



SKILLS-BASED GROUPS

FOOD IS MOOD

LIFE SKILLS

**NAVIGATING
STRESS & ANXIETY**

WE MATTER

Practical skills-based programs in a mental health peer support setting help participants build confidence and independence by developing everyday life skills such as cooking, budgeting, and planning. Learning these skills alongside peers creates a supportive, low-pressure environment where individuals can practice, ask questions, and learn from shared experiences. These programs promote self-sufficiency, routine, and problem-solving, while reinforcing the connection between practical skills and overall mental well-being.

FOOD IS MOOD

Vision Statement

A community where individuals feel empowered to make healthy eating choices, enhance their mental well-being, and enjoy nutritious meals together.

Purpose of the Group

The Food is Mood group fosters learning about the relationship between food and mental health. Through hands-on meal preparation and shared discussion, participants build skills in nutrition, budgeting, and mindful eating.

Program Objectives

- Teach participants how to prepare cost-effective, nutritious meals.
- Promote awareness of how food choices affect mood and energy.
- Build skills in budgeting, meal planning, and basic cooking.
- Encourage collaboration and shared responsibility.

Food is Mood Program Procedure

1. **Welcome (5-10 min):** Facilitator welcomes participants and reviews the Comfort Agreement.
2. **Review Recipe, Roles, and Budget (5-10 min):** The facilitator will present the recipe, assign roles to participants on how to contribute and explain how this meal came in under budget.
3. **Meal Preparation (40 min):** The participants will complete their assigned task and contribute to making the meal.
4. **Shared Meal (30 min):** The participants get to enjoy the meal that they made.
5. **Reflection and Discussion (20 min):** The facilitator will lead a discussion on how food impacts mood.
6. **Clean-up and Closing (10min):** All will participate in cleaning up.

Open Group Policy

Food is Mood is an open group, meaning:

- New participants are welcome at any time.
- No prior attendance is required.

- Individuals may join as often as they find it helpful.
- This structure ensures accessibility and flexibility for all who need support.

Session Overview

- **Schedule:** Twice weekly.
- **Format:** In person at NISA.
- **Open group:** New participants may join at any time.
- **Attendance:** Join as often or as little as is helpful.
- **Eligibility:** Anyone registered with NISA may sign-up for this group.

LIFE SKILLS

Vision Statement

A community where individuals feel empowered to make healthy eating choices, enhance their mental well-being, and enjoy nutritious meals together.

Purpose of the Group

The Life Skills group fosters learning about the relationship between food and mental health. Through hands-on meal preparation and shared discussion, participants build skills in nutrition, budgeting, and mindful eating.

Program Objectives

- The objective of Life Skills Groups is to equip members with practical strategies and resources to navigate daily life with confidence, independence and stability. Through guided activities and discussions, members can set personal goals and enhance their overall well-being in a motivational, supportive environment.

Life Skills Program Procedure

1. **Welcome (5–10 min):** Facilitator welcomes participants and reviews the Comfort Agreement.
2. **Opening / Check-In:** The day's topic or definition will be introduced and participants are invited to add what it means to them (share-or-pass).
3. **Main Sharing Round (20–25 min):** The facilitator will introduce a prompt or theme (e.g., "SMART Goals").
4. **Activity (20–25 min):** The facilitator will introduce and support an activity related to the prompt or theme and assist participants with it, if required.

Open Group Policy

Life Skills is an open group, meaning:

- New participants are welcome at any time.
- No prior attendance is required.

- Individuals may join as often as they find it helpful.
- This structure ensures accessibility and flexibility for all who need support.

Session Overview

- **Schedule:** Weekly.
- **Format:** Hybrid – online and at NISA. Participants may sign-up for virtual attendance at nisa.on.ca/calendars.
- **Open group:** New participants may join at any time.
- **Attendance:** Join as often or as little as is helpful.
- **Eligibility:** Anyone registered with NISA may sign-up for this group.

NAVIGATING STRESS & ANXIETY

Vision Statement

To create a compassionate, inclusive, and culturally respectful space where participants explore mindfulness, self-compassion, awareness, and self-worth to support sustainable recovery and wellness.

Purpose of the Group

The purpose of this group is to help participants understand what stress and anxiety are and how they affect daily life. It provides a supportive, empathetic environment where individuals can share experiences, learn coping strategies, and gain insights from others facing similar challenges. Through a facilitator-led process, participants will learn techniques and receive resources to reduce stress and manage anxiety.

