

Eating Disorders Victoria

EDV Group Agreement

The EDV Group Agreement has 5 key areas:

1. Confidentiality
2. Respect
3. Participation
4. Facilitators right to intervene respectfully
5. Participants right to intervene respectfully

1. Confidentiality

What is said within the group, stays within the group.

We ask that all participants respect the way information is shared both in and out of sessions. Please do not share personal information or issues that have been raised by participants with people outside of groups. If you have any questions or concerns about this, please speak to your group facilitators.

However, EDV programs do not operate in isolation from each other. If you are engaged with other programs or professionals at EDV, such as the Telehealth Counsellors or Nurses, we will share relevant information with them. This is purely to ensure that we engage in best practice and provide you with a comprehensive wrap around mental health service. We know that it can be frustrating for people to have to share their details multiple

times with different mental health practitioners so we aim to reduce this by providing clear updates to relevant people within our organisation if needed.

If we need to share any details about your engagement with the group with outside practitioners, such as your GP or mental health worker, we will work with you to determine the best way to do this. This may include where there are serious concerns for welfare or safety.

Additionally, EDV will not share any information that you provide via your registration form or ongoing surveys or feedback forms without your permission unless we are required to do so under law. This may include where there are serious concerns for welfare or safety.

We take privacy seriously.

EDV is committed to protecting the privacy of personal information it collects, holds and administers. EDV is bound by Victorian Privacy Laws, Health Privacy Act 2001, the Information Privacy Act 2014, as well as other laws and legislation, which impose specific obligations when it comes to handling information. The organisation has adopted the respective

Privacy Principles contained in the Victorian Privacy Laws as minimum standards in relation to handling personal information. The organisation is committed to protecting the privacy of personal information it collects, holds and administers. We use the electronic storage methods of Salesforce and Halaxy which have secure processes to ensure privacy.

2. Respect

Communicate respectfully within the group.

No numbers or methods

Please do not speak about **numbers** in regard to calories, weight or in terms of desired weight or desired calories.

It is appropriate for participants to talk about numbers that are important to them e.g., length of illness, age of onset of the ED etc. If you have any questions about this please speak to the facilitators.

We ask that you don't share specifics in relation to **methods** or how to engage in methods relating to eating disorder behaviour. The group agrees that discussion about **behaviours** is permissible.

For example: A behaviour might be saying '*I engage in restriction/binging when I feel anxious*'...a method would be outlining the details or specifics of how that is done.

Or '*when I feel out of control I over exercise*' – a method would be outlining the details or specifics of how that behaviour is enacted.

Talking about diagnosis or non-diagnosis

We recognise that some people in the group have a current diagnosis and others don't. We respect the right for people to name their diagnosis if they wish to or not. It is helpful to remember that groups at EDV are open to a diverse range of people group and there will be different diagnoses or no diagnosis.

Talking about treatment or trauma

At times participants will want to speak about their treatment history or about traumatic events related to either their eating disorder journey or treatment. We ask with both treatment and trauma that you don't discuss the name of the clinic/hospital or the specific name of the health/mental health practitioner that you have engaged with. If you would like further information about this, please discuss with your facilitators.

Triggers or distress

The group acknowledges that some discussions and content may be distressing or triggering for group members. We acknowledge that you can't predict what someone else is going to find distressing or triggering.

If **YOU** feel triggered or distressed, we ask that you let people know in an assertive yet calm manner. The group facilitators will work with you to manage the situation. If you would like to step out of the room into a breakout room, please ask the facilitators to organise this. Think about what techniques you can engage in during the session to manage your distress and please let the facilitators know if there is a way that they can assist. If you are unsure about something that you would like to say in a workshop, please send a direct message to one of the facilitators in the chat box to check if it is appropriate.

Eating during online sessions

It is fine for you to have food and drink during the online Zoom sessions. **However, we do ask that you turn your camera off if you are eating.**

Some people are not comfortable eating in front of others and some people don't want to be watched. This does not apply to drinking.

Smoking or use of drugs/alcohol online

We ask that you refrain from smoking, drinking alcohol or using drugs when online. EDV has a no smoking, no drugs and no alcohol policy within groups or workshops and we ask that you adhere to that within the online setting. We ask that you DO NOT attend sessions under the influence of either alcohol or other drugs.

