



Finding Assistance, Delivering Outreach

Project Reference number: 2024-1-FR01-KA220-ADU-000255033



| Module 5 |

Peer-to-Peer Support Methodology

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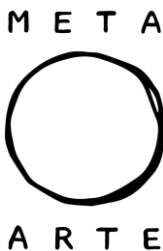
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Description of the module

*Unto a broken heart
No other one may go
Without the high prerogative
Itself hath suffered too.*

Emily Dickinson

This module presents the peer support methodology used in self-help groups, outlining their origins, structure, and benefits for both individuals and communities.

At the heart of peer support lies the idea that true understanding and connection emerge from shared experience. This principle shapes the way peer support groups function: as spaces of mutual recognition, healing, and empowerment among equals.

What will I Learn ?

By the end of this module, you will be able to:

1. Understand the concept and origins of self-help groups.
2. Identify the different types and functions of peer support groups.
3. Recognize the psychological and social benefits of peer support.
4. Apply the core principles of empathy, non-judgment, and active listening.
5. Organize and structure a peer support group.
6. Ensure privacy and confidentiality within group dynamics.
7. Define the facilitator's role and responsibilities.
8. Reflect on the transformative power of shared lived experiences.



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1. Understanding Self-Help Groups: Definition, Principles, and Typologies

1.1. Definition

Lambert Maguire, a psychologist expert in network work, defines self-help groups as "small groups of people who voluntarily come together for mutual support and independently decide who will be members of the group and what goals it will pursue" ⁽¹⁾

Self-help groups are based on the concept of peer support, they provide a space for people facing common struggles, such as grief, addiction, mental illness, or trauma, to find mutual understanding and healing. They offer an environment where individuals feel understood without fear of judgment. Within these groups, people find validation and emotional safety, as members share their struggles with others who have lived through similar sufferings. Peer groups create a safe and supportive community where experiences are acknowledged and respected.

Beyond validation, these groups foster mutual healing. Sharing one's story and listening to others becomes therapeutic, not only for the speaker but also for those who recognize their own pain in the experiences of others. Many who suffer from grief, addiction, or trauma often feel isolated from the outside world, and peer support provides a sense of belonging that helps break down that isolation.

1.2. Origins, Structure and Types

Self-help groups are voluntary, peer-based networks where individuals facing similar life challenges—such as addiction, trauma, chronic illness, or mental health issues—come together to offer one another emotional, social, and practical support. Unlike traditional therapy, these groups are rooted in mutual understanding and shared lived experience rather than professional authority. This dynamic fosters a profound sense of trust, belonging, and emotional safety, making participants feel genuinely seen and heard ⁽²⁾.



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Some of the common characteristics of self-help groups include:

- They are made up of peers - people who are all directly affected by a particular issue, illness, or circumstance
- They usually have a professional or volunteer discussion leader or facilitator
- They tend to be fairly small in size, to better allow everyone a chance to talk
- Attendance is voluntary

Over the years, various typologies have been proposed to categorize self-help groups based on their core objectives. One widely recognized framework, developed by Levy⁽³⁾, outlines four main types:

- Behaviour control groups support individuals seeking to change harmful habits, such as substance abuse, smoking, or overeating.
- Stress support groups offer emotional guidance to those coping with major life challenges, like bereavement or caregiving.
- Social action groups empower members who face discrimination or marginalization, fostering awareness and advocacy.
- Personal growth groups focus on emotional development, interpersonal relationships, and enhancing overall life satisfaction.



Types of Self-Help Groups



At the heart of all these models is the principle of empowerment. Participation in self-help groups encourages agency and self-efficacy, reinforcing the belief that individuals are capable of managing their own recovery processes ⁽⁴⁾. By creating safe spaces for honest dialogue, peer support also helps counteract stigma and encourages openness around often-taboo issues.

Importantly, the benefits extend beyond personal healing. Self-help groups strengthen the fabric of communities by building resilient social networks and promoting a culture of shared responsibility. Whether addressing mental health, substance use, or chronic illness, peer support remains a vital, human-centered resource for long-term recovery and collective well-being⁽⁵⁾ (Davidson et al., 2006; Mead et al., 2001).



