

# Rejuvenating your support groups

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# Before we begin

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This webinar will be recorded and shared with all registrants.



Submit your questions via Q&A. Use the chat feature to connect with others or get tech support.



Please complete our survey at the end of the webinar. You'll receive an email from AdoptUSKids Evaluation.

# Our mission



Raise public awareness about the need for foster and adoptive families for children in the public child welfare system



Assist US states, territories, and tribes to recruit, engage, develop and support foster and adoptive families

# Goals for this webinar

- 1 Discuss the stages of support group development.
- 2 Dig into the common reasons why groups may struggle at various stages.
- 3 Offer strategies for support group leaders to breathe life back into your support groups.



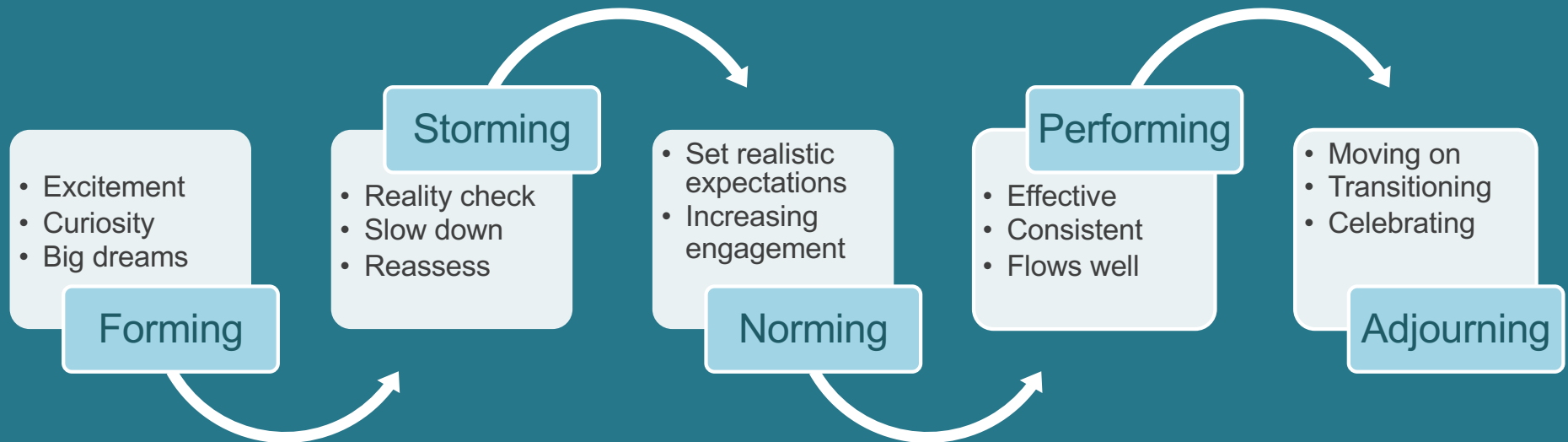
## **What are you hoping to get out of this session?**

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Join our peer meeting on March 22 to continue the conversation!

# Stages of support group development

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# Common pain points that can cause disengagement

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- Defining the who, the how, and the why for the group
- Doing too much with too little
- Challenging personalities
- Changes in leadership
- Navigating an individual or group crisis
- When an individual's needs exceed what the group can provide





## The effect of the pandemic

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- Virtual groups are not for everyone
- Attendance or group momentum may have been impacted
- Needs of the group may have changed





## Using data to rejuvenate your group

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Add small efforts to collect data as you lead your groups:

- Ongoing needs assessments
- Satisfaction surveys
- Exit surveys
- Pre- and post-group success metrics

# Reviewing your data

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Do you need to create sub-groups?

- Parenting adults
- Parenting young children
- Single parents

A new leader or co-leader?

New location?

In-person vs. virtual?



# How accessible is your group?

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What skills or resources do people need to access your group?

- Technological skills; high-speed internet; a computer or tablet
- Access to transportation
- Access to childcare
- Leisure time

Are there unspoken rules of belonging in your group?

- How easy is it for newcomers to feel included?
- Are some members isolated within the group?
- How are group dynamics impacting how the group functions?

Can people of various cultures and personalities show up authentically?

- What does your group feel like if you are a person of color? A younger parent/caregiver? An introvert?
- Does the leader have the facilitation skills to ensure that dominant personalities don't overtake the group?



## The importance of tending to group dynamics

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- Set the tone
- Balance “I-We-It”
- Anticipate the roles participants take
- Model reflective communication

Read this resource from AdoptUSKids on [tending to group dynamics](#).

# Have hard conversations

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If you have one or two group members who are negatively impacting the group, it is better to have a hard conversation with them than to lose the entire group.



# How do you, as a leader, affect your support group?

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- Facilitation skills
- Leadership style
- Lived experience(s)
- Racial and cultural identities
- Compassion fatigue and burnout
- Energy







## Strategies to breathe life back into your group

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- Recruit new members
- Outreach to members—both those who come and those who don't
- Mix it up
- Kill two birds with one stone
- Bring the joy

# Create buzz

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## Special events

- Plan a retreat
- Invite a trainer or speaker
- Do a service project
- Plan a group dinner
- Make meals together







## Communication

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- How are you reminding people about meetings?
- Do you only post in one place?
- Have you asked each member what mode of communication they prefer?

# Remember to laugh!

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“A day without laughter is a day wasted.” –Charlie Chaplin

Review this AdoptUSKids article on [bringing the joy to your support group.](#)





## Continue the conversation!

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Please join us for a peer meeting on March 22! Come ready to share your strategies, solutions, and challenges in leading support groups for caregivers. We'll talk through your specific challenges and solve them together.

[Register for the peer meeting.](#)



Questions?



## AdoptUSKids resources

Available for free at [professionals.adoptuskids.org](https://professionals.adoptuskids.org)

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### Discussion guides:

- Navigating first family relationships
- Supporting positive racial identity for BIPOC children in transracial placements
- Understanding grief and loss (parental and childhood)
- Confabulation, lying, and distorted thinking
- Trauma's impact on behavior



## **AdoptUSKids resources**

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### Other resources for parent group leaders

- Articles and tip sheets
- Recorded webinars
- 5-module parent group leadership curriculum

### Other resources for child welfare professionals

- Tools, articles, tip sheets
- Recorded webinars
- Content for leaders, supervisors, and frontline staff



## Contact information

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Contact [consultation@adoptuskids.org](mailto:consultation@adoptuskids.org) to discuss how AdoptUSKids can help your state, territory, or tribe build capacity!



# AdoptUSKids

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