

House Rules (Online Groups)

To ensure our groups remain a safe and productive space for everyone, we ask you to please familiarise yourself with our House Rules.

1. Stigma and ignorance inhibit open conversation about bipolar - our Online Groups offer safe spaces where people can talk openly about bipolar with others experiencing similar things.
2. We don't know what each conversation will cover but - ideally - we want people to leave the meeting feeling positive and re-charged, ready to meet the challenges of living with bipolar.
3. Privacy and confidentiality are paramount - don't take pics or record the Group meeting and don't share private or personal matters outside the Group. Everybody contributing to the Group should be in full view (i.e. nobody listening in on the side!).
4. We're always happy for new people to join the Group but please don't share the meeting link/password without consultation. If you know someone who'd like to join a group, please ask them to submit an online form at <https://bipolarscotland.org.uk/support-groups> or message us on social media and we'll give them all the relevant information. This keeps everyone safe.
5. Sobriety is essential within our Groups - no-one may join a Group under the influence of alcohol or non-prescribed drugs, nor should alcohol/non-prescribed drugs be consumed during Group Meetings. Bipolar Scotland operates a zero-tolerance policy on this issue.
6. The Group should provide a calm, therapeutic experience so no shouting, swearing or disrespecting each other - you don't have to agree with everyone, but you must show respect.
7. You can discuss politics, sport, telly etc anywhere with anyone - the Online Group should focus on bipolar-related issues. Any social contact (online or face to face) outside of group meetings is at each individual's discretion and is not sanctioned by Bipolar Scotland.
8. It's OK to bring up challenges and issues but the idea is to overcome problems and improve things... please try not to be ultra-negative.
9. Don't hog the conversation – when you've had your say, let others speak. And only one group conversation at a time please! Our facilitators' role is to ensure everyone

has an opportunity to speak, and as such may redirect the conversation to another person to ensure this is possible. Please don't be offended if this happens and know that everyone's contributions are valued, and we want to ensure everyone has an opportunity to be heard.

10. Friends, carers, partners and family members of people who live with bipolar are equally welcome at Group meetings.
11. If you have any concerns about the Group (or ideas for improvements), please share them with the Facilitators at a convenient time (e.g. during the discussion or email them directly). Bipolar Scotland supports local autonomy and will only get involved in adjudicating issues as a last resort. Our Groups are partnerships - let's work together folks!
12. There is no single 'correct' way of managing bipolar so please respect each other's ways of staying well... and share helpful ideas!
13. If you need to leave the Group before the meeting ends, please tell the Facilitator so they know you're OK.
14. The Group's main role is **to improve quality of life** so positive endorsement of suicide or methods of completing suicide (which could trigger a bad episode in another person) **cannot** be allowed.
15. There may be times when our facilitators have to step in for reasons that appear unknown, and we aren't able to explain why in order to ensure the confidentiality of group participants. Please know that we will only do this when there's a need to ensure everyone in the group is safe and comfortable.
16. Joining the Group means you accept these House Rules – if you don't observe the House Rules you might be asked to leave the meeting... but you'll be welcomed back if you agree to modify your behaviour.