

Organize

1. The first thing is to find a few others who will commit themselves to a Christ-Centered recovery group. We need to pray and seek specifically God's will in this matter. We don't want to be meeting alone, and certainly not without God.
2. Recovery in Christ ministries started when a few people from an AA meeting met afterwards at a local restaurant ... Since then, many have come together in similar ways and have found the Recovery in Christ materials helpful in beginning meetings at their places of worship. Other meetings have begun after a few recovering people met in Bible study or church and established meetings to reach out to their communities.
3. It is important to know that when we set up a Christ-Centered Recovery Group, we are not competing with or criticizing any other group.
4. We are simply creating an environment where Christians in need of recovery can gather and freely talk about Jesus and the Bible without concern of offending others.
5. It may be best to find space in a church where the pastor is supportive and understands the 12-step process.
6. The pastor can give spiritual covering in addition to referring people to the group, who through counseling, has found them hurting and in need of help.
7. Small Groups have an important role in the body of Christ. It is difficult for intimate fellowship to take place in large Bible studies or congregational meetings. The support group is a gathering of equals who come together to love, encourage and minister to one another.
8. (James 5:16 NIV) Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.
9. A Christ-Centered Group provides the opportunity for this to happen. When we gather together with others who understand us, we can get rid of the guilt from the past with reasonable assurance that we will not be judged or condemned.
10. Small groups also give us an opportunity to share what is going on in our lives in a confidential setting. If we never get a chance to share who we really are with others on a "gut" level, we can never be truly loved. They can only love who we are pretending to be or what they perceive.
11. We will forever be in bondage if we don't learn how to be transparent and accountable to one another. (John 8:32 NIV) "Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." As we share and listen and identify with each other, God brings us through our denial. "God is truth and God is love". As we share the truth in love, we are imparting God one to another.
12. In establishing a support group, it is important to be consistent. Make sure someone is there to start the meeting on time – every time.
13. Get a good foundation by inviting people who have a good attitude and have the courage to be honest. It might be wise to stay away from those who simply want to play church and impress others with their personal "holiness" or ability to quote Scripture at length.
14. Some people are fearful of attending meetings at their own church out of concern others may gossip. It is important to insure anonymity and confidentiality.

Facilitating a Healthy Christ-Centered Support Group

There are several suggestions in how to maintain a healthy Christ centered support group. The first should be to pray for God's presence, the grace of Jesus Christ and the leading of the Holy Spirit. A little common sense won't hurt much either. Here are some other suggestions:

1. We are here to honestly share our experience, strength and hope.
2. Avoid cross talk – cross talk is where two or more engage in a conversation during group to the exclusion of others – those left out could feel rejected – rejection is a terrible thing.
3. All members should be participants by sharing and listening. Those who refuse to share in meetings might not be sufficiently motivated toward recovery.
4. Use an I message instead of You messages whenever possible.
5. Talk only with those who are present, when sharing share about yourself. We can only be helpful to those who are present when the group meets.
6. Let other people speak for themselves. It is not necessary to defend other members of the group.
7. Don't counsel or give advice. Recovering people don't like being told what to do. We listen to others share and apply to our lives what we can identify will work for us.
8. Don't preach. This is a fellowship not a dictatorship. Few things are more irritating than one all-knowing person telling everybody what to do. In this setting, if we preach, we elevate ourselves above others, which goes against the importance of a fellowship setting.
9. Don't monopolize – time spent in the group is precious. Be considerate and realize that none of us has all the answers.
10. Avoid Profanity – coarse talk has no place in a Christ-centered group – it often just serves as an excuse for some people not to attend.
11. Attend meetings with a good attitude – with a sense of expectancy that God will speak through someone to help that specific thing we are concerned about. The Lord will often speak to us through the least likely person.
12. Maintain confidentiality – whatever is said in the group – stays in the group – “Who you see here and what is said here – stays here. Here, here.”
13. Freely talk about Scripture - It is ok to freely talk about Scripture that is meaningful to us. We should certainly share what Jesus has been doing in our lives in a Christ-centered meeting.

The Recovery in Christ Workbook which accompanies the Video series has a meeting format which can help in coordinating a meeting.

It has all the readings and meeting guidelines laid-out for easy reading. This is a suggested meeting format:

MEETING FORMAT (suggested)

1. Opening Prayer (praise & worship - depending on group)
2. Read Opening Group Statement Pg. 6
3. Read the Twelve Steps Pg. 8 (and Traditions Pg. 9 – optional)
4. Introduce and welcome new members (first name only)
5. Read the Ground Rules Pg. 7
6. Read Devotional (Many good recovery devotionals are available)
7. Introduce Topic:
 - A. Step Study (workbook section 3 / Video)
 - B. Open Discussion
 - C. Special Topic (workbook section 4)
 - D. Review Special Recovery Material (workbook section 2, etc.)
 - E. Speakers Meeting
 - F. Teaching (Bible study)
8. Acknowledge milestones in recovery / professions of faith
 - a. *SUGGESTION: (Give out colored marbles for 1-day, 30-days, 60-days, 90-days, 6-months, 9-months, 1-Year and give out a fidget spinner for multiple years)*
9. Prayer Requests / Closing Prayer
10. Announcements
11. Pass around phone list (optional)
12. Coffee Break and Fellowship

In addition, you can use the Videos to help stimulate discussion in meetings. One way of using them would be to play a half hour video segment on one of the steps followed by a half hour group discussion.

There are many Christian recovery resources that can be used in meetings for study and to stimulate discussion.

Often it is a good idea to have a rotation of group leaders. As people grow in their recovery, encourage them to take up responsibilities in the group. Set up, take down, coffee making, door greeting, chairing the meeting, speaking, etc...

As the facilitator, ultimately you are God's eyes and ears in meeting the need of those He is bringing to your group. We may not have all experienced the same trauma that brought us to recovery, but it is the same spiritual principals that will bring us healing through the 12 Steps and into a relationship with Jesus. Be flexible and allow the Holy Spirit to take the lead.