**Peer Support Group Guidelines**

**Welcome to the Central Okanagan Elizabeth Fry Society (COEFS) peer-led support group. Please note that a peer-led group is not meant to be therapy or counselling. While the group is overseen by a member of the COEFS counselling team, that role is to provide structure and support to the group, not counselling services.**

**We all want and need this group to be a safe place to share, so we collectively agree to the following:**

1. Group members must safeguard the confidentiality of other group members. What is said here, stays here. If we feel it would be helpful to share something we heard in group, we do not use names or other identifying information. *Please note: Counsellors have a duty to report any concerns regarding reasonable risks of harm to self or others.*
2. We agree to be respectful of others. We agree that discriminatory or stigmatizing remarks or jokes such as those based on race, origins, colour, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, or mental or physical disability are not acceptable.
3. Engaging in any behaviours such as bullying, harassment, hate-speech, or threatening the safety of other members will be grounds for immediate removal from the server.
4. This group is not to be used for crisis support, please see the resources section in the server for further information.
5. If you attend the Live Video meetings, you must do so in a private, confidential space, free from distraction, or other people.
6. We agree to refrain from making comments or having conversations with others in the group while someone is sharing. We find this to be very distracting to the whole group and disrespectful to the person sharing.
7. We agree not to be offended if a person passes on sharing or does not make eye contact while sharing.
8. While at group we agree to refrain from substance use, self-harm, or aggression towards other group members.
9. When talking about mental health practitioners, various treatments, or medications and their side effects, we agree to keep in mind that we are all unique and that these can affect each person differently.
10. We agree not to engage in detailed talk about suicide methods or attempts, self-harm, or substance abuse. This can be triggering for some people. However, it is all right to talk about one’s thoughts and feelings regarding these issues.

1. If you are feeling suicidal or may harm yourself or someone else, please tell us. We agree to support you to get help.
2. When offering comments to someone who has shared, we agree to first allow the person to finish before checking if they would like comments. We agree to speak from our own perspective using “I” statements. For example: “When I felt that way…” We find sharing personal insight is usually more helpful than giving advice, even when advice is requested. In addition, we agree to base our comments on what the person has shared rather than asking questions to elicit more information. People share what they are comfortable sharing at any given time, and such questioning may lead them into areas they would rather not go.
3. We agree to do our best to begin and end Group on time. If we arrive after a meeting has begun, we agree to join in quietly.
4. We agree to silence or turn off our cell phones. If we need to take an important call or leave the room for another reason, we try to wait until the person sharing has finished.