

Promoting Excellence in ECI PEER DISCUSSION GROUPS

Host Guidelines

In agreeing to host a Peer Discussion Group I accept that my primary responsibilities are (i) nominating a topic & designing the structure of the session, (ii) organising a venue and time, (iii) advertising the discussion on the ECI Learning Events website, and (iv) introducing / facilitating the discussion. In order to do this, you have access to funds to reimburse you for (a) a fee for a presenter (up to \$100 if required) and (c) venue and catering charges (up to \$100 if required).

Nominating a topic

There are no suitable or unsuitable topics; the gauge of suitability is the number of people who RSVP and participate. Please note that topics of demonstrated interest through the 2006 Learning Needs Analysis are:

- Family strengths models
- Family responses to grief
- Attachment theory
- Family partnership theories
- Involving parents in problem solving
- Mental illness in families
- Medication
- Assessment

Designing a Peer Discussion Group

There are several models you may choose:

Model	Your role
"Open Space" Discussion	<p>Set a topic, preferably in the form of a problem:solution statement e.g., "Creating optimism in a depressed parent" or "Minimising distractions in home environments"</p> <p>Introduce the topic with a Why Frame:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "Have you ever been in a situation where ?" 2. "Well, let me tell you about a recent time when I" <p>Facilitate a group discussion and record ideas on whiteboard / butchers' paper:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> "What similar situations have you faced?" <input type="checkbox"/> "What can we do when we encounter this?"
Case Study	<p>Either write or present a case study either as a problem only, or a problem + solution.</p> <p>Facilitate participants' discussion of possible approaches and record ideas on whiteboard / butchers' paper:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> "What similar situations have you faced?" <input type="checkbox"/> "What can we do when we encounter this?"

Presentation	Source a presenter who can speak to a particular topic e.g., "Comparison of two ASD Assessment Models" Introduce the presenter. Facilitate Q&A between the presenter and participants.
Debate	Source two individuals or teams of panellists with differing views on a contentious topic e.g., "xxxxxx" or "yyyyyy". Introduce each individual / team member and the viewpoint they will represent. Allow each individual / team to present their view: either A:B or A:B:A:B:A:B. Facilitate Q&A between panellists and participants.

Advertising the Peer Group Discussion

Your main vehicle for advertising will be the ECI Learning Event website. You should forward the following information to the webmaster at least 6 weeks in advance of your date:

1. your name, contact phone number & email
2. the style of PDG e.g., open space discussion, presentation, case study or debate
3. the topic of the PDG
4. the names of presenters / debate panellists (if applicable)
5. the start and finish time and date of the event
6. the location of the event (with parking information)

Arranging venues & timings

A suitable venue may be a work environment (a training room at your agency), a public venue (a community room) or a social venue (a room in a pub or a café). Your criteria should be:

- Will it comfortably seat the number of participants I'm expecting?
- Is there an accessible 'front of room' space for the host / presenters etc?
- Is it in a suburb that most participants can get to?
- Is there good lighting and low external noise levels?
- Can people be arranged to facilitate small group discussions / conversations?

Timing will depend on your topic and your own commitments, however, bear in mind that ECI practitioners seem to commonly attend:

- Breakfast events e.g., 8-10am
- Late afternoon events e.g., 5-7pm

You may be willing to test the willingness of people to attend lunch or evening events.

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