

PEER SUPPORT GROUPS

Most peer support groups have four things that they do. They do these in different combinations. For example, a group might be mostly educational, but throw a party twice a year, or the group might be strictly a support group until an issue crops up that requires advocacy. Almost every group focuses on one or two areas, and those areas may change over time.

1. SOCIAL GATHERINGS (like sponsoring eating out, hosting a party/picnic, going bowling, going to a movie, holding dances, etc.)

2. EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES (like having topics, guest speakers, bringing in experts, panel discussions, learning about new services or new assistive technology, hosting/sponsoring conferences & workshops, etc.)

3. MUTUAL SUPPORT (discussing common experiences, validating common feelings, sharing ideas about various options, etc.)

4. ADVOCACY OPPORTUNITIES (advocating for a cause in the community, attending public meetings, joining other groups in their efforts, sending out and responding to action alerts, learning about the issues, holding protest marches, etc.)