

Arthritis Support Network (ASN) Participant Guidelines



Arthritis Support Networks offer personalized help and support to adults living with types of arthritis and rheumatic conditions and their adult loved one. Support groups offer opportunities for connection, education and empowerment. To maintain a safe, comfortable, and confidential environment, the following Participant Guidelines have been designed to enhance your experience at meetings and events.

- **Minimize Distractions** - Please turn off or silence electronic devices during meetings.
- **Maintain Confidentiality** - Respect the confidentiality of the participants of the support group. What's said in the group, stays in the group.
- **Be Respectful Of Others And Their Ideas** - One speaker at a time. Do not talk over or interrupt others. Allow everyone a chance to speak. Be mindful of the time. Don't dominate the conversation. Use I statements. Don't generalize. No doctor or organization bashing.
- **Acceptance** - Be supportive, reassuring and encouraging. Avoid being judgmental and accept people where they are at.
- **Listen** - Give your full attention to the person speaking and avoid side conversations.
- **Sharing** - Sharing is feelings and personal experiences is encouraged, but not required.
- **Don't Give Unsolicited Advice** - or give medical advice.
- **Focus On The Positive** - Grieving your "old life" and learning to cope is normal. Focus on current accomplishments and new opportunities can help with these emotions. Be in the present. We want to help you to learn THRIVE with arthritis!
- **Exercise Good Judgment** - when managing pain/using pain medications. Please stay home if you have a cold or flu.
- **Solicitation** - We strive to keep our group free from solicitation. Please refrain from promoting, endorsing and marketing to participants during meetings. No medication swapping allowed.
- **Répondez, S'il Vous Plaît (RSVP)** – Please RSVP if you plan on attending so your ASN Leader will know how many people to expect. If you are unable to attend an event last minute, no problem - we do understand, please let your ASN Leader know as soon as possible. You can RSVP or cancel your RSVP on the event page.
- **We Begin And End On Time** - Please arrive a few minutes early so we can start on time.
- **Take Care of Your Personal Needs** - Get up and stretch, go to the restroom, grab a drink, etc.
- **Responsibility** - Participants share the responsibility to make the group work. Suggestions/ideas are welcomed and encouraged.
- **Be A Good Citizen In Real Life And On Social Media** - Refrain from behaviors that are inappropriate, disrespectful, disruptive, abusive, profane, threatening, offensive, disparaging, discriminatory, harassing in nature, unlawful or spam. We reserve the right to ask people to leave or remove social media posts/content as seen fit, to maintain a safe and comfortable environment for all participants.
- **This is a peer led group** - It is not a therapy group nor a substitute for professional counseling.

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- **We Invite You To Get Involved With Arthritis Foundation And ASN Events.**

ASN Participant and Media Release: Participants understand that the personal information provided will not be shared with anyone other than the Arthritis Foundation /Arthritis Introspective (referred herein as AF-AI) without your authorization. This Information is collected so that Arthritis Support Network Leader can notify participants of upcoming events. If certain information is to be excluded it is the participant's responsibility to advise the local Arthritis Support Network Leader.

Participants agree that that the information provided is accurate and true. Participants understand that the AF-AI is committed to respecting the privacy of its members, participants and personal contact information will not be shared with anyone other than the AF-AI without consent. This Information enables the AF-AI to notify people of both local and national AF-AI news and coming events.

Participants understand that, any and all, information presented is purely for informational purposes only and should not be interpreted as medical advice. Participants will consult a healthcare professional when seeking medical advice

Participants understand and agree that goal of the Arthritis Support Network is to provide a safe program environment free from disruption or harassment and to that end the AF-AI reserves the right to deny admission to those individuals whose behavior is disruptive or who harass other program participants, members or event leaders.

Participants also understand and agree that participation in **Arthritis Support Network Events and Meetings** shall be at the participant and their child/children's own risk and that neither AF-AI nor any co-sponsoring organization or facility, nor their respective support groups, officers, directors, agents, members, participants or volunteers shall assume or have any responsibility or liability for expenses or medical treatment or for compensation for any injury the participant or their child/children may suffer during or resulting from participation in this program. Further, in the event of emergency, participants hereby authorize any and all medical attention to be administered that is deemed necessary by the emergency personnel.

Participants hereby grant the Arthritis Foundation /Arthritis Introspective (AF-AI) and its representatives and agents, the right to use the participant and their child/children's quoted remarks or contributed original works, reproduce and publish photographs, video, audio or digital recordings of the participant or their minor child/children, including name, image and likeness as depicted therein, for AF-AI use in any and all media including print, online, and video-based marketing materials, as well as any other AF-AI publications; or any other purpose and in any manner and medium and to alter/edit the same without restriction. Participants further acknowledge that participation is voluntary and waive any rights of compensation or ownership thereto. Participants understand any quoted remarks or original work contributed that is published will include a credit with name. Furthermore, participants understand signing a release does not guarantee publication, simply consent for publication. Participants understand that it is the intention of the AF-AI to present the participant or their child/children's image or words in a positive manner and that the AF-AI will not share personal contact info with any third parties without prior consent. Participants hereby release and hold harmless AF-AI and its trustees, officers, agents, legal representatives and assigns from any and all claims, actions and liability relating to its use of said material from any reasonable expectation of privacy or confidentiality for the participant and for the participant's child/children.