

Starting & running a QL Group



There are simple agreements, processes and venue guidelines that help create what one member calls "*the special time, place and positivity of the QL group.*"

AGREEMENTS

To ensure a safe and friendly environment, where everyone feels free to share their thoughts and feelings, we have evolved the following agreements which keep everyone safe.

Group Members

The group is restricted to people who have been diagnosed with PD. This is so that we are all 'singing from the same hymn sheet'. This leads to greater understanding and empathy.

Confidentiality

So that we can develop trust, and be open and honest in discussions, it's important we protect everyone's contribution. After a meeting it's fine to share with others the general issues and what you said in the group – but not specific things another person has said that might identify them.

Respect

Everyone's contribution matters. Listen without interruption. You may disagree, you may even be offended. Your responsibility as a group member is to hear everyone out and respond respectfully should you wish. We don't give advice, rather we talk about what has worked for us, and leave others to pick it up or not as they choose.

VENUE

The venue is important, and we have found that there are essentials that we need to allow the group process to work effectively.

Privacy	We must be able to speak confidentially without being overheard.
Comfort	The space should well lit, warm and airy – welcoming; and toilets
Wheelchair access	Essential if you wish to welcome all
Space	The space should accommodate ten to fifteen chairs in a circle
Refreshments	Facilities to provide tea and coffee
Payment	A small charge for the room hire and the provision of fruit and biscuits

MEETING STRUCTURE

This is the structure that we have developed, and we find it works well for us. Feel free to adapt it to your own circumstances.

Timing	Meetings last for an hour and a half (with time after for extra chat)
Frequency	Monthly, with a consistent date e.g. First Thursday of the month.
Self-led	No leader; a facilitator role which rotates by volunteering
Script (below)	Facilitator reads out the agreements at the start of each meeting
Check-in	We go round the room allowing everyone to 'say where they are'
Discussion	Members are invited to introduce topics for discussion
Check-out	Members are invited to say what they got from the meeting

SCRIPT

The meeting script follows below. We have found that it is important to read the script, especially the Agreements, at the start of every meeting. The group attendance fluctuates, with new people joining, and regular members sometimes being unable to be there, so using the script creates part of the safety and feeling of security

We wish you all the best in starting your own QL Group. We would be delighted for you to use the QL logo, and will email it to you on request.

Feel free to contact us with any questions, experiences, stories and laughter. And next time you are in Edinburgh, we meet on the first Thursday of every month – see you there!

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QL MEETING SCRIPT

WELCOME: Welcome to the Parkinson's QL group. The purpose of the meeting is to provide a space where people with Parkinson's can freely express their thoughts and feelings about their day to day living, in a safe environment, free from judgment, criticism, embarrassment or advice.

The meeting lasts an hour and a half – and anyone who wants to stay on a little longer is very welcome.

We have some simple guidelines to help us stay on track:

- The group is for PWP's only
- We value confidentiality and respect the dignity of everyone in the meeting; so outside here we share only WHAT we talked about, not WHO said what
- We respect our equality, and all members of the group deserve to be heard uninterrupted and with appreciation
- The group will gain confidence and grow, if members are prepared to share their own unique experience.

CHECK-IN: Please say your name, and if you want to, how long you have been diagnosed. And where you are, how you are feeling, right now.

[The facilitator starts the process, modeling brevity]

[The discussion develops and the facilitator keeps an eye on who has/hasn't/wants to speak/spoken. Bearing in mind that if someone wants to be quiet, just wants to listen, or is having a bad day, 'bringing them in' is the last thing they want.]

Has anyone got an issue they particularly want to bring forward?

(We also ask: What have you found has worked well for you over the past month?)

CHECK-OUT: [10 or 15 mins (depending on numbers) before the end do a **check-out**]

I'm going to invite each of us to share one thing from today's QL group that you have found useful and will take away with you.

[Go round the room]]

Thank you [say some words of appreciation]. Just a quick reminder of the confidentiality agreement – outside the meeting we can share WHAT was said but not WHO said it. A donation of towards the hire of the room and the refreshments would be appreciated.

The next meeting will be here as usual, on