



Lions Clubs International



# Diabetes Peer Support Groups Workbook

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**Peers for Progress**  
*Peer Support Around the World*  
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

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## Acknowledgement

The Lions Clubs International Diabetes Peer Support Groups Workbook was developed through a collaboration with Peers for Progress ([www.peersforprogress.org](http://www.peersforprogress.org)) at the Gillings School of Global Public Health in the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Founded in 2006, Peers for Progress is committed to promoting peer support as a key part of health, healthcare and prevention around the world. In agreement with Peers for Progress, this workbook was developed for the sole use of Lions Clubs International Diabetes Peer Support Groups. Peers for Progress's contributions to this workbook include scientific expertise, strategic counsel, best practices for program implementation, and original and adapted materials from its library of peer support resources.

## How to use this workbook

This workbook serves as a resource to assist in the development, implementation and quality improvement of community-based peer support groups for people living with diabetes. The information in this workbook may be useful for program coordinators and group facilitators, helping them to think systematically about peer support groups. Due to the global nature of our organization, this workbook is not prescriptive and there may be elements of this workbook that are not applicable to your club, district or multiple district. We encourage you to carefully read the workbook and utilize the information, resources and best practices that are useful for your diabetes peer support group. For some clubs, this may simply mean continuing the great work that their support groups are already doing. Furthermore, we encourage clubs to collaborate with each other to share their experiences and lessons learned about implementing peer support.

Lions International offers great programming to provide support for people who are living with or are at risk for diabetes. Many Lions and Leos are already doing peer support, either as part of an organized effort or on their own. This workbook will simply share ideas to improve what you are already doing.

Remember that peer support is not a replacement for diabetes education or clinical care from healthcare professionals. For additional information not addressed in this workbook, please reach out to your local diabetes organizations.



## Section 1. Overview of diabetes and peer support groups

Thank you for your interest in the Lions Clubs International Diabetes Peer Support Groups program! Creating and running a diabetes peer support group can be a rewarding experience for your club and the participants you serve. Through this experience, you will help us get one step closer to our goal of improving the quality of life for those living with diabetes. If your club, district or multiple district is starting a diabetes peer support group or is looking to refine your current diabetes peer support group, this guide will help you with the rules and expectations of a diabetes peer support group to ensure that your group is successful.

### A. What is diabetes?

According to the International Diabetes Federation, diabetes is a disease that occurs when the pancreas can no longer make or properly use insulin. Insulin is a hormone produced by the pancreas that allows glucose from ingested carbohydrates to pass into our cells for energy. Without insulin, blood glucose levels can rise and cause negative health outcomes to the body. There are three types of diabetes:

- » **Type 1 diabetes:** Type 1 occurs when your body produces little to no insulin. Those living with type 1 diabetes must take daily injections to maintain proper blood glucose levels. This form of diabetes cannot be prevented and usually develops in childhood or adolescence.
- » **Type 2 diabetes:** Type 2 occurs when your body does not make good use of the insulin it produces. Some people living with type 2 can slow the progression of their disease through diet and exercise, but over time they will require medication or insulin to maintain proper blood glucose levels.
- » **Gestational diabetes:** Gestational diabetes occurs when blood glucose is high during pregnancy and is associated with adverse health effects for both the mother and child. Someone who develops gestational diabetes is at an increased risk of developing type 2 diabetes later in life (What is Diabetes, n.d.).

### B. What is prediabetes?

According to the Association of Diabetes Care & Education Specialists, prediabetes occurs when blood glucose levels are higher than normal, but not high enough to be considered as type 2 diabetes. Without proper intervention, prediabetes can lead to type 2 diabetes or cause negative health outcomes like stroke and heart disease. With proper diet and exercise, the risk of developing type 2 diabetes from prediabetes will greatly decrease (Diabetes Prevention & Prediabetes, n.d.). This resource primarily discusses support groups for people with type 1 diabetes, type 2 diabetes and gestational diabetes. If you're interested in holding support groups for individuals with prediabetes, please contact your local diabetes organization to learn more about preventative measures being taken in your area.



## C. The need for diabetes peer support

### **Diabetes is an international public health issue.**

- » Globally, 463 million people are living with diabetes and 374 million people are at risk of developing type 2 diabetes.
- » Over 75% of people living with diabetes live in low- and middle-income countries (International Diabetes Federation, 2019).

### **Without proper treatment and management, diabetes is a deadly disease.**

- » 4 million deaths were caused by diabetes in 2019.
- » 87% of diabetes-related deaths occur in low- and middle-income countries (International Diabetes Federation, 2019).
- » Diabetes can lead to very bad complications including blindness, amputations and impotence.
- » Disparities in diabetes outcomes exist for many populations that are hardly reached by conventional health services.

### **Diabetes self-management is challenging.**

- » If the average person with diabetes spends six hours in a doctor's or health professional's office annually, that leaves 8,760 hours a year that they are "on their own" to manage their diabetes. Diabetes self-management can feel like a full-time job!
- » Diabetes is "progressive" — that means it gets worse over time.
- » Adopting healthier lifestyles requires difficult behavior changes, maintained over time.
- » There are many challenges posed by social determinants of health, such as culture, environment, education, working conditions, access to medical care and community infrastructure (Clark and Utz, 2014).

### **Diabetes treatment is costly.**

- » An estimated US\$760 billion was spent on diabetes-related health expenditure in 2019.
- » 35% of diabetes-related health expenditure is spent in low- and middle-income countries (International Diabetes Federation, 2019).



**Peer support programs can be effective in delaying the onset of diabetes among people with prediabetes, improving self-management of diabetes and preventing complications.**

- » Social support, a key ingredient of support groups, has been proven to aid in diabetes self-management (Strom & Egede, 2012).
- » Peer support has been shown to improve diabetes knowledge, self-care behaviors, glycemic control and emotional well-being (Fisher et al., 2017).
- » Peer-led diabetes self-management education (DSME) is effective and expands the delivery of diabetes education to marginalized groups.
- » Most people cannot sustain changes from DSME. Peer support helps DSME by encouraging people to attend DSME programs and by providing diabetes self-management support (DSMS) afterwards to maintain knowledge gains and behavior changes.
- » Peer support plays a role in addressing social determinants of health by helping people solve problems, overcome challenges and access resources.
- » Peer support is more effective for people starting off with poorer self-management and glycemic control — in other words, the people who need it most.
- » Peer support can address some of the mental health burdens associated with diabetes, such as low mood or depression.

### Key messages

- » Diabetes is an international public health issue that is costly, challenging and deadly without proper intervention.
- » Peer support programs can be effective in delaying the onset of diabetes among people with prediabetes, improving self-management of diabetes and preventing complications.
- » Peer support is not cheap care for poor people, but good care for all people.

## D. An opportunity for Lion/Leo involvement

Lions and Leos are active members of the community who take action to make a difference, locally and around the world, bringing kindness and hope where it's needed most. We see and feel the effects of diabetes and are aiming to improve the quality of life for those diagnosed. One of the best ways to do this is through peer support groups! Starting a diabetes peer support group could be a wise choice for your club, district or multiple district for several reasons:

### **Lions and Leos are active and knowledgeable about the needs in their community.**

- » Lions and Leos will be able to efficiently recruit participants and experts through their outstanding reputations in their communities.
- » Lions and Leos can collaborate with like-minded community organizations to increase access to information and resources.

