

For Positive Men Guidelines

I. NAME

The name of this group is For Positive Men (For PM). We are a peer-based and peer-led support, education, and social group for HIV-positive men.

II. MISSION AND GOALS

- A. Mission. The Mission of For Positive Men is to provide support.
- B. Goals. The Goals of For Positive Men are:
 - 1. To host a weekly drop-in support group on Thursday from 6:30 p.m. until 8:30 p.m. in Phoenix, Arizona.
 - 2. To create a safe space for HIV-positive men to discuss their lives.
 - 3. To provide peer-based support that encourages personal growth, knowledge, self esteem, and acceptance.
 - 4. To encourage our members to create and/or enlarge a social support network of friends.

III. GROUND RULES FOR GROUP MEETINGS

- A. Membership. For Positive Men is a drop-in group open to participation to all HIV-positive men age eighteen (18) or older.
- B. Confidentiality. Due to the potentially sensitive nature of topics discussed at Group Meetings, personal and/or private information divulged during the course of a meeting is confidential and is not to be disclosed to individuals who are not members of the Group. What is said in Group stays in Group. When discussing a meeting with a member not in attendance at that meeting, caution should be exercised when disclosing sensitive personal information. If in doubt, leave it out.

Exceptions. If any individual attending a meeting discloses to the Group the intent to harm himself or someone else, this information may be communicated by the Moderator to the appropriate authorities.
- C. Guests. Group Members may bring an occasional guest (e.g., relative, supporter). Guests are bound to the same Ground Rules as the member. Advance notice of Guest attendance is requested. HIV-negative individuals who are not guests of a member may be allowed to attend a group meeting at the discretion of the Moderator. Guest attendance will be limited to two (2) consecutive meetings. The Moderator may, depending upon individual circumstances, waive the two (2) meeting limit. Male partners are always welcome as guests.

- D. Code of Conduct. Group Members and their guests are expected to abide by the following Code of Conduct during Group Meetings and Activities:
1. Members are expected to conduct themselves in a respectful and courteous manner.
 2. Members are expected to respect the opinions and beliefs of all other members. No opinion or belief system is inherently better or worse than any other. Members do not have to agree with the opinions and beliefs of others.
 3. Personal attacks on people, doctors, and other organizations by name are not allowed. Members are encouraged to discuss the facts of their particular situation but must refrain from naming names during a meeting.
 4. Side bar conversations are not allowed.
 5. Cell phones and pagers must be turned off or placed on vibrate. If a call must be answered, members and guests are expected to leave the room to have a conversation, thus minimizing the disruption of the meeting.
 6. Text messaging is considered disruptive and discourteous behavior. As with all items in the Code of Conduct, final determination of “disruptive behavior” lies with the Moderator.
 7. If a member or guest is ill and/or contagious, he is expected to not attend a meeting until he is well again. Participants who are ill may be asked to leave a meeting.
 8. Once a meeting has surpassed ten (10) people, members and guests are asked to raise their hands to speak.
 9. Before changing the topic of conversation, a member or guest must ask the Group if the subject may be changed.
 10. Disruptive behavior will not be tolerated.
 11. Alcohol is not allowed at Group Meetings.
 12. For Positive Men is not responsible for lost or stolen items.
 13. Distribution of prescription medications at meetings or on the church property will not be tolerated.
- E. Classes. No more than once a quarter, Group Members or outside speakers may be invited to give presentations on various topics of general interest to the Group. If consensus about having a class is reached by the Group, classes may be held concurrent with a regular Group Meeting. Proposed classes should be presented to the Group for consideration in a concise and informative manner.
- F. Surveys. From time to time, community groups may conduct surveys which may be of interest to Group members. The entity conducting the survey should request permission of the Group at least two (2) weeks in advance of conducting the survey. Surveys should be anonymous. At the meeting where a survey is conducted, an announcement will be made at the start of the meeting. Surveys will be distributed and completed during the break. Completing a survey is never mandatory.

IV. GROUND RULES FOR OUTSIDE ACTIVITIES

Outside Activities are events, outings, gatherings, etc. that are not regularly scheduled Group Meetings. Outside Activities are not limited to participation by Group Members nor are they sponsored by For Positive Men. There is no guarantee or expectation of confidentiality at Outside Activities. If confidential information is discussed, members should take care not to disclose sensitive information in the presence of non-members.

V. GROUP MEETING MODERATORS

A. Selection. Moderators will be selected using the following process:

1. Any member may volunteer to be a Moderator after attending a minimum of eight (8) weeks of meetings.
2. Each meeting will have a Moderator and an Alternate assigned. The Alternate will conduct the meetings only in the event that the designated Moderator is unavailable or otherwise excuses himself.
3. During the meeting break on the third Thursday of each month, Moderators and Alternates will be randomly selected from a pool of available volunteers for the meetings for the following month.
4. Once a member has led a meeting, his name will be removed from the Moderator Pool until everyone who desires to moderate a meeting has had the opportunity to do so.