2. Benefits of peer support for individuals and communities

Peer support delivered through self-help groups brings transformative benefits to both individuals and the wider community. For individuals, these groups provide a refuge from isolation—particularly for those living with mental illness, chronic health conditions, or addiction. Through the shared language of lived experience, participants find not only validation, but also a sense of solidarity that reinforces their emotional resilience.

One of the most significant personal benefits of peer support is increased self-efficacy and empowerment. By witnessing others overcome similar struggles, individuals gain hope and confidence in their own ability to recover. Studies have shown that peer support interventions can lead to improved self-management skills, higher treatment adherence, and reduced stress levels^[6].

At a community level, peer support strengthens social cohesion by fostering networks of mutual aid and solidarity. Communities that embrace peer-led initiatives often experience improved public health outcomes, reduced stigma surrounding mental health issues, and lower healthcare costs due to decreased hospitalizations^[7]. Additionally, peer support programs create opportunities for leadership and advocacy, empowering individuals to become active contributors to their communities.

According to a study conducted in 1979 by M.A. Lieberman^[8], self-help groups facilitate behavioural change through three key dynamics:

1. Sense of belonging – Being part of a community of similar individuals fosters cohesion, though it may also encourage conformity.
2. Emotional sharing – Described as a cathartic experience, it allows members to express and process their emotions.
3. Social comparison – Group members act as behavioural models, promoting change through observation and interaction.

Lieberman argued that these dynamics create bonds that support desired transformations in participants.

Additionally, the report published by the World Health Organization, [Quality Rights guidance module](#), highlights other benefits arising from dialogue among people with lived experience. Strengthening social networks allows



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individuals to receive solutions to challenges, as well as engage in a valuable exchange of information about available resources and existing practical support services.

Summary of Key Benefits of Peer Support



2.1. Application of self-help groups in different contexts

Peer support has been successfully implemented in a variety of contexts, including healthcare, social services, education, and workplace environments. Each setting leverages the power of shared experiences to enhance well-being and promote resilience.

In healthcare, peer support is widely used for mental health recovery, chronic disease management, and addiction treatment. Peer support specialists, who



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have lived experience with mental illness or substance use disorders, play a crucial role in helping others navigate the healthcare system and adhere to treatment plans. Research has shown that peer support can reduce hospital readmissions and improve overall health outcomes ⁽⁹⁾.

Social services also benefit from peer support programs, particularly in marginalized communities. Homeless shelters, refugee support groups, and organizations for survivors of domestic violence often incorporate peer-led initiatives to provide emotional and practical support. By fostering trust and relatability, these programs help individuals regain stability and reintegrate into society ⁽¹⁰⁾.

In education, peer support programs are commonly found in schools and universities, where they help students cope with academic stress, mental health issues, and social challenges. Peer mentoring programs, for instance, provide guidance and support to students navigating new environments, promoting both academic success and emotional well-being ⁽¹¹⁾.

Workplace peer support programs have also gained traction, particularly in high-stress professions such as healthcare, emergency response, and military services. Employee peer support networks help reduce burnout, improve job satisfaction, and create a culture of mutual care and resilience.

Overall, peer support is a versatile and effective approach that enhances well-being across different sectors. Its ability to foster connection, empowerment, and resilience makes it an invaluable tool in various professional and personal settings.

3. Structure of the groups and membership

The structure of self-help groups can vary significantly. Formal groups typically have clearly defined roles and responsibilities, such as a designated facilitator for each meeting, and a more rigid structure for activities. In contrast, informal groups are more flexible, allowing members to take on dynamic roles and offering more freedom in planning and executing activities. Additionally, self-help groups may have either open or closed membership, each offering its own set of advantages.



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With open membership, anyone who wishes to participate is welcome to join, and members can attend meetings as needed, providing flexibility and the ability to seek support on short notice. This type of membership allows individuals to come and go based on their personal needs.

In contrast, closed membership means that only individuals accepted into the group can attend. Potential members typically meet with current members before joining to assess compatibility with the group's purpose, needs, and expectations. This setup fosters deeper, more trusting relationships over time, creating a secure environment where members feel comfortable sharing confidential experiences. For some, knowing that the group consists of the same members may be essential to feeling safe enough to open up. Additionally, in a closed group, it's important for members to feel that their presence and contributions are meaningful to others, which can play a crucial role in their recovery. For some, a closed group might be the only space where they feel comfortable sharing their personal stories.

