Where to Begin?

Once the determination to start a Support Group has been made, what is the next step? It is often very helpful to contact and seek the advice of others in the Support Group field.

Ask the professionals who helped you with different aspects of your child's disability if they know of other individuals that had similar experiences and might be interested in joining your group.

Many cities have mental health associations which have a Self-Help Clearinghouse. These organizations can provide you with names of similar groups and often will help you start your own.

See if there is a National Organization in your field of interest that will help you open a chapter in your area. They can often supply you with startup guidelines and supplementary material that can be very helpful.

Check the Community, Neighborhood, or Metropolitan sections of your newspaper for announcements of similar groups and their meetings. Contact a group leader and see if you could visit the group and see how it is run.

Churches, Synagogues, and other Religious or Spiritual organizations can often provide you with a location or speakers for your group as well as alert you to similar groups within their institution.

Look in the Yellow Pages under social services for organizations you may wish to contact to let them know of your group.

Go to the library and check our books on your subject. Many books will include a list of organizations and useful resources for you to contact or use as group materials.

Your local or regional psychological association can refer you to counselors who specialize in your area of interest and who might be willing to work with you in starting your group.

Subscribe to newsletters offered by organizations in your field of interest. Newsletters are a good source of information on who is prominent in your field and where to find seminars or lectures to broaden your knowledge.
If you find a group with similar interests, call the group facilitator and see if you can monitor the group and arrange a meeting to discuss ideas and concerns.

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