

## Common Ground Men's Group - Ground Rules and Guidelines

The Common Ground program is designed as a contact, support, information and referral group, it is not a therapy group.

If a participant requires specific therapy/counseling then this is their responsibility not the program's or the Men's Health and Wellbeing Association Queensland Inc.

Referrals in this area can be provided. Please ask your facilitator.

- **Confidentiality:** What is seen, said, done and shared here stays here. No man's name or physical description need be told to anyone else outside this group. You may like to express your personal experience of the program to a friend, colleague or partner and this is welcomed as long as the first two aspects of confidentiality are not compromised. If any doubt about this please ask the facilitator.
- **Respect:** At all times during the program participants are expected to act respectfully in regards to themselves, the other participants and the environment where the program is being held. This includes using respectful language and behaviour. Put downs of any form will not be welcomed.
- **Responsibility:** Each participant is responsible for his own learning, participation and growth. Remember, you will only get out of the group as much as you are prepared to put into it.
- **Punctuality.** We ask that a commitment be made by each participant to attend all 8 sessions on time (6.45 for 7.00pm start). In the event that you are running late or are unable to attend, please contact one of the facilitators so we can inform the whole group.
- **All feelings are OK:** Sadness, Fear, Anger, Happiness are all normal emotions. You have a right to them, try to own and identify them, if you are not feeling OK then say so.
- **Feedback/Advice:** Unless specifically asked for, then respectfully, keep it to yourself. You may believe that you have the perfect answer/solution to what you perceive as that man's problem. Then that's what it is, a belief and a perception, which is yours and not necessarily his.
- **It's OK to Pass:** You have the right to share and speak at the level at which you are comfortable. There may be a time when you wish to pass, this will always be respected.
- **Speak for yourself:** The use of what is termed "I" language, (I think, I feel, I am) is highly encouraged in Common Ground. This is called the language of the personal as opposed to the language of the impersonal which uses, you, we, them, it, they.
- **Facilitator's Role:** There may be times when the facilitator will need to ask questions and give directions to both the group and individuals. This will be done respectfully and with the above ground rule applying.
- **Additional Rules:** You may have something specific you need to feel safe in a group, then add it to the list. Nothing is set in concrete, each person and each group is different, so please speak up for what you need.
- **Talking Stick:** The talking stick is a tool and technique designed to build communication, listening, safety and empathy. When a man wishes to speak then he picks up the stick, from that point on until he places the stick down again he is not to be interrupted. Even if the man remains in silence or speaks something you may strongly disagree with, all he is asking you to do is listen.