Another option is to start with an open membership and later transition to a closed membership once the group members are familiar with each other and decide they prefer not to include new members.

Regardless of the membership type, both forms can help individuals feel a sense of purpose and connection. Clear communication about the type of membership from the outset is important.

People join peer support groups for various reasons. Some may be at a crisis point in their life, feeling unable to cope alone, while others may have heard about the group from others. If the decision is made to meet new members in advance to understand their needs and expectations, this can be done by the facilitator or by someone within the group who is comfortable providing information about the group's purpose and structure. New members should be given contact details for further questions and information about meetings. It's essential to help new members determine if the group is a good fit for them and to address any specific needs (such as physical access or language requirements) before they join.



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Things to Know Before Joining the Group



Who to contact to join the group.



Meeting times, duration, location, and topics.



The group's values and principles,
especially regarding confidentiality.



Any established ground rules.



A brief overview of the meeting process.



An introduction to the concept of peer support
and how it can benefit them.



— Understanding these points will help new members feel informed and welcomed. —



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3.1. Rules and confidentiality

Each self-help group should establish its own set of ground rules, but some essential principles for consideration include the following:

1. **Maintaining Confidentiality:** Group members must not disclose any information shared by others outside the group. This is critical to maintaining trust within the group. Additionally, members should refrain from expressing judgment or being critical of one another.
2. **Respecting the Right to Share (or Not):** While members should be encouraged to speak during meetings, the group should respect their choice to remain silent when they prefer. Members should never feel pressured to share personal details to participate in the group.
3. **Avoiding Intrusiveness:** It is important to respect the boundaries of others. Some members may prefer to remain distant, while others may be comfortable with closer connections. Both options should be accepted without question.
4. **Valuing Unique Experiences:** Each person's feelings and experiences are unique. Group members should respect and accept both the commonalities and the differences within the group, without discrimination.
5. **Allowing Everyone to Speak:** Every member has the right to express themselves without interruption. However, those in crisis may be given extra time to speak through their issues if needed.
6. **Sharing Responsibilities:** Members should take turns in fulfilling various roles within the group, such as being the coffee-maker or facilitator. This helps create a sense of collective responsibility.

3.2. Privacy

Respecting privacy is fundamental in peer support groups. Since individuals often share personal stories, they may only do so after building trust with other members. It is crucial to respect this trust and keep all shared information, including participants' involvement in the group, confidential unless specified otherwise.



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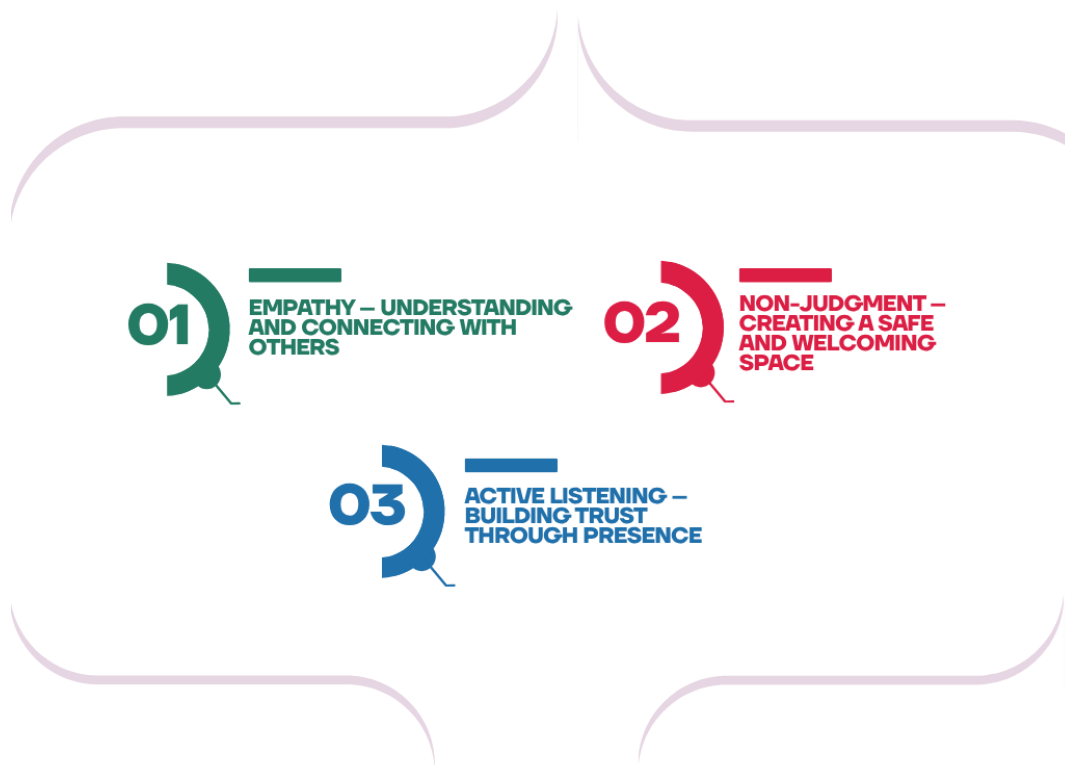
If any group member wants to gather personal information from another member, they must first seek consent, explaining the reason for requesting the information and how it will be used.

