

Support Group Discussion Guide: It's Okay to Ask For Help



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We thank them for their generosity!*

Purpose

The purpose of this session is to help us better understand that it is normal *and expected* to need help with the challenges we will encounter parenting relative or like kin children. Often the transition comes about with little or no time to plan. Add to that the complicated relationship navigation and stigma involved in relative caregiving, and it can make it that much harder to ask for help when it's needed. **Everyone** needs help sometimes. Getting comfortable with reaching out not only helps you and the children in your care, but it is good for the “helpers” as well.



The hope is that this discussion guide will provide prompting for safe and non-judgmental exploration of issues we're facing and help give voice to the very real, normal, and understandable feelings we all struggle with. You are encouraged to share strategies and resources you have discovered as we offer hope and encouragement to one another.

Ice Breaker



A Time When You Helped Someone (10-15 minutes)

Ask participants to share a time when they helped someone in need. Often, we hesitate to reach out for help because we don't want to put someone out or admit that we need help. In actuality, people love to share their expertise and feel needed.

An Example:

"After a rough day at work, I had to stop at the grocery store. In the checkout line, I watched a young mom in front of me trying to keep her three little girls together while unloading her cart. The littlest was crying, and another took off running toward the balloons in the floral department. The mom looked frantic. I told her I would gather up the runaway while she continued checking out. She was in tears when I returned with her little girl in tow. We walked together to the parking lot, and she explained that her husband had passed shortly after they relocated to this area. She said she knows no one here and has been struggling. In talking, we discovered we live in the same apartment complex. I gave her my number and offered to help out while she does the shopping once a week. When I got home, I realized I was no longer focused on my bad day and was actually feeling great that I could help *her* with hers."

Objective:

This icebreaker is intended to help participants get over any stigma surrounding asking for help and understand that people are as enriched by helping as the recipient of the help.

Introduction to Topic

It's okay to ask for help. You are not alone.

Parenting is one of the hardest jobs there is. Parenting someone else's child can make you doubt everything you thought you knew, yet asking for help can be tough. Rest assured, you're not alone. There's actually a psychological reason why we all struggle with asking for help: we are hardwired to be independent and to want to do things on our own.



In this session, we're going to explore our feelings about the challenges we face as relative caregivers and how to get better at asking for the help we need and deserve.

In the video included in this session, a foster parent who grew up in foster care admits that fostering shook her confidence in her decision-making and parenting abilities. Despite her own lived experience and her belief that she was going to be "really amazing at it," trying to do it without help literally brought her to her knees.

No Matter What Video: It's Okay to Ask For Help

In this video, foster mom Magdalia shares the importance of reaching out to the people in your life, even if they don't completely understand that challenges caregivers face.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iESyohqrfY>

Click link to play video