### **Lions and Leos are always looking for new service activities that allow them to directly work with the populations they serve.**

- » Diabetes peer support groups allow your club, district or multiple district to actively support the diabetes community through hands-on service.
- » A diabetes peer support group is an ongoing service activity with several Lion/Leo roles that require little medical or diabetes knowledge.
- » There is very little cost associated with starting and maintaining a sustainable diabetes peer support group as compared to other service projects.

### **Lions and Leos are champions in the global cause of diabetes!**

- » Starting or assisting a diabetes peer support groups program is a great way to get involved in the diabetes global cause.
- » These programs are important in filling gaps in diabetes care and strengthening public health.
- » Diabetes is not an individual burden, but a public health challenge that needs community involvement.

*"I believe that sponsoring a diabetic support group in your area brings great satisfaction in knowing you are helping and supporting local people."*  
*-PDG David Morris, MJF of the Congleton Lions Club*



## E. What is peer support?

Peer support is practical, social and emotional support exchanged between people with shared lived experiences, such as living with diabetes. People who have gone through similar challenges have a unique perspective and understanding of what it's like to live with diabetes. By developing trusting relationships with other people who have diabetes, peers can catalyze behavior change and maintain these changes over time.

Peer support is frequent, ongoing, accessible and flexible. It complements and enhances other healthcare services by creating the emotional, social and practical assistance necessary for managing a disease and staying healthy. Specifically, peers can empower persons with diabetes to eat healthier foods, exercise more, adhere to medications, reduce risk factors such as smoking and drinking alcohol, cope with stress, improve self-monitoring, solve problems and utilize clinical and community resources (Tang & Fisher, 2020).

Managing diabetes is challenging for many people, especially if they don't get the support they need from family and friends. Often, even though family and friends want to help, they don't have the knowledge and experience to provide appropriate support. Peers can tap into their own experiences to help others with their diabetes self-management and perhaps even help family members learn about ways in which they can support their loved ones.

Peer support programs come in all varieties, and few are identical. If that's the case, how can we set standards to help assure program quality and effectiveness? One way of promoting standards is to use Peers for Progress's "Five Key Functions of Peer Support."

**Being There, Shared Experience:** Often, the most important thing that peers can do is to be there when others need them. We should not underestimate the value of knowing that support is within reach and feeling a genuine connection with the person providing support.

**Assistance in Daily Management:** Simple objectives like "exercising 150 minutes a week" or "eating more fruits and vegetables" sound pretty straightforward in the doctor's office, but often turn out to be difficult to put into practice. The peer supporter helps turn these into specific plans that fit in with people's lifestyles and circumstances. Peer supporters use their own experiences with diet, physical activity and medication adherence in helping people figure out how to manage diabetes in their daily lives.

**Social and Emotional Support:** Through empathetic listening and encouragement, peer supporters are an integral part of helping others cope with social or emotional barriers and to stay motivated to reach their goals.



**Linkages to Clinical Care and Community Resources:** Peer supporters help bridge the gap between patients and health professionals. They can motivate each other to communicate and assert themselves to obtain regular and quality care, identify local resources for buying affordable, healthy food or to find safe places for physical activity.

**Ongoing Support:** Diabetes and other chronic diseases are “for the rest of your life,” and needs change as motivation diminishes or health problems emerge. Peer supporters keep their fellow peers engaged by providing proactive, flexible and continual long-term follow-up (Tang & Fisher, 2020).

**Review the examples of peer support below and think about which ones you are already doing or how these examples can be incorporated into your desired or existing activities:**

- ☐ Distribute information about diabetes self-management and answer questions that group members may have.
- ☐ Greet people and introduce yourself as a Lions Club International Diabetes Peer Support Group facilitator/member.
- ☐ Invite participants and their family members to participate in activities for exercise and healthy eating.
- ☐ Visit a person at their home to check in on them and use this as an opportunity to meet their family.
- ☐ Collect questions from your diabetes peer support group and get answers from doctors at the local clinic.
- ☐ Organize a meeting with a healthcare professional to talk about medications and invite support group members to bring their medications and ask questions about them.
- ☐ Lead a group discussion to help everyone set a common goal for the month, such as getting at least 5,000 steps every day.
- ☐ Ask participants about the last time they saw a doctor and encourage them to see the doctor routinely.
- ☐ Share your personal story about living with diabetes and invite others to share their stories.

## Key messages

- » A common observation among peer support programs around the world can be summarized as: “the doctors tell patients what to do, and peer supporters help patients figure out how to do it.”
- » There is no one way to do peer support. However, participants benefit more when peer support attends to the five key functions: being there, assistance in daily management, social and emotional support, linkages to clinical care and community resources and ongoing support.



## F. Why peer support groups?

There are many formats for delivering peer support, such as in-person contacts, telephone calls, text messages, social media, online message boards and virtual meetings, to name a few. There are pros and cons for each of these formats, and each plays an important role in serving the diabetes community. Programs can rely predominantly on one format, but it is often a good idea to use a combination of formats to attract and retain members that like to engage in different ways.

For community-based organizations, in-person group meetings tend to be the most popular format for reaching members of the local community. Groups provide an environment in which people can feel comfortable and be themselves. Sometimes you just need a reason to get together — and when you do, peer support happens naturally!

### **Strengths of in-person peer support groups include:**

- » Ease of starting a group using existing relationships and word-of-mouth promotion.
- » Ease of building group identity, camaraderie and a sense of belonging.
- » Ease of communicating clearly without misunderstanding.
- » Development of friendships as a result of group participation.
- » Opportunities to engage in selfless acts by supporting peers.
- » An impact on reducing feelings of isolation and loneliness.
- » Ability to learn in real-world environments.
- » Ability to provide live demonstrations and help peers practice/rehearse new skills.
- » Accountability and motivation between participants.
- » Access to highly relevant information about local resources.
- » Connection and cooperation with other local organizations.
- » Ability to organize fun, interactive events with local speakers and experts.

### **Common issues faced by in-person peer support groups can include:**

- » The perception that support groups promote negativity and complaining must be overcome.
- » Potential emotional entanglement and interpersonal conflicts.
- » Difficulty in accommodating people with disabilities, mental health challenges or illness.
- » Requirement for high-quality facilitators to address problematic behaviors that may occur among peers.
- » Limited capacity to provide 24/7 support.
- » Difficulty for people to participate anonymously.

*“I have seen people living with diabetes get their confidence and become hopeful just by attending the support group I coordinate.”*  
*- Lion Osa Chima of the Gbagada General Hospital Lions Club*



## G. Legal considerations

There are several legal issues to consider before starting a diabetes peer support group.

**Personal data protection:** Any data gathering that might be necessary should be done at the local level and adhere to local standards/laws. Once personal data has been used and the purpose of the information has been fulfilled, the personal information should be destroyed, deleted and/or erased permanently to prevent any misuse. It is generally recommended that where personal data about a minor is collected, parental consent should be obtained. You should ensure that a standard-procedure “retention and destruction of data” is implemented for participants’ personal data after the program is complete. This will minimize the potential for complaints in the future. Personal or participant data should never be sent to Lions International.

