

## **COMFORT AGREEMENT – Formal Peer Support Groups**

### **INTRODUCTIONS:**

- Warm welcome and introduction from facilitator(s)
- For group safety, **EVERY** participant will be asked to check in and provide:
  - 1) Name (with pronouns is optional)
  - 2) Mental Health Diagnosis / Challenge (optional)
  - 3) Answer to ice breaker question (optional however it aids comfort & engagement)(In person this is done by following a clockwise order in the room starting with the facilitator & online by using the chronological participants list found in the chat box)

### **SHARE TIME:**

- The "floor" is then open for "share time". Depending upon the size of the group, each person is given approx. 5 mins to share their mental health challenge(s)
  - Sharing is optional however participation is encouraged
  - Only share what you are comfortable with
  - Be mindful of horror stories or graphic details & use a trigger warning before describing potentially distressing topics so others can opt out for self-care
  - If a share is too long, a facilitator will politely signal that for now, it's time to move on
  - Actively listen to others, don't interrupt and accept people as they are
  - The facilitator will then ask if supportive person focused feedback is welcomed (approx. 5 min) For ex: "I haven't been able to sleep all week due to anxiety"  
Feedback: empathize with how difficult/disruptive this is; something helpful from personal experience is keeping a regular routine / listen to soothing music
- If you can relate to a share, please connect & support, nobody wants to feel alone
- Avoid judgment, advice, blame-shifting and impulses to "fix" others or situations
  - To keep order, please wait for a facilitator to address you before speaking
  - Please give those speaking 100% undivided attention
  - If time allows, the facilitator will suggest a group topic of interest to discuss
  - In wrapping up a session, the facilitator will prompt a group wellness check out before leaving and provide any MDO announcements
  - Please respect diversity and inclusivity
  - Please uphold confidentiality during and after the group meeting
  - In general, all behaviour should follow the **MDO Code of Conduct**

### **GUIDELINES FOR MDO VIRTUAL PEER SUPPORT GROUPS**

- No Recording - Video, Audio or Screen Shots
- Chat Box is an option to communicate with the facilitator for support
- Use the Raise Hand Reaction to speak: this creates an ordered list
- Phone options: to Mute/Unmute is \*6. Raise/lower hand is \*8.
- If leaving early, please post reason in chat to facilitator in case follow up is needed

### **\*SELF CARE\***

Do what is necessary to feel comfortable during the session

Have a plan in place if self care is needed

For additional support: Visit [www.mooodisordersottawa.ca/resources](http://www.mooodisordersottawa.ca/resources) or

Call the Distress Center: In Ottawa 613-238-3311 Outside of Ottawa 1-866-676-1080

\* All MDO programs, groups & activities incorporate **MDO Mutual Support Group Guidelines**