Furthermore, contact information and other personal details of group members should be stored securely (e.g., in a locked drawer or on a password-protected computer file) to prevent unauthorized access.

There may be exceptions to confidentiality in certain situations, such as cases of child abuse or when a group member is a danger to others. How to handle these situations will depend on the laws of the country in which the group operates.

3.3. Fundamental Principles of the Method

Peer support is based on three essential and interrelated principles. These elements are key to creating a safe, empathetic, and effective support environment:



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Empathy – Understanding and Connecting with Others

Empathy goes beyond recognizing emotions; it means truly understanding another person's experience from their perspective. In peer support, empathy builds trust and emotional safety, helping individuals feel validated and understood. This deep connection fosters healing, self-esteem, and personal growth.

Non-Judgment – Creating a Safe and Welcoming Space

A non-judgmental attitude is critical in peer support. Many participants have experienced stigma or internalized self-doubt. By ensuring an atmosphere free of criticism, support groups become safe spaces where people can speak openly. This acceptance encourages recovery and reinforces emotional resilience.

Active Listening – Building Trust Through Presence

Active listening involves being fully present, showing genuine interest, and responding with care. Techniques such as eye contact, paraphrasing, and open-ended questions help create meaningful dialogue. This approach strengthens group cohesion and improves the quality of support.

Together, **empathy**, **non-judgment**, and **active listening** form the foundation of effective peer support. They create environments where healing is possible, not through expertise, but through shared humanity and respectful connection.

4. From theory to practice: an expert's perspective (by Cinzia Frontoni, psychologist)

The following sections have been authored by Cinzia Frontoni, an expert psychologist and psychotherapist currently practicing in San Benedetto del Tronto. She offers her direct testimony on how the model works, sharing her personal experiences and valuable suggestions.

For more information about Cinzia Frontoni, you can visit [her website](#) or find her on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).



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4.1. Self-Help as a Life Philosophy

Self-Help –also known as mutual aid–is above all a philosophy of life built on the principle that “unity is strength.” Sharing one’s struggles with people who have experienced—or are experiencing—the same issues can significantly enhance one’s ability to cope. Today, self-help practices are widespread and play an increasingly central role within social and healthcare systems.

In my training and professional journey, I was fortunate to participate in self-help groups as a facilitator. While completing my specialization in systemic-relational psychotherapy, I joined not as a psychologist, but as a servant-teacher, the term used in Clubs of Alcoholics in Treatment (CATs) for facilitators. Others like me, from diverse professional and personal backgrounds, filled this role in meetings held on various days of the week. Some had first-hand experience of alcohol dependency and sought to transform personal suffering into a community resource.

This exemplifies the essence of self-help groups: certain problems, often approached solely through professionals and institutions, can be meaningfully addressed from within—drawing on the motivation and lived experience of those directly involved

4.2. Who are the facilitators and what do they do?

There is a range of terms—with varying meanings and nuances—that are used to define the role of the facilitator: animator, group leader, guide, and so on. However, the term facilitator is likely the most appropriate, as it denotes the specific function of making oneself available to the group.

