



OCD SUPPORT GROUP CHARTER



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OCD Action is the national charity for people affected by Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD). The Charity has been working with the network of independent local OCD support groups* throughout the UK as part of a National Lottery funded project called 'Better Together'.

The overall aim of this project is to help and support local OCD group facilitators in providing quality peer support to people in their community affected by OCD. One of the ways that the Charity is meeting this aim is through the OCD Support Group Charter.

It was recognised by both the Charity and support group facilitators that the creation of an OCD Support Group Charter would help to promote and encourage continuity of standards within support groups. As well as this, the Charter would help group members, and those people wishing to join a group, to better understand the nature of a group and the standards to which it operates.

The Charity worked with the facilitators of local OCD support groups to identify best practice in running a support group. The Charity then helped support group facilitators to draw up and agree a Charter that outlines what groups and facilitators 'must', 'should' and 'could' do to help ensure that their support group fits the framework of best practice.

Support group facilitators have asked OCD Action to administer the OCD Support Group Charter. To do, this the Charity and its team of Better Together Regional Volunteers will be working closely with support group facilitators who would like to sign up and work under the Charter.

The Charity will be taking a collaborative approach, working together with group facilitators to identify whether their group meets the requirements of the Charter. If both partners agree that a support group meets these requirements, then the group will be eligible to use and display the OCD Support Group Charter logo on all support group publicity materials. This logo will also be displayed as part of the support group's listing on the OCD Action website and in the Charity's newsletter.

If the Charity feels that a support group does not currently meet the requirements of the Charter, the Charity's Better Together team will offer to work with the facilitator to make any necessary changes to help the group reach these requirements.

Support Groups that are eligible to use the OCD Support Group Charter logo will have an annual re-assessment meeting with the Charity to discuss whether they still meet the requirements of the Charter and are entitled to continue using the OCD Support Group Charter logo.

Although support groups have asked OCD Action to facilitate the creation of this Charter and to help administer the assessment process, it should be remembered that all support groups are independent of OCD Action.

OCD Action does not seek to, nor does it, control or oversee the work or activities of any support group. Because of this, OCD Action does not take responsibility for, or accept any liability for, any support group activity or the methods by which any support group activity is carried out. The Charity does not guarantee in any way the work of any support group or support group facilitators.

In granting any support group the right to use the OCD Support Group Charter logo, OCD Action is indicating that in the opinion of the Charity, at the date of its last assessment of the support group, the written aims and methods of the support group were in accordance with best practice.

The Charity believes that the OCD Support Group Charter is an important initiative which will help to enable local OCD support groups to provide excellent and life changing peer support to many people affected by OCD nationwide.

*** Please note that the OCD Support Group Charter also includes groups who provide support to those with OCD related disorders (Body Dysmorphic Disorder (BDD), Trichotillomania (TTM), Compulsive Skin Picking (CSP) and Hoarding Issues.)**

Aims of an OCD support group

1. **Groups must offer a safe, supportive and inclusive environment for people affected by OCD to talk openly about their experiences of the disorder.**
 2. **Groups must be constructive, positive and considered by group members to be of benefit to them.**
 3. **Group facilitators must ensure that all group members have equal access to the support and resources offered.**
 4. **Group facilitators must identify the group's needs and respond accordingly.**
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5. Groups should have their own statement of aims, which are reviewed regularly and made available to all group members.
 6. Groups should also understand the personal aims of group members relating to their own OCD and work in partnership with them to help them reach their objectives.
 7. Groups should be respectful and non-judgmental to individuals choosing their own way to manage their OCD.
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- *Group facilitators could set aside time within a group session annually to confirm that current group members are happy with the aims of the group and discuss any alterations that should be made.*
 - *As part of the process of welcoming new group members, group facilitators could encourage them to discuss and write down their own personal aims, what they wish to achieve from attending the support group and over what period of time. Time during group sessions could be set aside to regularly review these personal goals.*

How OCD support groups are governed

1. **Groups must have some form of statement of governance/constitution that sets out how the group is to be managed and how the group facilitator is chosen. This statement must be reviewed on an annual basis.**
2. **Groups must state the minimum age requirements to attend group sessions. Where groups include children or young people, appropriate safeguarding must be in place.**
3. **Groups must have a confidentiality policy that is shared with all group members. This policy must show an understanding of how people with OCD may disclose information relating to their fear of causing harm to others that would in other situations cause concern and would potentially lead to a break of confidentiality.**
4. **Groups must also be fully aware of the insurance and legal obligations that relate to their activity and ensure that their group operates within these obligations. Where applicable groups must have the following in place:**