B. Moderator Code of Conduct. Moderators are expected to observe the following code in addition to the Code of Conduct for Group Members (see Section III.D.):

1. The main function of the Moderator is to keep the meeting moving and enforce the rules as needed.
2. The Moderator should maintain a neutral stance and should not allow the views or issues of any one individual to dominate the meeting.
3. If a Moderator is incapable, for whatever reason, of conducting a meeting on his assigned date he should excuse himself.
4. Moderators must be able to handle criticism and be open to suggestions on how to better conduct a meeting.
5. By volunteering to moderate a meeting, a Group Member accepts the responsibility to moderate. Failure to show for an assigned meeting, or the failure to arrange for another Moderator to take his place, may result in the suspension of Moderator privileges for up to six (6) months. This section applies to both Moderators and Alternates.

C. Alternate Code of Conduct. The Alternate and/or other designated member shall be responsible for greeting new people, welcoming them to the Group, and ensuring they are eligible to attend the meeting. If a new person is HIV-negative and not a member guest, the Alternate shall introduce the individual to the group as someone who is HIV-negative, is

attending the meeting to discuss a specific issue, and will then excuse himself from the remainder of the meeting.

VI. GROUND RULES FOR THE E-MAIL LIST

The following Ground Rules shall apply to any person subscribing to the ForPM e-mail list:

- A. The ForPM e-mail list is a closed list. Individuals wishing to subscribe to the list must be approved by either the List Owner or a List Moderator.
- B. In order to join and remain list members, subscribers must follow Yahoo! Groups rules regarding age, e-mail content, etc.
- C. The e-mail list is unmoderated. Messages are sent to all list subscribers without prior review, editing, or approval.
- D. If there is a problem with someone or something on the list, the issue shall be taken up “off line” with either the List Owner or a List Moderator (e-mail ForPM-owner@yahoogroups.com).
- E. If these list ground rules are breached, the offending subscriber(s) may be immediately blocked from sending e-mail to the list or may be removed from the list entirely at the discretion of the List Owner or List Moderator. Violations, especially of the Confidentiality provision (see Section VI.F and VI.G), the matter may be referred to either a Planning Meeting or the Group as a whole.
- F. Messages may be forwarded without the permission of the sender only if the sender does not mark the message “Confidential.” All names, e-mail addresses, and ForPM Yahoo Group references must be removed prior to the forward.
- G. If the sender marks a message “Confidential” then forwarding of that message is strictly forbidden without the express permission of the sender. Violations of this rule will be dealt with in the same manner as confidentiality violations (see Section VII.B.) of Group Meetings.
- H. The e-mail list is for fun and for information. There shall be no spamming, threats, fighting, demands, or personal attack on anyone.
- I. Subscribers are free to share information, feelings, opinions, and topics of general interest.
- J. Pictures are most welcome through the e-mail list. Every person in images depicting nudity or any type of sexual content must be at least 18 years old.
- K. Subscribers shall post no more than three (3) e-mails for any given event, donation solicitation, etc.

VII. PROCESSES

- A. Structure. For Positive Men operates without a hierarchical structure. No one person or organization owns the Group. All decisions affecting Group operations are decided by the Group itself. Votes will not be taken. Instead, For Positive Men uses a system of consensus building to ensure full participation by individual members of the Group as a whole in any decision making discussions and processes.
- B. Confidentiality Violations. The following process must be followed when violations of confidentiality (see Section III.B.) are alleged:

Violations of confidentiality will not be tolerated. Individuals who violate this ground rule may be banned permanently from both For Positive Men Group Meetings and the For Positive Men E-mail List.

1. Decisions of this nature are to be made only by the full Group during one of the regularly scheduled For Positive Men meetings.
 2. Before the Group is allowed to make any decision of this nature, all parties to the dispute must be given the opportunity present their sides of the issue.
 3. If a member believes his confidentiality has been violated, the member is to bring this issue to the attention of the meeting Moderator. If the individual alleged to have broken confidentiality is not in attendance at that meeting, the Moderator will defer discussion of the matter for no more than two (2) weeks. The Moderator will make reasonable efforts to contact the individual and inform him of the allegation.
 4. If, after two (2) weeks have passed or the Group has heard from all parties to the dispute, whichever comes first, a decision is made that confidentiality was violated, the violator may be permanently banned from both For Positive Men group meetings and the For Positive Men e-mail list.
- C. Group E-mail List. Violations of the E-Mail List Ground Rules are to be brought to the attention of the List Owner or a List Moderator. The List Owner and Moderators shall decide what sanctions, if any, are warranted for violations of the E-Mail List Ground Rules. With the exception of Section VI.F. of these Guidelines, violations of the E-Mail List Ground Rules are not grounds for either temporary suspension of attendance privileges or permanent banishment from Group Meetings.
- D. Planning Meetings. For Positive Men shall schedule a Planning Meeting at least once every three months. These meeting may be conducted by the Group Member in whose home the meeting is convened. Planning Meetings are open to any Group Member. Planning Meeting decisions will be made by building consensus. All recommendations arising from Planning Meetings must be approved at a regular Group Meeting.

- E. Guideline Amendments. These Guidelines may be amended only by For Positive Men during one of its regularly scheduled meetings. Proposed amendments to the Guidelines are to be referred to the next Quarterly Planning Meeting unless there is consensus that the issue is more urgent. Proposed amendments will be presented in writing both at the start of a regular meeting and via e-mail in advance of that meeting. Discussion of and decisions about proposed amendments are to be deferred until after the break.