



Let's talk

An introduction to Registered Groups



Rethink Mental Illness, then known as the National Schizophrenia Fellowship, was started in 1972 when carers came together in groups for mutual support and began campaigning for better information, help and treatments. This developed into a network of peer support groups for family, carers and people with mental illness.

The organisation strives to lead the way to a better quality of life for everyone affected by severe mental illness.

Our values of hope, respect, understanding, commitment, passion and expertise are found in all that our groups do.

What do our groups do?

Groups provide empathy, acceptance and reassurance from peers in a non-judgemental way which helps to normalise experiences and reduce stigma. They provide a listening ear, practical help, friendship and social support, that makes coping with life's challenges that bit easier. Information and knowledge gained in the group empowers members, builds self-confidence and enables individuals to become more engaged in issues of care and treatment.

Ultimately some people may find themselves wanting to work with and influence local mental health services at local and national levels and campaign for further change.

Groups vary considerably in how often they meet, how long they meet for and what they do. Some meet for information, mutual support and to share experiences, whilst others offer activities such as art, music, sport and leisure pursuits. Group members decide for themselves what their group will do.

The 'Group Charter' sets out clearly what groups can expect from the Rethink Mental Illness and what the organisation can expect from its groups.

So what happens if I want to start a group?

- Firstly you need to be or become a member of Rethink Mental Illness.
- The Participation team will offer you advice and support in starting a group. You will work closely with a Group Development Officer to get your group established and guide you through the process of becoming a registered group. This includes developing the aims and objectives of the group and establishing a safe, working framework.

Keeping you and the group safe

- We want to ensure our groups are safe places to be. Those running groups receive appropriate training and an induction and receive monthly support from a member of staff. We carry out a Disclosure and Barring Service check on anyone wishing to run a group.
- We will help you develop group guidelines setting out what is and isn't acceptable at the group. This promotes a safe and supportive environment.

- We will undertake a risk assessment of the building that the group meets in and of any activities that the group gets involved with.
- We will provide you with a group mobile phone allowing you to keep your personal contact details private.

Time commitment

- Running a group is enormously rewarding but it can be time consuming and daunting to start with. We know that having someone else to help you run the group lightens the load and makes it more enjoyable, so we ask that you find someone to help you.
- Attracting new members is often a worry but we can help by designing and printing promotional material to advertise your group. We can also help you with fundraising ideas to pay for group activities.
- We have a wonderful network of groups which is a great source of inspiration. Our monthly newsletter will keep you in touch with what others are doing and let you know what's happening in Rethink Mental Illness.

Next steps

If you feel that you would like to talk to someone further about running a group, please call 01823 365 327 or email groups@rethink.org



**Rethink
Mental
Illness.**

Leading the way to a better quality of life for everyone affected by severe mental illness.

For further information on Rethink Mental Illness
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Rethink Mental Illness is a partner in:

time to change

let's end mental health discrimination