

# How To Start A Support Group

## How to Begin

Why do I want to form a Support Group?

Who will be the attendees?

What type of group do I propose? (Ex: in-person, virtual, phone, etc.)

Where will we meet? A physical location? Online (Facebook or Zoom)?

Locate a facility (Non-smoking such as a hospital, rehab, community center or library)

Create your guidelines from the samples found online. (See QR code)

Ask yourself, what are my goals; what do I want to achieve?

Write your **Mission Statement**.

## Additional Tips

Make a separate email for the group.

Make business cards.

Pick a day or time that works for you as well as the group.

Send out a reminder of the upcoming meeting a few days before.

Decide with the group the length of your meeting (1-2 hours is the norm).

RSDSA has a grant program.

When choosing when you meet, choose a day (i.e., first Monday, second Tuesday) versus a date such as every 15<sup>th</sup> of the month which will move the day of the week month to month.

It's not quantity, it's about the quality of the meeting, so don't worry about the number of people who attend.

If you help one person, your meeting has been a success!

Contact RSDSA for informational materials (See QR code)

## How to Maintain Your Group

Have a list of attendees with Name, Address, Phone, and Email. This can be done when they sign in or if they call you beforehand, you can record them at that time for your records.

Have a backup if you can't facilitate the meeting, i.e. another facilitator, or cancel the meeting, and plan to update your members on the change.

Poll the group to find out what they want to talk about.

At times, invite speakers to the group. It is important to have a speaker who had a good knowledge of CRPS. **Note:** You do not want speakers all the time. It doesn't allow the members to share and learn self-help skills.

## Establishing Group Guidelines

Create guidelines.

Discuss with your group and get agreement, and choose a meeting format.

## Promoting Your Support Group

It is important that you not state that the meeting is sponsored by RSDSA. All support groups operate independently of the organization.

You can never promote your meetings enough!

For your initial meetings, it's best to start promoting at least 4 weeks before the date of your first meeting.

Here is a list of places that you may be able to display your meeting information (be sure to get permission beforehand):

- RSDSA website
- Libraries
- Banks
- Hairdressers
- Doctor's Offices
- Hospitals
- Pharmacies
- Drug stores
- Rehab facilities
- Community Centers

Facebook, or other social media targeted to your locale. Note: You can start a private FB Group as your meeting space.

You may also contact local TV stations and newspapers, radio stations and Community Outreach Programs.

For more information



# Meeting Topics

1. What can we do to help ourselves in relation to RSD/CRPS?
2. How does RSD/CRPS affect our relationships with others?
3. How does RSD/CRPS affect the way we eat? What can we do about this?
4. How do you know your limits? How do you pace yourself?
5. What is the best way of communicating with your doctor?
6. How do you cope with the inevitable flare-ups?
7. Do you ever feel guilty for having chronic pain?
8. Negative thoughts: How do they affect your pain? How can you stop them?
9. Laughter is a coping mechanism! It creates relief from stress, lessening pain elevation and symptoms such as depression or negative thoughts.

**November is National  
CRPS month.  
How can you spread the word?**

**Be sure to check National Health Observance  
Calendars for ideas:**

<https://b2b.healthgrades.com/insights/blog/2025-health-observances-calendar/>



RSDSA is committed to assisting those who suffer from CRPS as well as the people who support them.

RSDSA offers hope and emotional, financial, educational, and medical support to people suffering with CRPS. Please contact our organization.

Join us and receive our information monthly digital newsletter free.

**WE ARE HERE TO SUPPORT YOU  
- YOU ARE NOT ALONE -**

## **Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy Syndrome Association**

PO Box 502

Milford, CT 06460

Tel: 203-877-3790

Toll Free: 877-662-7737

Email: [info@rsds.org](mailto:info@rsds.org)

Website: <http://rsds.org>

**Raising awareness of CRPS since 1984**

Photo by Hannah Busing on Unsplash

# How To Start A Support Group