The facilitator contributes to the effective functioning of the group, fosters relationships among its members, and supports the overall growth of the group. As previously mentioned, this role is often assumed by individuals who have personally experienced the issue the group is focused on.

Anyone who has personally lived through a particular issue can transform that experience into a resource—they can shift from the role of a victim to a more active role, becoming a bearer of resources, skills, and support. This greatly



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facilitates empathy among group members, but above all, it promotes the idea of equality among them.

In self-help groups, there is no hierarchy, no individual who holds a scientific or absolute truth. What exists are stories—each with its own dignity, its own path, its own implications and consequences, and its own way of being faced.

The group works to address the common issue shared by its members, drawing on the individual competence each person has developed through their own life story and direct experience. The facilitator is there simply to facilitate communication among members, as the very word itself suggests.

The true protagonists of a self-help group are the members themselves: each one brings their own skills, their capacity to listen, and their personal contribution.

4.3. Core Competencies of a Facilitator

In order to operate effectively as a facilitator and truly be of help to participants, an individual must possess—and continue to develop through direct practice—some fundamental qualifications. The desired qualities include:

- A sincere and deep interest in the specific form of distress or difficulty for which the group was created
- The ability to listen attentively and to encourage active listening among group members
- The capacity for empathy and the ability to foster empathetic relationships
- A non-judgmental attitude and the ability to promote non-judgmental behaviours within the group
- The ability to speak about one's own personal experiences
- Humility
- Tenacity in navigating sensitive or delicate phases within the group dynamic.



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The facilitator must also have a solid understanding of the issue at the heart of the problem for which people have chosen to turn to a self-help group). As we will later see, having lived through the issue personally and/or having undergone thorough training are certainly central elements for fulfilling the role of facilitator.

In cases where the facilitator has personally experienced the issue in question, it is important that they assume this role only if they have reached a certain level of adaptation or stability in relation to that issue.

The facilitator brings their subjectivity into play. Like all other members, they are an integral part of the change process and engage in their own journey of self-growth and self-empowerment. This holds true even when the facilitator is someone who has *not* personally experienced the problem the group focuses on. Participation in self-help groups in fact entails ongoing personal development and maturation.

4.4. Facilitator training

As previously noted, a facilitator may be a professional, a non-professional volunteer, or a community member who has developed sensitivity to the issue and received training to, in turn, become a trainer within their own community.

First and foremost, the facilitator should undergo appropriate training—even if they have personally experienced the issue. It is essential that they understand the key concepts and core themes related to the problem at hand. This not only fosters empathy but also equips the facilitator with a set of reference points for managing the group. Specifically, this refers to training in the emotional dynamics involved in the cycle of violence.

In the case of CATs (Clubs of Treated Alcoholics), for example, individuals who volunteer to become “servant-teachers” participate in a multi-day course where they learn the methodology inspired by Hudolin’s theories. In my view, facilitators in other self-help groups should also receive training in the following areas:

- Emotional and psychological aspects of the issue;
- Group dynamics (including through role-playing exercises);

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- Communication strategies that facilitators should apply;
- Methods for activating and sustaining a vibrant social support network;
- Knowledge of local services available in the area.

Personally, I believe that technical training—such as on group dynamics—is less crucial than training focused on relational dynamics and the emotional aspects of the issue being addressed. For this reason, such training—already in place in some self-help settings—could be led by experienced facilitators. These individuals could be supported by public health professionals who are experts on the topic, both to strengthen the network of services and to provide a scientific perspective on the issue.

Facilitators should also periodically attend refresher meetings aimed at promoting ongoing education and training, as well as strengthening the internal network within the association.

In CATs, once a facilitator joins a group, they are also expected to participate in “intervision”—a form of peer supervision that typically involves monthly meetings of the servant-teachers within a specific network of Clubs. This may include Clubs from the same city, geographical area, or province. The purpose of these meetings is to share challenges encountered in managing AMA groups and to receive support from fellow facilitators.

Local intervision, along with meetings held at the provincial, regional, and national levels, also serves to monitor group progress, evaluate the effectiveness of the methodology, and promote a supportive network among all facilitators.

4.5. Difference Between Self-Help Groups and Therapeutic Groups

The first major difference lies in the fact that members of self-help groups are considered the real experts on the issue at hand, as they experience it personally and often have been dealing with it for a long time. There is no designated or recognized expert within the group.

