



NEW JERSEY SELF-HELP GROUP CLEARINGHOUSE

375 East McFarlan St., Dover, NJ 07801 * 1-800-367-6274 or 973-989-1122 * www.njgroups.org

RECRUITMENT TECHNIQUES

Getting the word out about your group can be a continuous effort on the part of the membership. Here are some suggestions that might help increase knowledge about the availability of your group and ways to reach out to potential members.

- **Call helplines/referral lines:** Make sure that every local community helpline and hotline knows about your existence. (You can usually find these numbers in the front of your phone book.) The helplines and hotlines receive calls from people in need and they appreciate having as many resources to give out as possible.
- **Write a 10-second radio spot:** Radio stations devote a certain amount of airtime (Public Service Announcements, or PSA'S) free of charge to non-profit organizations. Although this is competitive, contact your local radio stations to see if you can submit a 10-second radio spot for consideration.
- **Television PSA's:** Some television stations also accept PSA's from non-profits. Contact your local stations to see what kind of material they accept and what format it needs to be in to be considered.
- **Radio Interviews:** Many small, local radio stations have programs in which they interview local community people. These are usually pre-taped. Contact your local radio stations to see if they have a program that could air an interview with some of your group members.
- **Contact key professionals:** Contact key professionals in mental health centers, hospitals, etc. and tell them about your group. Send them a flyer or brochure, and try to obtain a follow-up face-to-face meeting.
- **Contact your local self-help group clearinghouse(s):** Many states have local self-help group clearinghouses which refer callers to local self-help groups. If you have a clearinghouse in your area, contact them to make sure that they have up-to-date information on your group.
- **Design a brochure:** In the brochure, describe what happens at the group, who the group is designed for, and contact information. You might also want to include your ground rules in the brochure. Distribute these brochures to doctor offices, hospitals, health fairs, mental health agencies, etc.
- **Hang up flyers:** Design an eye-catching flyer that describes the purpose of your group, when and where it meets, and whom to contact for more information. Hang the flyers up wherever potential members may see them (doctor's offices, laundromats, libraries, supermarkets, etc). When you design the flyer, include "grab tags" (which are the pieces of dangling tabs with your name and number on them). Also, take away one or two of the grab tags.

- **Cable TV Bulletin Board:** Ask your local cable TV station about running an announcement about your support group meeting on the public community bulletin board.
- **Cable TV Talk Shows:** Some local cable stations are available to have speakers from local groups participate in a talk show on cable. Write a letter to your local station explaining the topic you would like to discuss on-air.
- **Word of mouth:** Have your group members write a list of at least seven people that they know and have each member personally contact them to tell them about your group.
- **Church bulletins:** Have each member of your group ask their house of worship if they can put a small blurb in the bulletin.
- **Speakers' bureau:** Develop a speakers' bureau and give talks about the availability of your group and the benefits of attending. Speak at local organizations such as Kiwanis, Rotary Clubs, Visiting Nurse Associations, human services agencies, professional associations, churches, community service organizations, etc.
- **Develop a newsletter:** Newsletters can be done monthly, quarterly, annually, or whenever you want it to come out. Newsletters help sustain interest and information concerning your group, and can be a great way to let members and others learn what your group has done, and is planning to do in the future. Send out the newsletter to area agencies, professional associations, medical practitioners, etc. You can even design a newsletter that is distributed via the internet. Include in your distribution all current and former group members.
- **Look on the internet:** There are many message boards on the internet. If you find a site for persons with dealing with your issue, post information about your group. Also, check into such internet sites as "MeetUp.com" to see about setting up a meeting for persons in your area.
- **Write letter to the editor:** This is a simple, yet effective way of getting the word out about your group. You can write a letter to the editor to publicly thank someone for a donation, a new member can write to talk about their wonderful experience in the group, you can write about an upcoming or a past event, to thank the public for supporting a fund-raising event, or to respond to something in the news that affects the members of your group.
- **Get in other agency newsletters:** Contact agencies that potential members may contact to see if you can get a small blurb about your group in their newsletter. Such agencies might include the various state Departments, Visiting Nurse Associations, Mental Health Association, etc.
- **Hold a fund-raiser:** Have a bake sale or tricky tray and invite the public to attend. Display information about your group at the fund-raiser, and write a letter to the editor before and/or afterwards to thank the public for supporting you.
- **Network with other groups:** Network with other similar self-help groups in your area. Let them know that your group exists in case they have a current or future member who might benefit from your group.
- **Look for guest speakers for your group:** Call professionals and associations in your community and find out if they would be willing to be a guest speaker at your group. Educate them about the benefits of your group. Even if they don't speak at your group, they will have been educated on its availability and benefits.