**Medical data protection:** Due to the personal nature of diseases such as diabetes, it is recommended to keep all shared information, collected health questionnaires and any other form of medical information completely confidential. All medical data that is collected should be held and maintained in accordance with local laws. Members should be prohibited from discussing the disease status of peers outside of the designated meeting space.

**Consent:** All forms should disclose in clear and distinguishable language how and what personal data may be used. As a Lions Clubs International Diabetes Peer Support Groups facilitator or host, you are responsible for complying with any local data privacy laws and protecting the information that you receive in this role. To post pictures or videos taken during any Lions Clubs International Diabetes Peer Support Groups activity on social media, it is encouraged to obtain written consent from the participants, or, if a minor, the parents/guardians. Consent to post photos of minors should be done so in accordance with any existing local laws.

**Local laws:** All local laws must be abided when establishing, running, maintaining or terminating a diabetes peer support group.



## H. Determining your club's capacity

As previously mentioned, there is a great need for diabetes peer support groups and plenty of roles for Lion and Leo involvement. Before you move forward and create your diabetes peer support group, it's important to reflect on your club, district or multiple district's capacity. A few things to consider are:

**Time commitment:** Many peer support groups last for several years, and it's imperative that we refrain from risking potential successes by terminating a group too early. Furthermore, even simple programs have many considerations and tasks, and it is very difficult for one person to assume all responsibilities for maintaining the group. Consider setting up a planning or steering committee to assist with different aspects of the program.

**Community needs and recruiting:** There are many people living with diabetes in every community served by Lions and Leo clubs. It's important to learn about the current needs of those affected by diabetes in your community. For example, if there are already several diabetes peer support groups, it might not be appropriate or necessary for you to create a new peer support group. You must also be willing to work with area hospitals and diabetes organizations to recruit individuals to become involved with your diabetes peer support group.

**Lion and Leo interest:** Since there are many roles for Lions and Leos to take on when implementing a diabetes peer support group, you must ensure that your club is interested and willing to take on project for a commitment of at least 1–2 years.

### Key messages

- » It is a good practice for diabetes peer support groups to be ongoing without a predetermined end date, but remember this also means ongoing capacity and support will be needed — so plan accordingly.
- » Fostering a sense of community among participants takes time, and we encourage you to commit to at least 1–2 years of service with a plan for succession. Current facilitators should create a pipeline for identifying and developing group members as potential group facilitators. This may start with identifying helpers to assist with meeting logistics, moving on to group co-facilitation and eventually to succession or to the start of another diabetes peer support group to absorb new members.



## Section 2. Creating your diabetes peer support group

### A. Identifying a population

After learning about the types of diabetes, it's important to realize how differently this disease presents itself. There are unique problems and solutions that accompany each type of diabetes. For example, for someone with gestational diabetes who might only be administering medication or insulin for a short period of time, insulin pump management would not be a needed discussion topic. Since different forms of diabetes come with their own unique challenges, some members might object to being in a group with participants with several different forms of diabetes. However, there are many topics that all people living with diabetes will benefit from discussing, such as coping strategies, healthy eating habits, discrimination and many more (Kurtz, 1997). Many diabetes peer support groups prefer to be inclusive to participants with any form of diabetes and even include significant others, such as parents and friends. It's up to you to decide what population you would like to support!

A few audiences to consider:

#### **Type of diabetes**

- » People living with prediabetes
- » People living with type 1 diabetes
- » People living with type 2 diabetes
- » People living with gestational diabetes

#### **Age**

- » Children living with diabetes
- » Teens living with diabetes
- » Adults living with diabetes
- » Older adults living with diabetes

#### **Disease phase**

- » People who are newly diagnosed
- » People who have been living with diabetes for an extended period of time

#### **Disease status**

- » Those who have complications or comorbidities from diabetes (i.e., heart disease, vision problems, neuropathy, etc.)
- » Those who do not have complications or comorbidities from diabetes



## Caregivers

- » Parents
- » Partners
- » Friends
- » Other relationships to people living with diabetes

## B. Establishing group size

You should consider choosing a group size that will best fit the needs of your participants as well as the capacity of your group. Most peer support groups have 10–15 participants, but this is not a strict guideline. Depending on community needs, it might be necessary to have a larger group, or depending on capacity or need, it might be necessary to have a smaller group (Kurtz, 1997).

Do not be discouraged if attendance at your diabetes peer support group fluctuates over time. Remember that maintaining attendance is difficult and complicated by many factors. It is not necessarily a reflection of the group itself or the performance of the group facilitator.

If only four people show up to a group meeting that has a typical membership of 15 people, try your best not to show your disappointment or allow it to put you in a negative mood during the meeting. There are four people that showed up and want to be there, so make them feel happy that they came!

## C. Scheduling meeting times

**Meeting times:** You should consider choosing a time that will best fit the needs of your participants. For example, if you have chosen to host a diabetes peer support group for children, you need to consider local school start and end times. If you have chosen to host a diabetes peer support group for older adults, you might have more flexibility for meeting times. This can always be changed based on feedback of the group participants. Meeting rooms should be open 15–20 minutes before the start time to allow for setup and socializing.

**Meeting length:** Most peer support groups meet for 90 minutes each session. However, meeting length should best fit the needs of your participants and can be longer or shorter based on their availability (Kurtz, 1997). For example, a peer support group comprised primarily of children might not have the capacity to sit through a 90-minute session.

**Meeting frequency:** Most peer support groups meet once a month or once a week. Consider your availability, the availability of your participants and the availability of other Lions/Leos when establishing a meeting frequency. This can always be changed based on feedback from the group participants.



## D. Identifying and recruiting roles

There are several roles required for a successful diabetes peer support group. These roles require Lion/Leo volunteers, people who are knowledgeable of diabetes and people who are living with diabetes. Some of these roles can be interchangeable depending on the needs of the diabetes peer support group. For example, some diabetes peer support group facilitators also act as group hosts, but that is not a requirement for all diabetes peer support groups.

**Participants:** Diabetes peer support group participants are members of the community who are living with diabetes that have chosen to join the diabetes peer support group. Participants are often referred to as “group members” or “peers.”

**Facilitator(s):** Diabetes peer support group facilitators plan meetings about managing diabetes and other health conditions, provide support to group members in learning how to make good choices for themselves, offer information that they are qualified to offer and much more! Diabetes peer support groups should only be facilitated by Lions/Leos if they are living with diabetes, and/or are an active member of the diabetes community, and/or have sufficient diabetes expertise. If you are active in the diabetes global cause, chances are you already know someone who fits this role! If not, please reach out to local diabetes organizations, hospitals or personal connections to find someone who is willing to take on this role. Some diabetes peer support groups function well when they are led by peers while having a medical professional present to answer questions if needed. It’s also possible to have multiple facilitators per diabetes peer support group as long as meetings are divided amongst them to ensure proper group discussion. Some peer support groups thrive without a facilitator, and members of the group take turns leading individual meetings. It’s up to you and your group to decide the best facilitating structure for your diabetes peer support group (Kurtz, 1997). For more information, view the group facilitator role description in Appendix G, found at [lionsclubs.org/DPSG](https://lionsclubs.org/DPSG).