Self-help groups do not rely on numerous techniques or predefined strategies; instead, they encourage spontaneity as much as possible. While structuring conversations using specific techniques might be helpful in some contexts, it



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can also lead to confusion regarding the actual aim of self-help groups. These groups are not therapeutic groups, where a psychologist typically leads the session with defined therapeutic goals. Self-help groups serve as an additional form of support but do not replace a therapeutic process, which is inherently more structured.

For this reason, in my view, the facilitator should not apply rigid methods, predefined frameworks, or overly structured strategies. Nor should they attempt to interpret—or worse, judge—the group dynamics or individual behaviours. Doing so could lead the facilitator to be perceived as a leader rather than as a peer member of the group.

Instead, the facilitator should establish a symmetrical, peer-to-peer relationship with all members. Their presence is not indispensable, and at times, their role may even be assumed by others. The facilitator should actively discourage members from focusing on them and instead encourage focus on the group as a whole.

Within self-help groups, each person contributes in their own unique way to promoting both their own well-being and that of others. The facilitator should be regarded as much as possible as just another group member.

As becomes clear from what has been said, self-help groups differ substantially from therapeutic groups. The former does not deal with the deeper, intrapsychic aspects of the individual, nor do they aim to foster change at that level through analysis. In self-help groups, interpersonal relationships are encouraged even outside the regular meetings—unlike in therapeutic groups.

The facilitator is a fellow participant, maintaining an equal relationship with the other members, whereas the therapist is a guide and is recognized as the leader. The person leading a self-help group does not act as a psychotherapist (even if they hold such qualifications): they do not assume responsibility for therapeutic care and do not use psychotherapeutic techniques.

Unlike a therapist, a facilitator may share their personal experiences and works actively to shift attention away from themselves and toward the group.



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That said, the self-help group methodology shares certain objectives with therapeutic groups, such as fostering emotional expression, reflective thinking, self-esteem, and social skills.

5. STEPS TO CREATING A SELF-HELP GROUP



5.1. Creating a group: the importance of the social network

Many self-help groups that have developed in Italy were inspired by the positive experience of the Clubs of Treated Alcoholics (CATs), which introduced several innovative and transferable practices. Drawing from my years of experience as a facilitator within the CATs, I believe their methodology can serve as a valuable reference for creating self-help groups in other contexts—



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including those designed to support people who have experienced gender-based violence.

Rather than replicating the CAT structure in full, it is more useful to identify and adapt its core principles. One of the most relevant is the integration of self-help groups into a broader network of community and institutional support. In the CAT experience, facilitators actively collaborate with local public services—such as health authorities, municipalities, and social services—to raise awareness, build partnerships, and ensure continuity of care. This approach strengthens the group’s impact and helps prevent isolation among individuals in need.

This model can be meaningfully adapted to self-help groups for survivors of violence. Establishing dedicated contact points—like helplines or facilitators with direct links to public health services—helps build bridges between victims and available resources. Special attention should be paid to engaging professionals in departments most likely to come into contact with survivors, such as general medicine, gynaecology, and mental health. Similarly, cooperation with municipalities is key to gaining visibility, logistical support, and access to public spaces for meetings and outreach events.

Building strong connections with local Volunteer Centers and other grassroots organizations can also enhance group capacity, visibility, and integration within the community. These partnerships can support joint initiatives, increase participation, and help normalize the conversation around issues such as violence, which are still often surrounded by stigma.

Training is another cornerstone of the CAT methodology that is highly relevant to the FADO project. Training should not only target facilitators but also involve families and the broader community, through interdisciplinary seminars, public talks, and educational events organized with local health authorities. As with alcohol-related issues, addressing gender-based violence requires both cultural change and practical support systems. Low-cost, community-based training can contribute to both, challenging stereotypes and promoting a more empathetic, informed approach to these complex issues.



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5.2. Facilitator strategies in leading Self-Help Groups

Recently, there has been a growing public awareness of violence: while this has fortunately encouraged many women to seek help, it has also led to a dangerous oversimplification of the issue to the detriment of the victim. I refer to numerous TV shows and scientific articles that list the traits of the abuser, the persecutor-victim dynamics, and the behaviors the victim "should" adopt to save herself.

