Steps to take after being trained!

How to select a group location, meeting day and time:

- If you weren’t able to set up your group location and meeting time before the training, then the facilitators, their champion(s) and affiliate contact/coordinator should meet to go over the details of starting the group – site, day, time.
- Make it your goal to have your group meet within the first month after training – this will keep the training fresh for everyone!
- Good (free) locations will be where consumers can and do get to easily – schedule your meeting during times when public transportation is available both before and after your group meeting time.
- Suggestions:
  - Local NAMI office/meeting space of monthly meetings
  - Mental health agencies/facilities
  - Clubhouses/CSBs
  - Drop-in Centers
  - Libraries
  - Religious establishments
- Schedule your meeting time and day when all co-facilitators can be there.
- Avoid scheduling your group immediately following another event – 90 minutes after another meeting can be tiring for you. If there is another support group meeting in your area, schedule your group on a different day of the week.

We’re ready to start our group:

- In cooperation with your local champion and/or local affiliate contact/coordinator, complete the NAMI FSG New Group Registration Form to notify your state coordinator that the group has started.
- Your state coordinator has access to your state website and will post your group to assist with advertising.

How to publicize the group:

- Consult the FSG outreach suggestions – this is an array of ideas, you don’t have to do all of them, just pick the ones you are certain you can do and start there.
- Be sure to work with your champion and/or local affiliate to get the best coverage possible.
• Use your marketing materials! Be sure to complete them with the information about your group meeting and a contact number before you distribute them.
• Be creative with your material. Create your own flyers, posters, pass along cards to share with your community.

When your group has started meeting:

• Continue to outreach to your community. Group membership grows and ebbs all the time so it is important to devote constant attention to marketing and informing your community on your group.

What if I can’t get a group started?

• First, evaluate what is preventing you and the kind of help you need and ask your champion and/or affiliate contact for assistance.
• Get in touch with your champion and/or affiliate contact/coordinator for assistance.
• If you don’t get help from them, contact your state coordinator for assistance.

What if I don’t have a co-facilitator or my co-facilitator quits?

• If you don’t have a co-facilitator, try to enlist a volunteer to be at the meetings to help you with set up and logistics until you get a co-facilitator. Potential volunteers could be regular group member or a friend (if your group hasn’t started yet). Ideally you want to identify someone who is interested in becoming a co-facilitator, a family member, who you can mentor in the position until the next available training.
• If your co-facilitator quits, be sure your champion and affiliate contact know so that they can help you locate a suitable replacement.
• Facilitating a weekly support group is challenging and you should always be recruiting new FSG facilitators. The more that are trained, the less likely you will have burn out and can potentially offer multiple groups, in multiple locations, in your community.

What if I need to become inactive?

• First of all, we know that sometimes facilitators need to stop facilitating because they get/change jobs, move, have personal needs, etc.
• We just need to know. As soon as possible, notify your champion, affiliate contact, and state coordinator.
• If you are moving to another part of the state, work with the state coordinator to see about starting a new group in the community.
• If you are moving out of the state, you can work with your state coordinator to connect with NAMI affiliates in other states and see about starting a new group in that community.