**Volunteer Lion/Leo hosts:** Lions Clubs International Diabetes Peer Support Groups provide many service opportunities to get Lions/Leos involved in the diabetes global cause! The tasks below highlight some of the many tasks that Lions and Leos can take on with varying levels of involvement.

- » Planning meetings, activities and events.
- » Providing and/or funding food and beverages for the group.
- » Participating in trainings to improve the skills of group facilitators.
- » Inviting and/or funding speakers (with approval from the group).
- » Cooperating with local clinics and other useful organizations for persons with diabetes.
- » Designing promotional materials.
- » Publicizing the program in the community and/or on the internet.
- » Recruiting participants through a variety of channels.



- » Screening participants to join the group.
- » Developing and circulating newsletters.
- » Engaging with group members between meetings.
- » Gathering topics of interest.
- » Sponsoring participants for other events or activities.
- » And much more!

For more information on how to fundraise for your diabetes peer support group, please read our fundraising guide found at [lionsclubs.org/service-toolkit](https://lionsclubs.org/service-toolkit).

## E. Identifying a location

Meetings can occur in many diverse locations. A meeting site should be accessible, safe, comfortable and convenient for all members, with easy access to restrooms. If your club or district has its own space it normally uses for meetings, this would also likely be a great space for a support group to meet. If your group is small, you might be able to meet at a restaurant or café. If your group is large, you should consider renting a space. If your group's community is impacted by diabetes-related stigma, you should consider meeting at a private location to ensure confidentiality (Kurtz, 1997). A few popular locations for peer support groups include:

- |                         |                     |                  |
|-------------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| » Club spaces           | » Schools           | » Restaurants    |
| » Churches              | » Shopping malls    | » Public parks   |
| » Hospitals             | » Community centers | » Private homes  |
| » Partner organizations | » Gyms              | » And many more! |



## F. Virtual diabetes peer support groups

Virtual peer support groups have become increasingly popular due to improvements in telecommunications and social media. If you have a difficult time establishing a physical meeting, consider hosting virtual meetings! Online peer support groups allow members to connect virtually from their homes and offer similar benefits of in-person peer support groups.

Below are some simple online activities that can be organized and promoted among online diabetes peer support groups. All activities may be done through text messages and photo sharing. More advanced online groups may consider trying group video calls if they have experience with that format. The group facilitator can initiate each activity by sending out a message with the introductory text. The group facilitator should be prepared to post their own contribution to the activity within 24 hours if other people in the group have not responded. The group facilitator should also ask follow-up questions and encourage others to ask questions as well.

**Phone chain for emotional support:** The group facilitator creates a list of the group members and assigns each person one other group member to contact during the following week. Each person will receive one phone call and they, in turn, are responsible for initiating one phone call to their assigned person. Peers are free to talk for as little or as much as is desired.

**Resource sharing:** Start a group chat to encourage the group to share links to exercise videos, healthy recipes and recent challenges.

**Show and tell:** Have each person take a picture of an item that is meaningful to them or has a story behind it that they want to share. The item can be diabetes related or it can be something personal to the group member.

**Video contest:** Have group members record a short, two-minute video or audio clip on something positive that they are doing to take care of themselves. Have the group vote on the funniest video, most creative video and the most informative video.

### Did you know?

Lion Michael Sarin, Diabetes Awareness Chair of the Toronto Doctors Lions Club, hosts a “Walk and Talk Diabetes” diabetes peer support group in which community members engage in peer support while walking in various local areas such as parks, community centers and campgrounds instead of meeting in a formal location.



## G. Recruiting participants

In every community, there are hundreds if not thousands of people that are struggling with their diabetes and stand to benefit from participating in a Lions Clubs International Diabetes Peer Support Group. However, due to stigma, many people living with diabetes keep their diagnosis a secret. It might be difficult at first to recruit participants for your diabetes peer support group. The following section explains recruiting strategies for potential participants.

**Utilize the strength of the Lion/Leo network:** Our network of 1.4 million Lions/Leos is eager to serve our global causes. Consider reaching out to the district or multiple district leadership to share information about the program to increase interest and recruitment. Also, many diabetes service activities are connected to support groups. For example, if nearby Lions/Leos are active in type 2 screenings, they might be eager to connect those who had abnormal screenings to participate in your diabetes peer support group. Chances are, there are Lions/Leos in your area who are experienced in diabetes service activities or have key contacts who could assist you!

**Reach out to community diabetes organizations and hospitals:** A great place to start recruiting participants is to reach out to community organizations that serve diabetes. Diabetes organizations work to serve those living in the community and may be able to connect you with people who could benefit joining a diabetes peer support group. Also, hospitals have diabetes educators or endocrinologists that may be able to provide you with a platform to recruit participants or advertise your group (see Appendix C, found at [lionsclubs.org/DPSG](https://lionsclubs.org/DPSG), for a sample flyer).

**Be visible in the community:** Participate in community events as a representative of the diabetes peer support group and promote the benefits of joining. Use our flyer template and place them in high-traffic areas to attract potential participants. Consider advertising not only in community organizations or hospitals, but also gyms, supermarkets, schools, universities, libraries, health fairs or other areas with high visibility. Consider purchasing an advertisement in a local magazine, newspaper or radio station by using our press release template (see Appendix B, found at [lionsclubs.org/DPSG](https://lionsclubs.org/DPSG)). Travel to other Lions/Leo clubs or districts to talk about your diabetes peer support group to encourage other clubs to participate!

**Advertise on social media:** Share your diabetes peer support group flyer or calendar on social media and have friends and family do the same! Also, consider reaching out to local diabetes Facebook group administrators for help advertising your group.

**Contact community leaders:** Reach out to those who have status in the community, such as elected officials who are passionate about diabetes or similar causes, members of the clergy, school principals (if your program involves youth), local businesspeople, etc. (Kurtz, 1997).



**Provide screenings:** Some current Lions Clubs International Diabetes Peer Support Groups encourage people to join their group by offering free A1C, blood pressure and other health-related screenings. This offers the chance for participants to receive necessary medical care and gives groups the opportunity to showcase the importance of peer support in managing diabetes.

**Be easily recognizable:** It is helpful to wear something that clearly shows who you are, like a Lions/Leo club vest or T-shirt.

## Refine your “elevator pitch”

Think about what you might say to someone to invite them to join your diabetes peer support group. How would you persuade them to give your diabetes peer support group a try? An elevator pitch is a succinct and memorable advertisement for your group that you can say in 30 seconds or less. Below is a simple script to get you started on crafting your own elevator pitch to recruit participants.

My name is \_\_**(insert name)**\_\_ and I volunteer with the \_\_**(insert club)**\_\_ Lions Clubs International Diabetes Peer Support Group. Our group is dedicated to helping people with diabetes live healthier and happier lives. We help each other learn about self-care, make lifestyle improvements, stay motivated and overcome the challenges of living with diabetes. If that sounds like something you’d be interested in, we meet every \_\_**(insert meeting dates)**\_\_ at \_\_**(insert time)**\_\_ and we welcome everyone. If you give me your contact information, I’ll send you the details about our meetups. I’m here if you have any questions.



