

for INDIA

Type 1 Diabetes

Peer Support

Guidelines

INDIA





Introduction

In response to the growing need for comprehensive support for individuals managing Type 1 diabetes, the ImPatient Network fellows embarked on a collaborative endeavor to establish peer support guidelines. Recognizing the crucial role that peer support plays in complementing medical interventions, this initiative was driven by a commitment to fostering trust and cooperation between healthcare professionals (HCPs) and peer support groups.

These guidelines were meticulously crafted with the invaluable input of individuals with lived experiences of diabetes, certified educators, caregivers and healthcare experts. With a focus on inclusivity, transparency, and evidence-based practices, the guidelines aim to provide a framework that ensures the integrity and effectiveness of peer support initiatives while facilitating meaningful collaboration with HCPs.

By adhering to these guidelines, peer support groups seek to bridge the gap between medical expertise and community support, thereby empowering individuals to navigate their diabetes journey with confidence and resilience. Through mutual respect and shared goals, the establishment of these guidelines signifies a pivotal step towards building a stronger, more cohesive network of support for all those affected by diabetes.

Defining a Peer Support Group

A diabetes peer support group is a community-driven initiative that provides various forms of support to individuals living with diabetes and their caregivers. These groups may include:

- WhatsApp Groups: Digital platforms where members can connect, share experiences, and offer support in real-time.
- Educational Events or Sessions: Organized sessions aimed at empowering members with knowledge about diabetes management, treatment options, and lifestyle adjustments.
- Community Peer Support Events: Gatherings that facilitate face-to-face interaction, fostering a sense of belonging and solidarity within the diabetes community.
- Lobbying and Policy Work: Advocacy efforts focused on influencing healthcare policies, improving access to diabetes care, and raising awareness about legislative issues affecting individuals with diabetes.
- Non-Educational Community Events: Social activities and outings that promote camaraderie and provide opportunities for relaxation and enjoyment.
- Awareness Sessions: Programs designed to educate the public about diabetes prevention, early detection, and the importance of healthy lifestyle choices.

These components collectively contribute to the holistic support provided by diabetes peer support groups, fostering empowerment, education, advocacy, and community engagement within the diabetes community. Please note: a peer support group can exist with only one or multiple of the above mentioned activities.

Who is this Document for?

This document is intended for groups and organizations actively engaged in providing support, education, and advocacy for individuals living with diabetes. Specifically, it targets those who regularly interact with people with diabetes, whether through virtual platforms or in-person meetings. It is designed to offer guidance and best practices for establishing and maintaining effective peer support groups within the diabetes community. While not intended for individuals solely advocating on social media, this document aims to equip those actively involved in direct interactions with practical strategies to enhance the quality of support and assistance provided to individuals managing diabetes.

THE GUIDELINES:

Do's *(Best practices to follow)*

01	Ensure the presence of trained educators within the group who have lived experiences and are certified, creating a supportive and understanding environment. This ensures there is credibility in the peer support group.	04	Provide referrals to reputable doctors affiliated with recognized medical bodies like RSSDI, specifically for those prescribing basal bolus therapy.
02	Foster a collaborative approach with healthcare professionals (HCPs) to complement peer support with medical expertise.	05	Adhere to guidelines of “Language Matters”, ensuring respectful and sensitive communication within the group and all other messaging and collateral (posters, flyers, social media)
03	Encourage collaboration with other patient bodies to leverage collective knowledge and resources for mutual benefit.	06	Maintain transparency in interactions with industry, ensuring that any collaborations or sponsorships align with the group's values and objectives.

Don't's

THE GUIDELINES:

<p>01</p>	<p>Peer groups must strictly refrain from prescribing any medication. Instead, members can suggest titration through clear education (ICR, ISF) after consulting with healthcare professionals.</p>	<p>04</p>	<p>Don't generate income for profit within peer support groups. Monetary contributions should be solely allocated for logistical support and activities, ensuring that educational services remain accessible to all members without charge.</p>
<p>02</p>	<p>No discrimination based on religion, socioeconomic status, or gender within the group, fostering an inclusive environment for all. Membership and participation in the group should be open to all individuals, regardless of their background, ensuring equal access to support and resources for everyone.</p>	<p>05</p>	<p>Don't foster dependency among community members; instead, prioritize empowering them to make autonomous decisions regarding their diabetes management. While providing essential support, refrain from creating reliance on the group for every decision, ensuring individuals retain their independence and agency in their health journey.</p>
<p>03</p>	<p>Don't disseminate misinformation or endorse alternative treatments lacking scientific evidence. Ensure that all information shared within the peer support group is accurately backed by scientific evidence to maintain credibility and safeguard the well-being of members. (No talk of cures or alternative therapies)</p>	<p>06</p>	<p>While offering guidance and suggestions, groups should refrain from exerting pressure or coercion regarding regimens, routines, or diets. It is essential to empower individuals to make informed decisions about their healthcare. However, it should be unequivocally emphasized that adherence to insulin therapy is non-negotiable for managing diabetes effectively.</p>

These guidelines serve as a roadmap for peer support groups within the diabetes community, embodying principles of inclusivity, transparency, and evidence-based practice. By adhering to these standards, peer support groups can effectively bridge the gap between medical expertise and community support, empowering individuals to navigate their diabetes journey with confidence and resilience. Through collaborative efforts with healthcare professionals and other patient bodies, these guidelines pave the way for a stronger, more cohesive network of support for all those affected by diabetes.

Conclusion