Camera

We ask that you have your camera on for all sessions.

EDV encourages cameras on as this builds trust, rapport and relationship building between participants and facilitators. Being able to see who is present and who is speaking can assist with building open and honest sharing. Having cameras on also enables EDV facilitators to ensure that you are safe and in a private place for your session.

Please turn your camera off:

- if you are eating
- if you need to go to the bathroom
- if you are upset
- if you need to attend to something else for a short period of time

If you need to turn your camera off for any of the above situations, please send a brief message in the chat box to the group facilitator. The message can be as simple as 'turning off my camera for a short period of time, back soon.'

You don't need to give specific details of what you are doing. However, if you leave the group or turn off your camera and have not let the facilitators know, they will try to make contact with you either via the chat or via your mobile phone number. If you need a facilitator to contact you directly, you can also put this in the chat.

Caveat: If, for some specific reason, you are unable to have your camera on during the session, we ask that you email or call to discuss this with the Manager Telehealth Support Programs, a minimum of 2 business days prior to participating in the group. EDV will seek to understand your circumstances and support you towards participation or finding alternative support options.

Contact details are:

reception@eatingdisorders.org.au or 03 9994 0354. Please outline in your email why you are unable to have your camera on for the sessions.

EDV values and respects the safety and privacy of the group dynamic: Only participants may attend the sessions (for example, we ask that you do not invite others to sit in the background or listen in).

We know that not everyone has access to a private space or room. If you are participating from a shared space, please use headphones so no one else can hear other participants contribution, blur your background or add one of the background filters provided by Zoom, and position yourself so that no one can see your screen.

'Hiding' your own view

We know that at times participants can be distracted by seeing their own face on the screen - the group facilitators can show you how you can 'hide' your own view on the screen but still see everyone who is participating. The main thing is that we ask you to not stop other people from participating.

For the safety of all participants, we ask that you are seated throughout the session. Please do not walk around either inside or outside with your laptop or phone during the session. Find a quiet, safe and private place where you can sit comfortably for the session.

For safety and legal reasons, we ask that you DO NOT participate in sessions while driving in your car. Please read Vic Road rules [HERE](#).

Try to find a quiet, comfortable space for your session where you can participate without being distracted or interrupted.

Pronouns

Please add your pronouns beside your name on Zoom. We ask you to do this so that people know how to respectfully refer to you by using your correct pronouns.



3. Participation

Participate at the level that works for you.

We ask that at a minimum, **all attendees actively participate in the introduction activity and closing activity of each group.**

This means engaging in some verbal exchange. Or, if you are not comfortable with speaking, we ask that you still communicate in the written form via the chat box.

Sharing

Please respect everyone's right to share their stories, strategies and experiences. We believe that personal experiences and feelings are unique, and that all group members may ask questions, and equally all group members can choose not to respond to a question.

Supporting each other

We ask that you give your support to the person who is speaking. Please allow group members to share and try to refrain from making judgements about others and resist offering suggestions on how to 'fix' things or tell people what they should or shouldn't do.

Respect for the group

Please demonstrate your respect for the group by logging in on time, staying for the whole group, and minimising any disruptive behaviour and using respectful language. If anyone needs to leave early or attend late, they need to notify their facilitators.

4-5. Intervention

The facilitators reserve the right to intervene respectfully if they believe that this group agreement is not upheld in a manner that creates a safe and caring place, an atmosphere of trust, connection and courage.

If facilitators believe the group agreement has been breached they will take the following steps to ensure group safety:

1. If appropriate, an open acknowledgement of the breach and a reminder of the group agreement within the group setting.
2. If more appropriate, or the group agreement is still not being upheld, the participant will be privately messaged and invited into a separate breakout room with one of the facilitators to discuss the group guidelines and breach.

3. Finally, if a participant continues to disrespect the group agreement, they will be asked to leave the group, with the offer of EDV telehealth support within five business days of the group.

Participants can also intervene respectfully if they have concerns about the group agreement or the safety of the space.

If a participant believes the group agreement has been breached or they have concerns about the safety of the group space we ask that you privately message the facilitators to notify them of your concerns. The facilitators will then take the appropriate action as detailed above and / or offer a private space in a breakout room with one facilitator to discuss.