## Section 3. Planning support group meetings

### A. Meeting format

There are a few common peer support group formats that can provide a solid framework for groups to feel more secure when getting started. The graph below, developed by Peers for Progress, depicts the wide spectrum of peer support group meeting formats that are commonly used. The main decision to make when determining a meeting format is if you would prefer a closed or open meeting format; a closed group is controlled with limited or no group member addition, while an open group is flexible with new members joining at any time (Schopler & Galinsky, 1984). Closed groups generally focus on a set curriculum, while open groups can include predetermined topics or open discussion. This framework of formats may be helpful if you are new to diabetes peer support groups or are looking to strengthen your existing diabetes peer support group, however, there are other formats that might work best for your group. Consult with your peers if you're unsure of which format will be best for your diabetes peer support group!

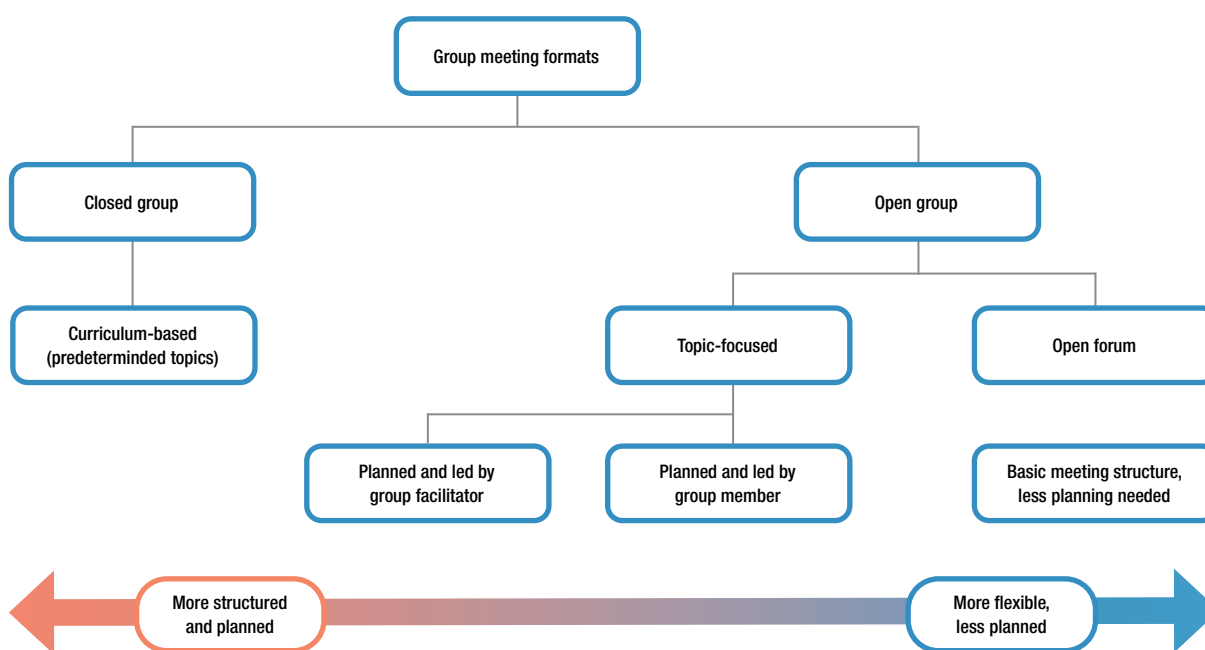


Figure 2: This graph was developed by Peers for Progress and depicts the wide spectrum of meeting formats that are commonly used for peer support groups.

## B. Conversation format

Peer support groups should encourage participation from all participants without pressuring individuals to talk when they don't feel comfortable doing so. Asking group members to share their personal story is a great way to start a conversation. Some groups encourage open, free-flowing conversation, while others encourage an approach where each member takes a turn in order of where they are seated. If some members dominate the conversation, dividing up time for each member to speak might be ideal (Kurtz, 1997).

If you would like everyone to share in a large group, start with one person and proceed around the room in a single direction. It is important that everyone be offered a chance to speak and that you keep track of this as a facilitator. Participants should be allowed the opportunity to skip their turn, but you should come back to them at the end to see if they would like to speak.

Consider dividing large groups into smaller units to encourage participants who may feel less comfortable speaking up in a large group. Try practices such as “pair and share” (two people talk and then share out to the larger group), small groups (3-4 people), or “concentric circles” (best with even numbers, 10+ people).

Concentric circles involve splitting a group in half and having one half form a circle at arm's length. Each person in the other half of the group should stand in front of another person. This forms an inner circle facing outward and an outer circle facing inward. Each person can then have a short discussion about a prompt for some amount of time. As the facilitator, you can rotate the inner or outer circle (i.e., “outer circle, step three people to your right”) and those pairs may have a discussion.

## C. Topics to consider

Peer support groups are meant to be fluid and focus on group participation. However, it is important to lay the framework for potential topics to bring up at your group meeting. It is important to emphasize that all topics must be wanted and approved by the group and facilitator. These topics might include:

**Goals:** Listing, defining and reviewing participant goals for the duration of their group membership. See the next section for more information on goal setting.

**Tips for diabetes management:** Diabetes management strategies to educate or inspire peers. These might include:

- » Delaying vision loss, heart, kidney, feet and/or dental issues.
- » Nutritional needs for those with diabetes such as healthy foods, low carb meals, etc.
- » Overall wellness, such as social and emotional well-being, while living with diabetes.
- » Exercises and fitness routines to help in diabetes management.
- » Enjoyable hobbies or recreational activities that can help to relieve stress.
- » Tips for traveling.
- » Learning about common diabetes medications and insulin.



**Coping skills:** Sharing stories of hardships and resiliency to increase the ability of peers to manage difficult times. Some members might be suffering from depression associated with managing their diabetes and could benefit from honest discussion on how to cope with it.

**Success sharing:** Sharing successful aspects of diabetes management or any other positive event that has occurred while having diabetes.

**News:** This could include new research or news stories that involve diabetes.

**Healthcare updates:** Updates in anything related to healthcare. This could include technology, new forms of treatment or anything else related to diabetes healthcare.

**Discrimination:** Addressing diabetes-related discrimination due to diabetes status.

**Resiliency:** The process of recovering from a difficult diabetes-related event.

**Insulin:** The importance of adhering to an insulin regimen, ways to manage barriers to procuring insulin and tips to manage fear and stigma associated with taking insulin.

**And many more!**

Depending on the topic, it might be beneficial to invite qualified guest speakers to host a discussion. For example, some current Lions Clubs International Diabetes Peer Support Groups invite local endocrinologists, nutritionists, diabetes educators and other relevant guests to speak at their group. Check in with your group to see if they would be interested in having a guest speaker at meetings.

