

Homebirth Cesarean Support Group Guidelines

Welcome! We are honored to have you here.

Many of the fears people have about sharing have to do with the level of trust a person feels when coming to a group for the first time. Trust level may be very low if a person has had a bad experience in a group setting; conversely, the trust level may be high if an experience has been positive. The feeling of trust must be encouraged by the group members.

- * Attendance does not require you to share your story. You may participate at your own comfort level.
- * This is not professional group therapy. This is a mom-to-mom support group. The facilitators, Courtney and Pamela, are not acting as therapists. We are here to help the group to maintain focus, stay on time, and hold the space as a safe place to share feelings and ask questions.
- * The group is on a fixed amount of time; 2 hours. In order to be timely, we may need to interrupt and bring someone's sharing to a conclusion so that everyone will have time to speak.
- * A primary goal for the group is to be empathetic, not to bombard or fix one another. Feelings are neither right nor wrong. It is O.K. to have and acknowledge any and all feelings. It is acceptable to feel and express anger at situations but not acceptable to be hostile toward each other.
- * If you need to leave the group for a bathroom break, a drink, to tend to your baby, or because you need some alone time or space feel free to do so.
- * We are not here to judge. We all have feelings about each other's personal situation. It would be inappropriate to make a judgmental statement or direct unsolicited advice to another group member regarding an expressed belief, conviction or feeling.
- * Complete confidentiality outside the group is absolutely required concerning identifiable personal information shared in the group.
- * Everyone has the right to speak or not speak. If they choose to speak, no interrupting. When each person is done sharing, she can ask for advice or feedback or she can tell us that she just needs to speak but doesn't want input from others.
- * We come together from many diverse backgrounds and experiences to support and to receive support from each other. We need to be sensitive to the feelings of others as we express our own beliefs.
- * Each participant is encouraged to "take ownership" of the group; that is, to offer comments and suggestions to the facilitators that will enhance the group's functioning. We welcome your input and ideas.

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