

San Diego SMART Recovery Facilitator DOs & DON'Ts

As a facilitator, please DO remain cognizant that you are representing San Diego SMART Recovery at your meeting.

While every facilitator has their own style and every meeting will be different, there are best practices and standard guidelines to follow when facilitating your own meeting to ensure you are creating a safe, non-judgmental, supportive discussion space for participants while remaining within the parameters of San Diego SMART Recovery's principles and policies.

Successful SMART Recovery Facilitators DO:

Take initiative to get questions answered, find solutions to meeting management issues, and engage with the SMART Recovery San Diego community to continue growing as a facilitator regardless of how long they have been in their role.

Actively practice the common factors of motivational interviewing as appropriate in the discussion: 1) paraphrase, reflect, summarize; 2) express empathy, warmth, unconditional positive regard; and 3) be genuine in interactions with participants.

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DO encourage discussion supporting participants exploring, identifying, and revising their interpretations of experiences, particularly in collaboration with others.

DON'T diagnose or label a participant's experience as trauma, depression, PTSD, boundary issues, or anything else as SMART does not believe in telling others what they are experiencing - and it can be dangerous to do so.

DO feel welcome to attend other meetings as a participant, while following the same meeting rules as any other participant of not speaking too long or too often, giving advice, or telling others how to speak.

DON'T criticize or critique how the meeting facilitator is handling the meeting during the meeting. We are all here to support each other. If you have concerns, please speak with the facilitator offline or express your concerns to the Facilitator Training Committee.

DO support the meeting facilitator by modeling what productive participation looks like and focusing on making positive progress with addictive behaviors.

DON'T use any meeting as a platform to vent or make it awkward or difficult for the meeting facilitators to enforce rules with participating facilitators.

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DO: Honor your commitments as a San Diego SMART Recovery facilitator by showing up to meetings each week consistently and on time. Prepare for an absence or emergency in advance by following [Finding a Substitute Facilitator](#) worksheet guidelines.

DON'T: Leave the meeting or its participants to fend for themselves.

DO: Welcome discussion of any addictive behavior the participant wants to address, and any related maladaptive behaviors (which could lead to the addictive behavior, or arise when they try to resolve the addictive behavior). The participant may be in any stage of change, including not wanting to make any changes at all. The participant could be in different stages of change for different maladaptive behaviors they may wish to change.

DON'T: Make any judgments or determinations about a participant's reasons for attending SMART meetings or whether SMART meetings are appropriate for them. If they follow the meeting guidelines and are not disruptive, they are welcome.

DO: Create a space for participants to share, experience, and discuss topics related to recovery. If facilitators share aspects of their personal story, please ensure this is inclusive, brief, and for the purpose of opening up the discussion for the group participants.

DON'T: Utilize the meeting or allow participants to utilize the meeting to extensively share their own story or dominate the meeting.

DO: Maintain a focus on stopping addictive or unhelpful behavior and making progress, where progress is defined by each individual for themselves. Moderation should support the entire group and discussion can focus on the most important part of any plan - when and how to stop.

DON'T: Dwell upon failures and ruminate upon the past.

DO: Encourage participants to make their own decisions about what progress and goals would be most helpful for them and their situation.

DON'T: Tell or allow other participants to tell others what path to follow or decisions to make.

DO: Encourage participants to offer their experiences of successful and unsuccessful behaviors/thought patterns/etc. and share suggestions of what has worked for them in their own lives utilizing "I" statements. Avoid telling other participants they "should" follow a course of action.

DON'T: Give advice or encourage/allow participants to give advice.

DO: Support social diversity by striving to actively understand and respect issues of social diversity including race, ethnicity, national origin, color, gender identity,

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sexual orientation, age, marital/partner status, political belief, religion, and mental or physical ability.

DON'T: Encourage or allow discussions to move out of the realm of mutual support and into expounding upon/discussing/debating politics, religion, etc.

DO: Protect participants' identities and privacy inside, outside, and between meetings, including all verbal, written, and electronic communications.

DON'T: Solicit, disclose, or share private information about a participant.

DO: Provide accurate representation of SMART Recovery's tools, exercises, and strategies as a facilitator and not as a mental health or medical professional.

DON'T: Present themselves as an expert or authority.

DO: Take the initiative to ask questions, engage with the SMART Recovery San Diego community, and continue building on and improving facilitation skills.

DON'T: Assume questions or concerns relating to improving as a facilitator will just get answered in time.

DO: Ask for donations from meeting participants to help support the San Diego SMART Recovery organization.

DON'T: Tell participants any form of payment is required to participate.

For further exploration and expansion of skills, facilitators may wish to learn more about and encourage the implementation of the thirteen active components of successful mutual help groups in their meetings: 1) bonding and support; 2) goal direction; 3) structure to follow; 4) observing and imitating norms and role models; 5) expectations of positive and negative consequences; 6) involvement in protective activities; 7) effective rewards; 8) identifying high-risk situations; 9) building self-efficacy and self-confidence; 10) developing coping skills; 11) presence of like-minded individuals; 12) giving back; and 13) developing self-awareness and reflection skills. Find more information [here](#).