



Keys to Starting a Christians in Recovery® Group

1. Don't Re-invent the Wheel

New CIR groups that have the most success are led by people who had previous experience in other support groups, such as AA, NA, or other 12 Step groups. While it is not required, we found this type of experience to be most helpful. Contact CIR headquarters to learn about leaders nearby. Consider calling them and attend one or two of the meetings they lead. Otherwise, we strongly recommend visiting other local self-help gatherings (such as AA, NA, Al-anon, etc.) that may be somewhat similar. You may get a feel for how they operate and then borrow ideas you feel will be useful.

2. Think "Mutual-Help" From the Start

The new CIR meetings that succeed are not started by an individual, but rather by 3 or more people who share a vision for a Christ-centered alternative to secular support meetings. Find others who share your interest by circulating a flyer or email so they can contact you. Include your first name, phone number, email address and other relevant information. Make copies and post them in places you feel are appropriate, e.g., churches, library, community center, clinic, or post office. You can also ask if the notice might be published in your local church bulletin and newspaper.

When you receive a response, discuss with the inquirer what their interests are and what they would like the group to accomplish. Ask if they would be willing to share the responsibilities of organizing things for a specific period of time. By involving several people in the initial work of the first meeting this acts as a model for newcomers by showing it is a cooperative effort.

Consider obtaining the assistance of any professionals who may be sensitive to your needs and willing to assist you in your efforts. Physicians, clergy, and social workers may be helpful in various ways from providing meeting space to locating needed resources.

3. Find a Suitable Meeting Place and Time

Try to obtain free meeting space at a local church, library, community center, hospital, or social service agency. Chairs should be arranged in a circle in order to avoid a lecture set-up.

If you anticipate a small group and feel comfortable with the idea, consider initial meetings in members' homes. Also, try and set a convenient time for people to remember the meeting, for example the first Tuesday of the month.

4. Publicize and Run your First Public Meeting

To reach potential members, consider where they might go to seek help.

Would they be seen by particular professionals or agencies? If the answer is yes, try contacting these professionals. Posting announcements in the community calendar section of a local newspaper, library or community center can be especially helpful. The key is to get the word out.