

COMFORT AGREEMENT – Peer Support Groups (MDO)

Jan 2026; update March 12, 2026 by Mylène P.

OBJECTIVE AND VALUES:

- Create a supportive and inclusive environment. This means:
 - Making sure everyone feels welcomed.
 - Providing a safe space for sharing.
 - Respecting people's ability to make their own decisions.
 - Accepting people as they are, without trying to change them.

Feel free to leave at any time. Signal the facilitator / use the "chat box" if you are leaving early and specify if you need additional support

A. HOW THE SESSION RUNS

1. CHECK-IN:

- Introduce yourself:
 - i. Name required,
 - ii. Preferred pronouns, mental health challenges and answer to the icebreaking question (optional).
- Use "Raise Hand" in person or reaction to speak on-line (phone: *9 to raise/lower hand, *6 to mute/unmute).

2. SHARE TIME (Optional)

- **Sharing:**
 - i. People can share their mental health challenges, experiences, thoughts, and feelings.
 - ii. Maximum 5 minutes per person.
 - iii. The facilitator may signal when time is up.
- **Sensitive topics:**
 - i. Please announce the specific topic before the discussion begins, offering a moment for people to take a break or leave the discussion if needed.

Example: *"I will be discussing topics of a sensitive nature including "sexual assault, child abuse, self-harm, suicide, consuming alcohol/ drugs" that may be triggering for some individuals."*

- ii. Check that people are ok to continue the conversation.

- **Receive Supportive Feedback** (Optional)

3. GIVING SUPPORTIVE FEEDBACK:

- Be supportive, non-judgmental, and avoid giving advice or trying to "fix" others.

- Share from your own personal experiences.
 - i. “In a similar situation, “this and this” worked for me.”
 - 4. **TOPICS:**
 - If time allows, the facilitators will suggest a group topic to discuss.
 - 5. **CLOSING:**
 - Group Wellness Check-Out and
 - MDO announcements.
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C. SAFETY GUIDELINES

- **Confidentiality and Privacy:**
 - Please do not share participants' personal information outside of this session.
 - **Virtual groups:**
 - Ensure privacy in your environment.
 - No recording (video, audio, screenshots).
- **Self-Care:**
 - Please have a self-care plan in place for managing difficult situations and emotions.
- **MDO Code of Conduct:**
 - Please respect the *MDO Code of Conduct*, which was included in the email invitation to this meeting.
- **Reach out for help:**
 - MDO provides peer support groups and recovery programs, but does not offer counseling or crisis services.
 - **Emergency:** Call 9-1-1 or visit the nearest hospital.
 - **Non-emergency crisis resources:**
 - Visit www.mooddisordersottawa.ca/resources.
 - **Distress Lines:**
 - **Distress Centre of Ottawa:** 613-238-3311 (Text: 343-306-5550, Chat: www.dcottawa.on.ca, 10 AM–11 PM daily).
 - **Mental Health Crisis Line:** 613-722-6914 (Ottawa) / 1-866-996-0991 (Outside Ottawa).
 - **Suicide Hotline:** 9-8-8.

Check the MDO website for more information