



## **FAQs – Frequently Asked Questions – peer support online**

### **What is an online peer-support group?**

An online support group is similar to a face-to-face group – a safe space set up by facilitators with their own experiences of maternal mental illness, where we can share our stories. We set up a meeting (via Microsoft Teams) and send the link to anyone who signs up. They go into a lobby and we admit them into the meeting. At that point it is possible to switch your camera off if you prefer, to name yourself and to blur your background if you want to. Once we are all there, we go through a group agreement – covering elements such as confidentiality and non-judgment. Then we take it in turns to share as much or as little as we like about our week/month (it's also totally fine not to share at all). We make sure everyone has a chance to talk and be heard.

### **Who can join the groups?**

The Happy Mums Foundation offers peer-support for anyone who identifies as a mum or mum-to-be with mental health problems. We do not require a formal diagnosis or a referral. To protect the safety and security of group members we will not be sharing the meeting link publicly so the first step would be to email us at [info@happymums.org.uk](mailto:info@happymums.org.uk) to say you'd like to receive the invite or to sign up on our website. If you haven't had much experience of Teams we can arrange a trial run before the group to make sure you are comfortable. Once we have you on our list we will email a link to the meeting.

### **Do I need a Teams account?**

You do not have to have a Teams account to attend a Teams meeting. You will be prompted to download the software or app, once you have clicked on the link in your invitation. You may also wish to create an account, but that is optional, you can take part via your browser. **You can find out more about using Teams here** [Join a Teams meeting \(microsoft.com\)](https://join.a.teams.meeting/microsoft.com)

### **To join a meeting**

Five minutes before the time in your invitation:

1. Click on the link provided in the email
2. If needed follow a link to download the Teams app or programme
3. The meeting will then start to connect – you will have the option to change your name, turn off camera and/or microphone and blur your background.
4. You will then go into a lobby/waiting room

5. Someone from Happy Mums will let you into the room and welcome you

### **Can the host or anyone participating record a session?**

No meeting should be recorded by anyone. If a recording is taking place a red light appears at the top of the screen. The Happy Mums Foundation does not authorise or make their own recordings.

### **Can you access a meeting via phone audio if you have no computer?**

Yes you can, you will be admitted to the group similarly to people using a computer or tablet. Please check you have the correct phone number.

### **How will the groups work?**

We have a rough guide to meeting etiquette, which is a work in progress so feel free to suggest things to be added. The same group agreement applies as in the face-to-face groups – and it will be emailed out to people who have said they would like to attend. If you want to chat to the facilitator or ask them anything during the group you can do so in the chat function. We will also use the chat function to “park” any issues that might come to you during someone else’s turn. We ask you not to break off into 1-1 chats during the group, just to make sure everyone can be listened to like in the face-to-face groups. There will be a maximum of 12 people to each session, but we will add more sessions if there is more demand.

### **Is there a group agreement?**

We are using an adapted version of our face-to-face group agreement which you can read here. [41acb9\\_0be340eb684348068a824e6444e96d9a.pdf \(filesusr.com\)](https://filesusr.com/41acb9_0be340eb684348068a824e6444e96d9a.pdf)

### **Can I discuss anything away from the group?**

If you want to raise anything with the facilitators but not the whole group you can use the chat function, or our emails which we will post. During the group we will also have a ‘parking’ space to hold issues until later. If you need to leave the group before the end, for whatever reason please let us know in chat. If anyone leaves without explanation we will get in touch afterwards to check in with them.

### **What privacy and confidentiality is there?**

The Happy Mums Foundation take privacy and confidentiality seriously you should visit our privacy policy [here](#). We ask that when signing into a Happy Mums remote meeting you do not share your surname and only first name. We also request you do not have visible items in your video background which can identify you or friends and family members to protect their privacy and to generally consider where you are taking part, for example if there are people behind you or if you are using a speaker or headphones. All group members are responsible for considering and maintaining confidentiality, as in face-to-face groups. There will also be the option of joining anonymously – please contact us for more information on how to do this.

### **Do you remove anyone from meetings needing more support?**

Not necessarily it depends on the person's presenting needs.

Happy Mums will offer support in a 1-1 using the chat function or a breakout room where a host and co-host are present. If we or you feel the forum is not suitable and someone would benefit from more support off-line via their mental health team, crisis team or emergency services we will recommend they seek immediate help. A list of crisis numbers are provided with the meeting invitation email.

### **What if a person is abusive or looks to have “bombed” into a meeting?**

We are aware some people have accessed online meetings to disrupt. Since the addition of waiting rooms, Teams have taken steps to reduce this. We will only send to closed invite list and will use the remove function if we are concerned about a person(s) behaviour. We are not publicly advertising our Teams meeting details and ask you not to post the link publicly either. We will use the waiting room facility before admitting people into the group.

The Happy Mums Foundation reserves the right to refuse entry and to not work with people within our face-to-face groups or online who are abusive. We will also lock the room once all invitees are there.

### **Can I attend regular meetings?**

Yes you are welcome to attend online meetings and face-to-face meetings when they're back running more than once and we encourage you to do so. Please request you are added to the mailing list after your first meeting. Find out more here [peer support groups.](#)

### **Do meetings cost attendees anything?**

The Happy Mums Foundation makes no charge for participants in either our face to face groups or online ones. Our funding comes from a variety of sources, namely Comic Relief, Suicide Prevention Fund, National Lottery, Rosa. If participants wish to make a donation, please visit our [website](#).