Are You Sure About Starting a Support Group?
Many groups never materialize, or they disband prematurely because the group founder is not ready for, or is unaware of, the ongoing commitment required to start and sustain a support group.

Don't Start a Group If...

You have not successfully accomplished tasks required to integrate your own personal issues. For example, it could take months or years to learn how to meet and/or adapt to the needs of a child with significant disabilities. It would be premature to consider starting a support group a few months after the child's birth. (Remember that you will be perceived as a role model by members of your group and an example to them that "coping and adapting" are possible.

You can't reserve significant time in your life to devote to the group and its administration. Many people underestimate the time commitment required to manage a group successfully. It takes an initial commit to setup, organize, and market the group, followed by a continual investment in time to oversee it.

You don't have the understanding and cooperation of your family or significant others in your life. Your group involvement will at many times take precedent over the concerns of your immediate personal life and, and unless anticipated, can put relationships in jeopardy.

You can't, or don't want to, share authority and responsibility. A successful Support Group requires administration, facilitation, and management. It is unreasonable to expect one person to handle each of these function well. Often the founder is not the one best suited to facilitate the meetings or handle the managerial tasks so it will be necessary to give that authority to others.

You want to help others. Support Groups by definition are self-help groups; the growth and healing comes from opening up to others who listen. Trying to help members by giving suggestions and/or personal 'insights' can cause anger and frustration.
Do Start a Support Group If..

You have a sincere and genuine concern for people.

You are prepared for a long term commitment.

You can put your personal and religious beliefs on hold.

You don't need personal recognition for your efforts.

Your personal reward comes by seeing other people grow.

None of the above, but you can restrict yourself to administrative duties only and delegate the facilitating and managing to others.

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