



GUIDELINES FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE HOPEFUL MAMA FOUNDATION'S SUPPORT GROUPS

Support Groups are led by peers and not by mental health or medical professionals, unless otherwise stated. Opinions expressed in these groups are personal opinions and not necessarily the opinions or policies of the Hopeful Mama Foundation.

Hopeful Mama Foundation will not discriminate against any person based on race, creed, color, national origin, marital status, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or any other classification protected by applicable state or federal law.

To ensure that the Support Groups are emotionally safe, supportive, productive, and the best possible experience for everyone, each participant will make a commitment to abide by the Hopeful Mama Foundation's guidelines for participation. In doing so, we can ensure that everyone is heard, included, and respected in the meetings. When you participate in a Hopeful Mama Foundation Support Group, you agree to abide by the guidelines listed below.

- **Respect**
 - Please respect others' opinions, emotions, and experiences.
 - Please review our Announcements Policy (see page 2).
- **Share Speaking Time**
 - Allow others to speak and share their experiences.
- **Seeking Professional Advice**
 - Hopeful Mama Foundation's Support Groups are not intended to be a replacement for private counseling. If you would like to consult with a mental health professional, visit Hopeful Mama Foundation's [Professional Services Directory](#).
- **Concerns**
 - If you have a concern or would like to express a grievance of any kind about the group or group leader, please contact Hopeful Mama Foundation via email: info@hopefulmamafoundation.org.
 - Hopeful Mama Foundation will review the concern and determine the next steps. Our goal is for every participant to have a positive experience and get the support they deserve.
- **Confidentiality**
 - Confidentiality is critical for creating a safe environment where people can feel comfortable sharing personal information. If you see other group participants out in public, please be respectful of their boundaries, as some people would like to remain anonymous in the community.
- **Participant Surveys**
 - Periodically, the Hopeful Mama Foundation may survey participants to gather anonymous feedback. The purpose of the survey will be to assess the effectiveness of the group, ensure the group is meeting participant expectations, and identify any potential issues or problems quickly. It is important to note that the Hopeful Mama Foundation respects your privacy, and therefore does NOT share this information with any outside organizations or persons.

SHARING POSITIVE NEWS & PREGNANCY ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Hopeful Mama Foundation understands that every journey through infertility is deeply personal and emotionally complex. While we celebrate moments of hope and success, we also honor the space needed for those who are navigating difficult parts of their journey. To create an environment that supports everyone's emotional well-being, we've established the following guidelines:

- **Private Communication with the Facilitator**
 - If you would like to share positive news, such as a pregnancy announcement or other milestone, please send a private message to the group facilitator before the session or at the start of the group meeting.
 - This ensures that announcements are handled thoughtfully and with sensitivity to the group's emotional needs.
- **Designated Sharing Time**
 - All positive news and pregnancy-related announcements will be shared during the last 10 minutes of the support group session. This allows the majority of the session to remain focused on support, while still providing space to acknowledge and celebrate milestones.
 - The Hopeful Mama Foundation now offers a 'New Mama' group for those who are pregnant and/or a new mom after infertility. Consider joining this group if you're looking for a supportive space to navigate the unique emotions that come with pregnancy and motherhood after infertility.
- **Trigger Warnings & Option to Sign Off Early**
 - Before announcements are shared, the facilitator will issue a trigger warning to notify the group.
 - Participants are welcome to leave group early if they prefer to step away for their emotional well-being. This is a judgment-free space, and we encourage everyone to honor their feelings without guilt or pressure.
- **Respect and Compassion**
 - We ask all participants to approach these moments with kindness, understanding that hope and grief can co-exist.
 - It's okay to feel both joy for others and sadness for your own journey at the same time. Both feelings are valid and welcomed in this space.
- **Post-Group Support Option**
 - If you find announcements particularly triggering or need additional support after the session, please reach out to the facilitator privately.
 - We are here to support you, whether that's through one-on-one conversations, referrals to additional resources, or simply holding space for you to process.

This policy helps us maintain a compassionate, inclusive environment where everyone feels seen, heard, and supported. Thank you for respecting each other's journeys with empathy and care.