*“Always use a speaker who will treat the patients  
and residents with respect and kindness.”  
-Lion Suzanne Herbst of the Gordons Bay Lions Club*



## D. Planning and running meetings

Some current Lions Clubs International Diabetes Peer Support Groups prefer meetings without a set agenda to allow for free-flowing exchange of information and shared experiences. These meetings are usually less prescriptive and have less planning involved. However, some Lions/Leos prefer planning a formal agenda. It's important to recognize that both methods can be successful. If your group believes that a structured meeting would be beneficial to ensure that certain topics are addressed, sit down with your facilitator and make a plan for future meetings. You should always allow room for changes based on group feedback. Some basic steps for running peer support group meetings from Peers for Progress are outlined below:

Basic steps for running a meeting	
Start the meeting on time	Start no more than five minutes late and thank everyone who came on time. When latecomers straggle in, don't stop your process to acknowledge them. Wait until after a break or another appropriate time to have them introduce themselves.
Welcome everyone	Make a point to welcome everyone who comes. Don't complain about the size of a group if the turnout is small! Thank all of those who are there for coming, and analyze the turnout attendance later. Go with who you have.
Make introductions	Go around the group and ask participants to say something about themselves. Start with yourself to provide an example. When new group members join, make sure to redo introductions for the entire group to help them feel welcomed. Consider icebreaker activities that get people to physically move around and interact with each other.
Set the agenda	Go over what's going to happen in the meeting and check with the group to make sure they agree with the agenda. This builds a sense of ownership of the meeting and lets participants know early on that you're there to facilitate their process and their meeting, not your own agenda.
Summarize the meeting	Before ending the meeting, summarize what happened during the meeting and follow-up actions for the next meeting.
Thank participants and close the meeting	Take a minute to thank people who helped you prepare things for the meeting. Thank all of the participants for their input and energy, and for making the meeting a success.



If you're planning to include an activity, you may consider using an activity plan that helps to guide potential key takeaways, goals and resource needs. A sample activity plan developed by Peers for Progress includes the following:

Activity plan	
Date:	
Activity title	
Goal of the activity (1–3 key points)	1. 2. 3.
Key takeaways (3–4 key points)	1. 2. 3. 4.
Activity outline	Opening: Introduction of new material: Guided practice: Question and answer: Open discussion: Adjourn:
Materials needed	
Lion/Leo roles	
Notes and tips	



## E. Resource needs

Some groups rely heavily on specific material needs. Below are some materials and resources that might help execute a successful diabetes peer support group:

- » Office supplies (i.e., pen and paper for people that want to take notes)
- » White boards or flip-charts
- » Snacks, drinks or other refreshments
- » Computers (preferably laptops or tablets)
- » Internet or Wi-Fi access
- » Tables
- » Chairs
- » Name tags
- » Sign-in sheet
- » Tissues
- » Hand sanitizer
- » Items specific to your activity or topic (i.e., specific materials, visual aids, etc.)

## F. Establishing crisis management procedures

In the course of running a diabetes peer support group, group facilitators or other Lion/Leo volunteers may encounter situations that are too complex, dangerous or simply outside their comfort zone. It is important to be able to recognize when problems exceed the group facilitator's capability and responsibility.

If you recognize that a group member is experiencing severe physical or emotional distress that poses an immediate threat to their health, **do not attempt to solve the problem on your own**. If a situation like this comes up during a group meeting, the group facilitator should say, "That sounds like something you should discuss with your doctor (or other appropriate social service)." After the group meeting, follow up with the group member in private to 1) encourage the group member to seek immediate medical, social service or law enforcement assistance and 2) ask for permission to alert a family member to the situation.

You must establish crisis management procedures in the event of an emergency such as a natural disaster or serious accident or injury. Depending on your meeting location, your building might already have emergency protocols. Speak to someone in charge of facility operations to ensure compliance.

In the event of serious illness or accident, it is important to have emergency contacts on file (see Appendix D for our participant registration form template, found at [lionsclubs.org/DPSG](https://lionsclubs.org/DPSG)). Follow your local laws to assess the seriousness of injury or illness and transport them to the appropriate medical facility, if necessary. If your diabetes peer support group includes minors, you are responsible for contacting and informing the youth's parent(s) or guardian(s) immediately in the event of a medical emergency.



## Section 4. Running your support group

### A. Onboarding new members

Some diabetes peer support groups feel that it's important to onboard or screen potential participants to ensure they will fit well with the rest of the group. These questions can be specific to your group, but we have included a sample questionnaire (see Appendix E, found at [lionsclubs.org/DPSG](https://lionsclubs.org/DPSG)) to help guide you. Some questions to consider are:

- » Demographic questions (age, gender, etc.)
- » Contact information
- » Emergency contacts
- » Diabetes status
- » Motivation and goals
- » Consent forms

It may also be helpful to provide new members with a packet of other onboarding materials, such as:

- » Informational brochures
- » Activity calendars
- » List of group rules
- » Key contact information
- » Maps and directions
- » Other resources that are important to your group!

Building rapport begins the moment that you first interact with new member, whether that happens during recruitment or onboarding. People want to feel that they are being heard and understood — not just as a person with a disease, but as a whole person. Express genuine interest when asking about their hobbies, family, sports, music or interests.

Some people may want to know more about you to develop a trusting relationship. Talk about your family, interests and experiences with diabetes — as much as you are comfortable — while ensuring the focus is still on the participants. You can even tell them about personal challenges that you face in your life. Allowing yourself to be vulnerable goes a long way in building a trusting and meaningful connection.

Please remember to remain in compliance with local data collection laws and regulations.



## B. Establishing group rules

Ground rules can keep your peers engaged and happy. Ground rules should be established by the group and enforced by the facilitator and other group members. A few ground rules to consider are:

- » Stay kind and don't criticize peers
- » Discussions are confidential and don't leave this room
- » Refrain from asking personal questions unless permission has been granted
- » And many more (Kurtz, 1997)

Ground rules should be revisited to ensure rules stay relevant and helpful. Group members should be involved in establishing ground rules and the consequences if they are not followed. Discuss with your group to find suitable rules and establish when and how to dismiss a member from the group.

### Key messages to promote within your group

- » Good clinical care is important, but equally important is the role of individual behaviors. And individual behaviors depend on the support of family, friends, peers and communities.
- » No one can make you take care of your diabetes; it is up to you.
- » Group members are not permitted to give medical advice to others.



## C. Goal setting

Goal setting should be the foundation of your diabetes peer support group. Some groups like to focus on specific medical goals, like improvements in A1C, as a measure of success. Some examples of goals for diabetes self-management are:

### **Blood glucose monitoring**

- » Testing blood glucose regularly as established by your doctor.

### **Medication plan**

- » Ask the doctor to explain why these medications are important to me.
- » Talk to my group about my concerns about taking medication or insulin.

### **Healthy diet**

- » Eat five servings of fruits and/or vegetables a day.
- » Eat healthy snacks in the afternoon and evening.

### **Exercise**

- » Walk for 30 minutes in the morning/evening at least five days a week.
- » Choose to take the stairs whenever there is an opportunity during the day.

### **Reduce risk factors**

- » Quit smoking.
- » Check my feet every day before going to bed.

### **Healthy coping**

- » Practice yoga, stretching or meditation to relax and manage stress.
- » Find the cause of stress and implement ways to change the situation.