Often, all of this is presented as some kind of easy-to-follow "recipe"—but this is not the case. Many victims of violence feel foolish for not having understood, not having foreseen, or for having stayed despite everything.

In self-help groups, a completely different atmosphere must be created: it should emerge clearly how difficult it is to "apply" that recipe. The facilitator must protect the group dynamics by preventing conflict and judgment. Each story should be welcomed and shielded from being judged by others' experiences.

The facilitator's role is simply to listen, to gently engage those who struggle to participate without pressuring them. They must manage time effectively so that everyone has the opportunity to speak, while respecting those who prefer to remain silent during a session. Over time, more reserved individuals can be gradually encouraged to share.

It's important to avoid situations where only a few people always speak or where leaders emerge. Self-help groups are based on a democratic functioning.

A climate of mutual trust and protection must be nurtured in self-help groups: each person's story is like a delicate, precious flower to be handled with care. While direct judgment is rare, members may unintentionally suggest that their timeline or approach to solving the issue is the standard, which can make others feel inadequate. The facilitator must emphasize that personal timelines vary greatly.

There is a time to become aware and accept being a victim, a time to speak up, a time to ask for help, and a time—perhaps the most difficult—to distance oneself from the situation and make painful decisions like separation or filing a report. Some individuals are unable to distance themselves at all, and that difficulty, too, must be acknowledged.



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The facilitator must prevent the emergence of “you should do this” or “you have to do that” advice. Instead, they should reinforce that each timeline is valid because every story is unique, and each person has their own way of living and coping with the issue. The same applies to how much someone chooses to share: some may need to go into detail, others may prefer to be more reserved.

During experience-sharing, the facilitator actively moderates communication and steers the focus back if discussions drift too far from the core issue. What should the focus be? Each person’s story, their emotions, the resources they’ve used to recognize and address the problem. Gossip, superficial talk, or judgment should be avoided.

The facilitator must also ensure an atmosphere of respect, empathy, and trust. Privacy is, of course, the foundational element that allows people to open up.

Another fundamental aspect is the creation of a new social network. A self-help group represents an opportunity to build this: the facilitator should encourage relationships among members outside of the scheduled meetings, perhaps by organizing various recreational gatherings.

Victims of violence often experience deep isolation. Sometimes this is due to shame: they isolate themselves to avoid having to explain bruises, limitations, or relationship dynamics. Sometimes it’s to avoid external variables that might worsen the situation at home—becoming a trigger for the abuser’s rage. Think of violence linked to jealousy, hypersensitivity, or comparisons with others’ lives.

Other times, isolation results from the decision to separate or to report the abuse. This can mean losing ties with relatives, friends, and even jobs.

5.3. Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of support

As previously mentioned, facilitators should regularly participate in **peer supervision groups**—commonly referred to as *intervision*—at the local, provincial, or regional level. These meetings provide a valuable space for sharing updates on group progress, discussing challenges, and staying informed about developments related to the group’s area of focus.

Self-help groups often follow a shared approach or guiding philosophy that shapes how they operate. For example, the Clubs of Treated Alcoholics (CATs) adopt the methodology developed by Hudolin, which offers a consistent



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framework for facilitators and participants alike. What makes this approach effective is not just a set of techniques, but a deeper emotional and relational perspective that informs how facilitators engage with the group and the issues at hand.

In the context of groups supporting victims of gender violence, adopting a similar shared framework can be extremely beneficial. It allows facilitators to develop a coherent mindset and emotional readiness when addressing sensitive and complex themes. This “protocol” should not be seen as a rigid rulebook, but as a reference philosophy—a set of values, attitudes, and relational strategies that guide the facilitator’s role within the group.

Peer supervision meetings are also key moments for facilitators to reflect on their practice, exchange insights, and seek support from others facing similar challenges. These gatherings can include discussions about group dynamics, difficulties in maintaining participation, and possible reasons why some individuals may drop out. Creating this space for collective reflection helps improve the quality and continuity of the support offered, while also strengthening the facilitator network on which self-help groups depend.





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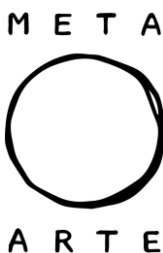
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