Confidentiality Policy (see above)

Data Protection Policy

Equal Opportunities Policy

Public Liability insurance (if not covered by the venue)

DBS Checks for group facilitators

Safeguarding policies (Vulnerable Adults and/or Children and Young Persons)

Health and Safety Policy

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5. Group facilitators should ensure the continuity and sustainability of their group. They should have appropriate mechanisms in place to hand over group facilitator duties in their absence.
 6. Group facilitators should ensure that good records are kept of income and expenditure and a voluntary record of group participants contact details.
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- *Group facilitators could identify group members who could take on specific roles within the group, and if needed, could take on further responsibility in their absence.*
- *Groups could access policy templates available as part of the 'Better Together Template Policy Pack' and work with their Regional Volunteer to adapt these to use for their group.*

How OCD support groups are run

1. **Groups must have agreed ground rules that are shared with all group members, monitored and up-dated at least annually.**
2. **Groups must give clear information on the details of meetings (time, dates and location) and specify who are suitable to attend meetings.**
3. **Group facilitators must be able to signpost alternative support to individuals who are not suitable to attend the group.**
4. **Groups must have mechanisms in place to set, measure and evaluate their outcomes such as feedback forms and registers of attendance.**
5. **Groups must have agreed Complaints, Comments and Suggestion processes.**

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6. Group facilitators should have access to some form of supervision, professional or peer, to offload, share ideas and discuss any problems.

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- *As well as group facilitators having access to peer supervision with their OCD Action 'Better Together' Regional Volunteer, group facilitators could also link up with other Chartered group facilitators and provide each other with peer supervision.*

How OCD support groups work with OCD Action and each other

1. **Groups must ensure that OCD Action is kept up to date with any changes to group arrangements and group facilitator contact details.**
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2. Groups should engage with OCD Action's 'Better Together' project and the events organised by them for group facilitators and support groups.
 3. Group facilitators should be aware of how group members can access OCD Action's range of services.
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- *Groups could request up to date leaflets from OCD Action to distribute within group sessions.*
- *Group facilitators could make contact with other Chartered group facilitators to share ideas and network.*

How OCD support groups are funded

1. **If a group has control over its own finances, it must work to an annual budget and know the income and the expenditure needed to keep the group running. This budget and the group's financial situation must be open and transparent so that group members are aware of their group's financial position. Groups that have secured external funding must be accountable to their funders and meet any obligations that they have agreed with them.**
2. **Groups must consider the ethical implications of any funding received and ensure that support from a funder would not bring the group into disrepute.**

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3. Groups should consider asking members to make a donation to cover group costs and where possible approach local charitable trusts and statutory service providers for funds.
 4. Groups should set up a bank account with at least two signatories in preparation for receiving any external funding.

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- *Groups could consider fundraising to cover group costs and could combine these activities with public awareness.*

How OCD support groups connect to local services

1. **Groups must be clear on where they sit within local services and make every attempt to ensure that relevant local service providers such as GP's, Mental Health Services, IAPT teams, charities and organisations with similar aims are aware of the group.**
2. **Group facilitators must have a good understanding of how their group members can access relevant local statutory services and should keep up to date with changes within these services.**
3. **Group facilitators must have a good understanding of the NICE guidelines with reference to treatment for OCD.**

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4. Groups should have a representative to be available to discuss and promote the group if contacted by local services.

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- *Groups could regularly send out group information to surgeries, Mental Health teams and IAPT services within a fifteen mile radius of the groups location (groups can use the 'support group letter' available from OCD Action)*

How OCD support groups are publicised

1. **Groups must be active in publicising their group meetings and activities.**
 2. **Groups must have a point of contact for enquiries about the group.**
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3. Groups should consider how they can reach a broad range of individuals throughout their local community and how they may be able to reach the most isolated and vulnerable.
 4. Groups should keep OCD Action's Better Together team up to date with any changes to group arrangements so that the OCD Action website listings can be amended.
 5. Groups should engage with local and national OCD events and campaigns (including those organised by OCD Action).
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- *Groups could think about how best to use free editorial publicity in their local media and could appoint a designated media person to take responsibility for publicising the group.*
- *Groups could assist and support group members who are keen to take their OCD experience into the community and publicise the group.*