This goal list isn't exhaustive, as there are many types of goals that peer support groups can strive for. The goal of some groups is simply to meet on a regular basis! One way to help participants set goals is through action planning. A diabetes action plan is a tool that persons with diabetes, peer support groups and healthcare providers can use together to guide and coordinate diabetes treatment and self-management behaviors. Diabetes action plans help patients set concrete goals, track their health data and share information with people that assist them in their diabetes care. Participants can start by choosing one or two goals that they feel they can accomplish and then decide on specific steps to help them achieve that goal. See Appendix I, found at [lionsclubs.org/DPSG](https://lionsclubs.org/DPSG), for an example of a diabetes action plan that you can implement in your peer support group.



## D. Tips for facilitators

There are many ways to prepare facilitators to serve in their role. Some organizations offer training for diabetes peer support group facilitators, so be sure to check in with your local diabetes association to see what they offer. Items to consider as a facilitator are:

Tips for facilitators	
<b>LISTEN</b> People need to feel like they are being heard and understood.	<b>ASK</b> Ask questions to encourage people to share their thoughts and feelings.
<b>MODEL</b> Model the behaviors and attitudes you want the group to have.	<b>REINFORCE</b> Use positive reinforcement and reward participants for achievements.
<b>ACKNOWLEDGE</b> Acknowledge the social climate in your community surrounding diabetes.	<b>UTILIZE STRENGTHS</b> Honor individual strengths and encourage group members to do more in their area of expertise.
<b>NOTICE</b> Notice your emotions and the emotions of the people around you and be sensitive to those emotions. Allow disagreements in conversations but intervene when necessary.	<b>FOLLOW UP</b> Contact your peers regularly (with permission). People like it when someone checks in on them.
<b>FOCUS</b> The focus should be on your peers — their experiences and their concerns, not on your personal journey.	<b>LEAN</b> Lean on diabetes experts and local clinics for any help that you need.
<b>BE THERE</b> One of the most powerful things is to be there for your peers. Your time is your greatest asset.	

For more information, visit Appendix G, found at [lionsclubs.org/DPSG](https://lionsclubs.org/DPSG), for the group facilitator role description.

*“Listen sympathetically and don’t be judgmental, just helpful. Kindness is a must!”*

*-Lion Anne Bowles, Diabetic Accessor of the Mijas La Cala Lions Club*



## E. Things for facilitators to avoid

- » Speaking more than your peers.
- » Dismissing your peers' feelings as not being serious ("Lots of people have it worse than you", "What do you have to feel bad about").
- » Repeating information to the group that someone told you individually.
- » Making your peers feel bad about their choices or their behaviors.
- » Pressuring your peers to make changes that they are not prepared to make.
- » Trying to scare your peers into making changes.
- » Thinking that you know what's best for your peers.
- » Sharing inaccurate information (you don't have to know all the answers, but make sure you know how to get reliable information).
- » Recommending medical treatments or providing medical advice.

### Key messages

- » Some organizations offer training for diabetes peer support group facilitators, be sure to check in with your local diabetes association to see what they offer.
- » Being a good facilitator is not easy. Group facilitation is a learned skill that improves with training and practice.

## Section 5. Maintaining your diabetes peer support group

### A. Identifying successes and areas for improvement

Generally speaking, a great way to measure the success of your diabetes peer support groups is to examine attendance rates. If your group has sustained or increased membership, there's a good chance you have a very successful group! One of the best ways to measure diabetes peer support group success is through surveying participants. Pre-surveys can be given out to new participants to gauge interest, motivation and establish a baseline for future surveys. Check-in surveys can be given out periodically to assess participant satisfaction and identify progress. View Appendices E and F, found at [lionsclubs.org/DPSG](https://lionsclubs.org/DPSG), for sample check-in surveys.



## B. What to do between group meetings

Engaging with group members between meetings is an important strategy for facilitators to maintain participant motivation and amplify benefits of the group meetings. These small enhancements can help ensure that your group has consistent attendance over the long term.

### Engaging individuals

- » Even short phone calls, text messages, voicemails and personalized emails are enough to give group members a feeling of security and that someone “has their back.”
- » Encourage group members to pair up according to criteria they have decided on, such as geographic proximity, similar interests, similar demographics, etc.
- » Organize home visits to group members that may be experiencing difficulties (led by one or two volunteers).

### Engaging the entire group

- » Create dedicated group chats and social media groups to facilitate communication between meetings. Encourage sharing of questions, personal experiences, milestones reached, success stories, challenges faced, etc.
- » Set up group challenges with prizes and/or recognition awarded at the next group meeting.

## C. Responding to problems

Problems will inevitably arise when a group of people with varying personalities come together. Some of the problems you may encounter are:

### Attendance/structure

- » Absences: Missing members can make conversation difficult. If attendance is ever remarkably low, it is encouraged to reach out to peers to see the underlying reason and adjust the group accordingly.
- » Group composition: If groups are mixed based on diabetes type, age or disease status, you might have members who experience more conflict due to differences. Again, it’s important to pay attention and talk to members to see how you can properly adjust the group based on the expressed needs of the participants.
- » Non-member participation: Some members might want to bring friends, partners or other non-members. It’s important to establish a policy for non-member participation in order to avoid conflict. If there is interest from group members to bring family members or friends, a separate outing may be a good opportunity to meet this need.
- » Diversity: Diversity among group members can bring both pros and cons. Diversity of class, race, gender identity, sexual orientation, nationality, language and religion can allow for a variety of perspectives, but also potential conflict between peers with differing backgrounds. Facilitators should strive to create an inclusive environment for all individuals, highlighting the qualities and interests that peers have in common.



## Conversation

- » Dominating conversation: The most common problem is when a group member dominates the conversation, taking up a disproportionate share of the group's time. It's important to encourage everyone to participate in order to discourage those individuals from dominating the conversation. Most of the time conversation dominance is unintentional but could still lead to later conflict. Consider having a "talking piece" or an object that a member can hold that indicates they are the only one who is permitted to talk at that time (Winters & America, 2014).
- » Competition between peers: A common problem within diabetes peer support groups is competition between peers to be recognized for their greater suffering and receive more sympathy from the group. The facilitator should remind the group that individual experiences are unique and that it is not helpful to compare one person's suffering with another's.
- » Silence in the group or low intensity of conversation: Although conversation should be initiated by the group or the facilitator, it's possible that only surface-level issues will arise. The best thing to do is continuously encourage open and honest discussion to make participants feel comfortable talking about tough topics. To strengthen the sense of camaraderie within the group, you may consider trying some community-building activities. See Appendix H, found at [lionsclubs.org/DPSG](https://lionsclubs.org/DPSG), for a list of community-building activities.
- » Breach of confidentiality: To review established ground rules, consult local laws and regulations, and assess whether the responsible individual should be dismissed from the group.



