

Elements of Effective Support Groups

(Based on The Executive Committee Model)

CORE ELEMENTS

1. Competent, relevant presentations with immediate usefulness or application.
2. Facilitated, structured, focused working of issues as presented by individuals who have come prepared.
3. Well-run "One-on-ones."

Other Vital Elements

1. Clear mission and norms for the group (including the norm of confidentiality)
2. Sharing of significant personal and professional events since the last meeting.
3. Thorough review, following the presentation, of learnings and applications.
4. Documentation of intended action items by each member, at the end of the day, with a copy going to the chair for follow-up at the One-on-One.
5. Tape recording the meeting while working an issue and giving that recording to the member whose issue is being worked.
6. Opportunity to invite others in the host's organization to attend the morning presentation.
7. Holding the meetings at the location of the host and allowing for a tour of the facilities by the members.
8. Having the group become familiar with the names and roles of direct reports or colleagues of each member.
9. The group has a clear understanding of each member's definition of success, personally and professionally.
10. Having one person always focused on process (i.e. staying out of content).
11. Opportunity to meet and get to know spouses.
12. Each member has an opportunity to work at least one issue every three months.
13. Opportunity to develop personal relationships and friendships (not spending all of the groups' time "working"; i.e. include some fun and play.).

14. On-going reports to the group on how an individual member has followed through on the working of an issue. (This can be something reported during a significant event.)
15. Opportunities and encouragement to be in contact between meetings.
16. Early at every meeting, the chair should report on who is absent and why he/she cannot be present.
17. Start and stop on time (with allowance for traffic).
18. When a new member joins allow at least thirty to forty –five minutes for him/her to introduce self and review the work and goals of his/her organization.
19. Be prepared to coach any member who is highly disruptive or toxic to the group and if they do not change, be willing to invite them to leave the group.
20. The chair should be willing to model vulnerability (without overdoing it or turning the group into his/her support group.)
21. The chair should participate in the significant events and invite the guest speaker to participate.
22. Consider assigning process or support roles to members (e.g. timekeeper for breaks; tape recorder operator; gatekeeper during issues session; introduce the presenter; book reviewer; etc.)
23. Provide a visible “log-in” that shows how things are going both personally and professionally on a 1 (low) to 10 (high) point scale.
24. As the host rotates over a period of 12 to 14 months, the host should make a major presentation regarding his/her organization’s current operations and future plans.
25. Post a visible agenda for the day which includes:
 - Name of the host
 - Significant Events
 - Presenter’s name and topic and time frame
 - Issues to be addressed
 - Group maintenance issues
26. Conduct an annual session for the group to set personal and professional goals for each individual member with at least a twice-a-year review and report from each member on how they are doing.
27. Consider creating similar groups for direct reports.

28. Make sure that members bring issues that are urgent and critical and/or strategic in nature.