Program Objectives

- Build foundational understanding of what stress and anxiety are and how they affect daily life.
- Develop practical coping skills (e.g., grounding, breath work, thought reframing, routine-building).
- Strengthen self-awareness and self-compassion to respond to stressors more effectively.
- Increase confidence and self-efficacy in using tools between sessions.
- Foster peer connection and mutual support in a respectful, non-judgmental space.
- Practice choice-based participation (“share or pass”) within a trauma-informed framework.
- Improve emotion regulation and distress tolerance through brief, repeatable exercises.
- Support navigation to resources (community supports, crisis/distress information) and next steps.

Navigating Stress and Anxiety Procedure

1. **Welcome (10 min):** The facilitator welcomes participants and reviews the Comfort Agreement.
2. **Topic Setting & Mindfulness Focus (10 min):** The day's topic or definition will be introduced and participants are invited to add what it means to them (share-or-pass).
3. **Topic/Activity & Guided Discussion (45 min):** The facilitator will guide the discussion and encourage balanced participation.
4. **Reflection/Sharing (15 min):** The participants will be encouraged to share insights, or the facilitator may offer grounding techniques as needed.
5. **Resources & Tools/Takeaway (5min):** The facilitator will share relevant resources including the Sudbury Area Crisis & Distress handout, as well as one small practice or handout for the week.
6. **Closing & Next Steps (5 min):** The facilitator will conduct a brief check-out, appreciation, and reminder of when the next session takes place.

Closed Group Policy

Navigating Stress & Anxiety is a closed group. Participants must **register in advance through Support House** to receive the Zoom link and pre-group forms. NISA will assist members with registration and share upcoming dates through the in-house program calendar.

Session Overview

- **Schedule:** Meets every Wednesday 1:30-3pm.
- **Format:** Hybrid — in person at NISA and virtually via Zoom.
- **Closed group:** New participants may join at any time however, sign-up is required in advance via [Support House](#); NISA In-House Program staff can assist with registration.
- **Attendance:** Join as often or as little as is helpful.
- **Eligibility:** Anyone who signs up with Support House is able to attend this group.

WE MATTER

Vision Statement

To create a compassionate, inclusive, and culturally respectful space where participants explore mindfulness, self-compassion, awareness, and self-worth to support sustainable recovery and wellness.

Purpose of the Group

We Matter is a facilitator-led group offered through the Centre for Innovation in Peer Support (Support House). The group focuses on mindfulness-based practices that strengthen self-awareness, self-compassion, and self-worth - complementing each participant's recovery/wellness journey and reframing setbacks as learning for growth.

Participants learn practical mindfulness skills and how to integrate them into everyday life.

Program Objectives

- Build foundational mindfulness skills for everyday use.
- Increase self-compassion, self-awareness, and sense of self-worth.
- Support emotional well-being and healthy coping strategies.
- Reframe setbacks as information for growth rather than failure.
- Foster connection, belonging, and peer-supported learning.
- Provide safe, choice-based participation ("share or pass") in a trauma-informed space.
- Support navigation of relevant resources and next steps.

We Matter Procedure

1. **Welcome (5–10 min):** Facilitator welcomes participants and reviews the Comfort Agreement.
2. **Topic Setting & Mindfulness Focus (10min):** Session topics will be posted in the chat and participants will be invited to make suggestions. A brief mindfulness practice or prompt aligned with the topic will be provided.

3. **Topic/Activity & Guided Discussion (45min):** The facilitator will encourage balanced participation and discussion.
4. **Reflection/Sharing (15 min):** Participants are allowed to share any reflections from the session. Grounding options may be available as needed.
5. **Resources & Tool/Takeaway (5 min):** Facilitator may offer community resources for additional support, or a handout or practice for the session.
6. **Closing & Next Steps (5 min):** Brief check-out and a reminder for the next session.

Closed Group Policy

We Matter is a closed group. Participants must **register in advance through Support House** to receive the Zoom link and pre-group forms. NISA will assist members with registration and share upcoming dates through the in-house program calendar.

Session Overview

- **Schedule:** Meets every Tuesday 6-7pm.
- **Format:** Hybrid — in person at NISA and virtually via Zoom.
- **Closed group:** New participants may join at any time however, sign-up is required in advance via [Support House](#); NISA In-House Program staff can assist with registration.
- **Attendance:** Join as often or as little as is helpful.
- **Eligibility:** Non-members are welcome to participate.