you would benefit from joining us.
- **You don't have to talk about yourself** if you aren't feeling up to sharing; sometimes it just helps to listen and hear similar experiences.
- **Please be respectful to others.** It's only natural to want to give advice to others - everybody's experiences and circumstances will be unique to themselves, so be mindful that what works for you may not work for others and vice versa.
- **Everything shared in the room will remain confidential.** If you are really struggling we will encourage you to seek further help. We will only raise concerns outside the group if there is disclosure or evidence of harm to you or any one else.

# Further support

**LifeWorks:** Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) for all co-op colleagues and their families to help you manage personal and work issues.

Experienced advisors are available 24/7 at: **0800 069 8854** or access the app at [www.coop.co.uk/lifeworks](http://www.coop.co.uk/lifeworks)

---

**Samaritans:** The Samaritans exists to provide confidential support to any person in emotional distress.

Call **0845 790 9090** - open 24/7  
Textphone: **08457 909192**  
[www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)

---

**Mind:** Information on a range of topics relating to mental health; where to get help; medication, alternative treatments, and support in your local area.

Lines are open 9am-6pm Mon-Fri. Tel **0300 123 3393** or email: [info@mind.org.uk](mailto:info@mind.org.uk)

Mind also offer a Legal advice line for advice on mental health law and discrimination on **0300 466 6463**

---

## Remploy

This free and confidential service, delivered funded by the Department for Work and Pensions is available to any employees with depression, anxiety, stress or other mental health issues affecting their work.

Tel: **0300 456 8114**  
[www.remploy.co.uk/mentalhealth](http://www.remploy.co.uk/mentalhealth)

**Depression Alliance** provides information and support to people with depression and their carers. They also list details of local self-help groups:

Tel: **0845 1232320**  
[www.depressionalliance.org](http://www.depressionalliance.org)

---

**Self Help** is a charity based in Greater Manchester that offers a wide range of support and services for people living with mental health problems.

Find local services near you at [www.selfhelpservices.org.uk](http://www.selfhelpservices.org.uk)  
Overnight crisis line (8pm-6am) Tel: **0300 003 7029**

---

**Co-op Bullying & Harassment Helpline** is available to all Co-op colleagues who need support as a result of bullying or harassment in the workplace and who may not feel able to seek help from a manager. The line is confidential and available on **0844 728 0165**

# Safeguarding

Our group has been set-up to give colleagues a safe space to share their mental health experiences within one another. Everything shared will usually be treated confidentially but it's important that you know when we will disclose what you share outside of the group.

If there is an **immediate risk** of you harming yourself, harming or being harmed by someone else then we will contact the emergency services (999) for support.

If there is a **potential risk** of you harming yourself, harming or being harmed by someone else then we will encourage you to seek support from LifeWorks. We may also discuss your case with LifeWorks, NHS 111 or colleagues in HR to make sure that we can provide you with details of the most appropriate support available for you.

## **Further Information**

LifeWorks are available 24/7 if you want to confidentially discuss a scenario where you are unsure what to do. They also have a wide range of material available on the website and app to download.



# MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT GROUP

Need someone to talk to?  
Feel like no one understands?  
Recently diagnosed?  
Feel like you're the only one?

#### **Run by Colleagues, for Colleagues**

This is a private, safe and confidential space for us to talk, offer advice, and spend some time with people with similar experiences. Come along and don't worry, you won't have to do or say anything you don't want to, you're free to just sit and listen.

The group is open to anyone who is affected by mental health issues; people dealing with illnesses now, people who have been ill in the past and friends and families of someone with a mental health illness.

The group is a private colleague initiative, no information will be shared with HR or The Co-op.

NEXT MEETING

LOCATION

TIME



# MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT GROUP

Need someone to talk to?  
Feel like no one understands?  
Recently diagnosed?  
Feel like you're the only one?

#### **Run by Colleagues, for Colleagues**

This is a private, safe and confidential space for us to talk, offer advice, and spend some time with people with similar experiences. Come along and don't worry, you won't have to do or say anything you don't want to, you're free to just sit and listen.

The group is open to anyone who is affected by mental health issues; people dealing with illnesses now, people who have been ill in the past and friends and families of someone with a mentalhealth illness.

The group is a private colleague initiative, no information will be shared with HR or The Co-op.

NEXT MEETING

LOCATION

TIME

A blurred, high-angle photograph of a large crowd of people walking in various directions, creating a sense of movement and anonymity. The background is white, and the people are in various colors, mostly muted tones. A large orange circle is superimposed over the center of the image, containing the text.

# MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT GROUP

Need someone to talk to?  
Feel like no one understands?  
Recently diagnosed?  
Feel like you're the only one?

#### **Run by Colleagues, for Colleagues**

This is a private, safe and confidential space for us to talk, offer advice, and spend some time with people with similar experiences. Come along and don't worry, you won't have to do or say anything you don't want to, you're free to just sit and listen.

The group is open to anyone who is affected by mental health issues; people dealing with illnesses now, people who have been ill in the past and friends and families of someone with a mentalhealth illness.

The group is a private colleague initiative, no information will be shared with HR or The Co-op.

**NEXT MEETING**

**LOCATION**

**TIME**