

## Community Alliance Support Groups – Facilitator Instructions

These groups are intended to allow participants to get to know each other a little better. This should serve a number of purposes. First, it validates experiences to hear that others have similar concerns, etc. Second, participants may gain useful knowledge about things like coping strategies, dealing with disability/insurance issues, or family relationships. Finally, for some, this can become a way for them to establish a relationship that they will carry on beyond the meeting. The facilitator does not have to have answers – he/she simply needs to keep the conversation going and staying pretty much on topic.

Please set some ground rules about confidentiality – nothing discussed in group should be taken out of group, particularly with a name attached. Also, it may help to ask people to refrain from giving medical advice, but to feel free to share personal medical experiences.

In general, the structure should be something like:

1. Introductions – where in the brain, how/when diagnosed, symptoms, treatment so far.
2. How has this impacted your life – family, work, economic situation?
3. Particular issues or concerns and coping strategies
4. If there is time, it would be good to brainstorm a little about how group members would like to be more involved. Involvement in Community Alliance activities can increase a sense of empowerment and reduce the feelings of helplessness we all know too well.

Your group will probably meet for only 60-75 minutes – please don't allow one person to use up too much time with their introduction. 75 minutes/10 people leaves about 7.5 minutes for each person to talk over the entire session – not a whole lot of time, but enough to get a good many things said. Please have a way to track time (phone, clock, watch). If you are holding a Zoom meeting, having the meeting in full screen may make it difficult for you to see the time.

Also, please feel free to write down any questions the group has and send them to me at [clee@angioma.org](mailto:clee@angioma.org) after the session is over. I'm happy to follow up with you.