### Facilitation techniques for problematic behaviors

Behavior	Possible explanation	Response
Overly talkative	May be well-informed or over-eager	» Do not respond in sarcastic or exhaustive tones » Slow them with challenging questions
Highly argumentative	Combative personality, emotionally charged issue	» Do not react in anger » Get opinions from others and move on » Talk to them during breaks to gain insight
Overly helpful	Trying to help or trying to exclude others	» Direct questions to others » Thank them and suggest letting others help
Rambling	Does not focus on subject	» Thank them, restate relevant points, move on » Acknowledge interest and refocus » Last resort — look at your watch
Personality clash	Two or more members clash	» Note points of disagreement, minimize when possible » Draw attention to agenda
Side conversation	May be related, may be personal	» Call on individual, repeat last opinion and ask for their response » Stand behind them
Inarticulate	Lacks ability or confidence to express thoughts	» “Let me repeat that...” » “If I understand you correctly...”
Wrong comment	Misunderstands topic, hidden agenda	» Handle with care, avoid embarrassing them » Ask them to remain focused on topic
Refuses to participate	Bored, insecure, feels superior, disinterested	» Arouse interest by seeking their opinions » Sincere, subtle recognition

## Burnout or fatigue

- » Facilitators/leaders: Leadership roles bring on additional workloads that can lead to burnout or fatigue. It's important to divide workloads before burnout occurs, so encourage your facilitator to ask for help. As a host, you might be susceptible to burnout as well. Lower your risk for burnout by adjusting your expectations, celebrating successes, learning to say no and avoiding sources of stress.

Common challenges for group facilitators:

- » Unreasonable feelings of responsibility for participants' progress
- » Frustration over participants not performing as well as expected
- » Over-involvement with participants' problems
- » Difficulty in establishing rapport with participants
- » Participants reject offer of support
- » Cultural, language, age and socioeconomic differences

Signs indicating burnout:

- » Feeling emotionally, physically and mentally tired
  - » Unable to experience a sense of connection with participants
  - » Feeling negative about the time involved in leading groups
  - » Questioning whether your role is valued
  - » Experiencing a sense of failure or low self-esteem
  - » Feeling frustrated, helpless and/or hopeless
- » Members: Similar to leadership burnout, it's important to encourage participants to ask for help, adjust their expectations, share what they are comfortable with and celebrate successes to lower their risk for burnout.

Member conflict: When people become upset during a diabetes peer support group, it can put a strain on the group and its members. Encourage upset participants to meet with the facilitator or host before lashing out at their peers. If their anger is pervasive, the group structure should be examined and adjusted accordingly (Kurtz, 1997).



## D. Resources for diabetes peer support groups

While this resource was developed to help guide your diabetes peer support group, local diabetes organizations are the experts on diabetes in your community. For additional information not addressed in this workbook, please reach out to local diabetes organizations. For additional Lions International resources that could be helpful for supporting your diabetes peer support group, visit [lionsclubs.org/resources](https://lionsclubs.org/resources). These resources include:

### Diabetes Support Groups Project Planner

This [project planner](#) summarizes the information offered in this workbook and gives basic tips on starting, running and improving a diabetes peer support group. For more information, please visit our project planner webpage at [lionsclubs.org/service-project-planner](https://lionsclubs.org/service-project-planner).

### Fundraising guide

This [guide](#) will help you think through and plan for two of the most common forms: an online fundraiser and an in-person event fundraiser. For more information, please visit [lionsclubs.org/service-toolkit](https://lionsclubs.org/service-toolkit).

### Diabetes fact sheets

These [fact sheets](#) display important diabetes statistics, separated by region and country. For more information, please visit [lionsclubs.org/diabetes-fact-sheets](https://lionsclubs.org/diabetes-fact-sheets).

### Developing local partnerships guide

This [guide](#) will help you prepare your club for a partnership as well as identify and approach potential partners. For more information, please visit [lionsclubs.org/service-toolkit](https://lionsclubs.org/service-toolkit).

### MyLion® service reporting

Reporting your service in MyLion® or your local regional reporting system allows you to celebrate your diabetes peer support group! Once you report your service, your club becomes eligible for service awards and other forms of recognition. Reporting your service allows us to accurately measure our global impact, identify the best ways to work together, bring attention to the great work of Lions/Leos and ensure clubs' service is supported in the best ways possible. For more information, please visit [myapps.lionsclubs.org](https://myapps.lionsclubs.org).



## E. Develop a plan for succession

To ensure your diabetes peer support group lasts for years to come, facilitators should create a pipeline for identifying and developing group members as potential group facilitators. Although you might be planning to facilitate your peer support group for several years, you will eventually need to create a succession plan. This may start with identifying helpers to assist with meeting logistics, moving on to group co-facilitation and eventually to succession or to the start of another diabetes peer support group to absorb new members. Do your best to identify participants who could have the capacity and skills necessary to become a facilitator in the future.

## Section 6. Opportunities for participants and next steps

Diabetes peer support group participants might benefit from Lion/Leo membership. When you become a Lion/Leo, you become part of a global network of volunteers working together to make a difference. Here are just a few of the great benefits they can expect:

### A. Membership

**Join a community of good:** There are over 48,000 Lions/Leo clubs around the world. Each is filled with people like you who've decided to take action and serve others. Lions and Leos form unique friendships and meaningful connections that can last a lifetime.

**Put leadership skills into action:** A Lions/Leo club is a great place to develop your leadership skills and put them into action. Each club offers opportunities to lead, along with first-class training from our global association.

**Access a global support system:** Every Lions/Leo and club is supported by our international association. Lions International staff members are constantly working on tools and technology to enhance your service. Lions Clubs International Foundation (LCIF) grants empower Lions and Leos and increase their service impact.

**Experience the feeling of service:** At the heart of every Lions/Leo club is one constant: service. Giving your time and energy to others is a fantastic way to help your community. Yet, it also provides a great feeling for you that can spread and have a positive impact in your life and how you approach the world.



## B. Plan additional diabetes programs

The hearts of Lions and Leos beat for service. Since 1917, our aim to bring health and hope to humanity has never wavered. Service is our journey! As we serve, we grow. Is your diabetes peer support group trying to help others living with diabetes in your community? With Lions International, there are several programs for your group to get involved in!

**Strides for Diabetes Awareness:** Strides is a highly visible, family-friendly activity that promotes diabetes awareness, education and the importance of healthy exercise for youth and adults at risk of or living with diabetes. For more information, visit [lionsclubs.org/strides](https://lionsclubs.org/strides).

**Diabetes Camps:** The Diabetes Camps program is comprised of day camps, overnight camps and international camps or exchange programs. Interested youth discover available camp programs through local Lions or Leo clubs, and clubs participate by volunteering time, fundraising and/or coordinating a camp. For more information, visit [lionsclubs.org/diabetes-camps-program](https://lionsclubs.org/diabetes-camps-program).

**Type 2 diabetes screenings:** A type 2 diabetes screening project is a one-day community event that provides type 2 diabetes education, awareness and screening services, including referral services for community members. Project organizers work with medical professional screeners or medical staff to determine screening methods and equipment. For more information, visit [lionsclubs.org/type2](https://lionsclubs.org/type2).

**Apply for an LCIF grant:** LCIF has a wide variety of grants available to help Lions and Leos serve their local communities and the world. For decades, LCIF has contributed to efforts in the focus areas of vision, disaster relief, youth and humanitarian causes. For more information on grants that you may be eligible for, please visit the [lionsclubs.org/lcif-grants-toolkit](https://lionsclubs.org/lcif-grants-toolkit).



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