



Strategies for Sharing Groups with Mothers

Psycho-educational PEACE Program groups for mothers may be offered in a series of semi-structured in-person or virtual group sessions. The group experience can provide a supportive environment to build safety, create connections and break the silence about secrets they may be keeping.

This section shares ideas about how to host a mother's group within the context of the PEACE Program. Specifically, some of the things discussed are: Group Structure Considerations; Sample Mother's Group Timelines; and Tips to Increase Group Attendance.

Group Structure Considerations

PEACE Program counsellors may consider the option to offer groups that are open, semi-open or closed. Open groups allow new members at any time, semi-open groups take in new members on set weeks after the group has begun and closed groups do not take in new members once the group has started.

Open groups can be ongoing with the option to welcome drop-ins. Over time, open groups may have some consistent participation, but the overall group will be constantly shifting, which may influence the types of group activities you choose to ensure group and individual safety at each session.

Semi-open and closed groups generally run for a pre-set time of anywhere between 6-10 weeks. The intimacy and connection in closed groups has the potential to allow for increased safety and trust, over time. This may allow more topics to be covered since topics such as group safety will not take up as much time each week with a consistent group. Closed groups can create accessibility issues for some mothers and may impact a mothers' willingness to attend.

After deciding which type of group a PEACE Program will offer, PEACE Program counsellors will need to consider how many mothers they have space for and ensure they have an adequate safe space to hold this type of group. Alternatively, a virtual mother's group could be an option if you are able to assist mothers with internet and technology accessibility challenges.



[Chapter 3: Skills Development for PEACE Program Counsellors Working with Mothers](#) provides strategies and skills to support community building in groups, skills to encourage listening and witnessing in groups and tips for increasing a mother's sense of belonging. These skills, among others are foundational to any mothers' group curriculum.

Sample Mother's Group Timelines

Many PEACE Programs in BC have been offering mothers groups for some years. Here are a few sample curriculum outlines shared by other PEACE Program counsellors in BC. We welcome more PEACE Program counsellors to submit sample mother groups curriculum if they have them. You can email these to info@bcsth.ca. If you are considering running mothers' groups reaching out to the PEACE Program listserv would be a timely way to build curriculum resources.

- [Marvellous Mother's 10-week Group Curriculum](#) (Cheryl Nowshadi, Cowichan Women Against Violence Society)
- [Strengthening Families 9-week Group Curriculum](#) (Cheryl Nowshadi, Cowichan Women Against Violence Society) During the first half of the BCSTH 2013 Webinar [Supporting Caregivers Lunch and Learn](#) Cheryl Nowshadi shares more detailed information about running the Strengthening Families Group.
- Single Moms (of teens) Parenting Support Group Summary. (Andrea Sentesy, Howe Sound Women's Centre). This program ran as a closed group for 8 lunchtime sessions. The group welcomed self-identifying mothers that spend time solo parenting their teenage children. It started with a grounding/mindfulness exercise and a check-in circle. In the first session, participants identified topics they wanted to learn more about that impacted their teenage children (i.e., vaping, pornography, discipline strategies for teenagers, effective communication with teens etc.). Community members were hosted to come and share their expertise on these topics. The group was successful in creating peer support within the community.



Tips to Increase Group Attendance

- Consider timing the groups with school and work hours. If possible, offer a daytime group and an evening group to increase accessibility.
- Consider the location of your group, for example perhaps in a place that is on the bus route and accessible for all local demographics.
- Offer a meal, snacks and drinks for attendees.
- If possible, offer an honorarium as an incentive for group attendance and commitment.
- Diversity and partnership is key. For example, try to work with an Indigenous co-facilitator, or bring in 2SLGBTQIA+ moms where possible and relevant.
- Option for programs to budget to purchase mothers a small gift. Some examples of a gift might be a parenting book or children's book to keep after the group is complete.
- Consider offering separate groups for mothers with teens and mothers with toddlers if possible and if you have a big enough community.
- Consider options for running a virtual group.

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