



Better Together

Defining Principles

I agree to abide by the following principles

Genuine Connection

The foundation of Better Together is the importance of forming genuine connections with other human beings. This means that we put time into developing learning relationships as opposed to service relationships. We take the necessary time to help each other come to make sense of our world In Better Together. We are encouraged to form connections with each other as they develop naturally, and to use these connections as an opportunity to build or strengthen their natural support systems. Connecting/reconnecting with family, our culture and our community.

We respect each other's mental, emotional, physical, sexual, spiritual, cultural and personal boundaries. This means that everyone has the right to determine when they are going to be available, when they do or do not want to be hugged or touched in any way, and what sorts of relationships they wish to engage in with others using Better Together.

Difference in relationships is an expectation. The presence of these values does not mean that all interactions will be perfect or fully embody all values at all times. Rather, differences will be expected, and – when these differences occur as challenges – we will work to see it as an opportunity for growth, supporting and challenging each other to move towards the life we want rather than a failure of the community and/or relationship. We are committed to figuring out how to make it work for us all.

Dignity, Self-Determination & Personal Strength

All forms of help, healing and recovery are welcome in Better Together. We will not place anyone way of helping, healing or support over another and will make space for people to define their own paths to 'recovery.' This means that Better Together will offer education and information on a variety of perspectives, options, and resources, and individuals will always hold the power to determine their own goals, and to define for them the meaning of the word 'recovery' as it applies to their own lives.

Every individual will be treated as capable of setting boundaries/guidelines for themselves. Hence, Better Together will avoid setting too many 'rules' and micromanaging situations and relationships because we believe in each individual's strength and wisdom to make their own choices, express likes and dislikes, and identify needs without the overuse of rules and guidelines to dictate that process.

Mutuality & Reciprocity

Every individual has a unique blend of experiences and strengths that aid in their recovery journeys. At Better Together, we use a diverse range of roles in our services but value each individual's input equally. It is assumed that all individuals who become a part of Better Together for support will also give support to another at some point and that each individual will not only approach Better Together with the attitude of what they can get but also what they can give.

Co-production

Better Together is a place where people work together with different skill sets, lived and learned knowledge and experience. We share roles and responsibilities. We value the peer support approach and we encourage peer support within our programme. Our values are rooted in utilizing the strengths and resources of all to benefit moving forward this is called co-production. People join in this value system to offer additional skills and tools to encourage healing and recovery. We are all on equal ground and we are all attaining the goal of living a lasting and fulfilling life.

Equality

We are all community members at Better Together. This does not mean that each person must necessarily take turns facilitating meetings, organizing gatherings, or being the contact person for a given activity. What it means is that as each of us empowers ourselves to move, question, give perspective, share experience, change, act and be hopeful we thereby (intentionally or not) inspire others in our community to do the same – by doing so we become agents of change all around us.

Hope

Better Together believes that recovery is a process of healing for all individuals. This means that all individuals will be welcomed to be a part of our community and treated with the belief that they have the power and ability to achieve their hopes and dreams. Better Together will always show compassion to those who are struggling. This means that we recognise that all individuals have ups and downs, and moments when they may 'relapse' or need to step away, but that we will reach out to them in times of need and always welcome them back with open arms and without judgment. We will never ask a person to leave Better Together.

Safe Environments

Individuals within Better Together will respect each other's privacy. This includes holding confidentiality around information shared within our spaces and supporting one another to define how and when information can be shared in a respectful manner and in a way that builds community and connection. Safety in Better Together is not defined as 'doing no harm', it means having respectful, mutually responsible and trusting relationships. We do not judge or make assumptions about each other.

Trauma Informed

Better Together is trauma-Informed. We are walking side by side facing life together sharing tools and resources that may be helpful in promoting healing, hope, and resilience. We do not believe in asking what is wrong with you, but instead what has happened to you striving to get to know, learn, and grow from one another.

Better Together uses non-violent conflict resolution. It is anticipated that when conflict arises, people will address the conflict directly with one another whenever possible. It is also anticipated that this will occur without the use of yelling, gossiping, or physical aggression and that individuals, in general, will be open to talking through conflicts with one another.

Respect

Above all else at Better Together we expect each individual to treat others as they would wish to be treated. This means treating ourselves, each other, and each other's belongings with respect, compassion, and kindness at all times. Better Together aspires to create a respectful and inclusive environment, we will use the most inclusive and respectful language at all times. Everyone will be encouraged to use open, person-first, strengths-based language and to avoid using one-word labels when referring to others in the recovery community.

Expressing Gratitude

We encourage showing gratitude and appreciation for all in Better Together. Individuals are encouraged to go out of their way whenever possible to thank others for their contributions, including those with whom they might not always get along.

Better Together will respect all differences of opinions, beliefs, culture, appearances, and ways of life. This means treating everyone with dignity, respect, and as a valued individual, as well as encouraging learning, openness, and conversations about different beliefs and cultures. We will not ostracize or put down any individual based on ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, size or other aspects of appearance, religious beliefs, challenge, and so on.