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Introduction

Welcome to Rainbow Spectrum Pride, an Autistic support group offered by Dori Zener & Associates. We'd love to have you join our monthly Zoom sessions to discuss the intersecting experiences of being 2SLGBTQIA+ and Autistic. We hope to provide a space for you to connect and feel validated through sharing stories and perspectives.

Please read this document in its entirety as it will tell you what you can expect in the group experience and how you can contribute to the supportive environment.

Fee

The group is Pay What You Can. Suggested contribution is \$10 for each group. Payment can be made during event registration. If cost is a barrier, please type 0 in the amount box. If you are able to give more than \$10, it is an act of solidarity towards our members who cannot afford it.

Facilitators

Jet (they/them) and Lindsey (she/her) will guide and participate in discussions. Their main role is to help the group stay on-schedule and on-topic, and to ensure the group is a safe space by upholding the below group policies, norms, and online etiquette. They will moderate the discussion and help people to stay within their allotted speaking times. You can email Jet or Lindsey outside of group hours with any questions or concerns about the group at rainbow@dorizener.com

We are looking for and welcoming additional leadership to co-facilitate the group.

Group Schedule

We meet virtually on the **Second Tuesday of each month** from **6:30-8:30pm EST**. If the group needs to be rescheduled we will let you know over email as soon as possible.

Group Structure

Each group will start with a check in. Then we will have one hour of structured Peer Support Group Discussion. You will be emailed the discussion questions in advance, before each meeting. During discussion time, each person will be given three minutes to share their thoughts and ideas. You're welcome to use the chat to share instead of answering verbally. Everyone gets the same amount of time to share. Facilitators will advise when your three minutes of speaking time is up. You don't have to use all of your time, and if you don't feel like speaking when your turn comes, simply say 'pass' or ask us to come back to you at the end.

After a structured discussion, we will have a casual discussion for half an hour where people can share additional thoughts about the questions, discuss additional questions, or other topics they would like to discuss.

Group topics are chosen based on preferences and interests of participants.

Agenda

Breaks will be discussed and decided among members at the beginning of each group. In this way we can be flexible to each session' energy levels.

- **6:30-6:40 PM**, Introductions, purpose of group, and what to expect
- **6:40-7 PM**, Introductions for new people/check-in for new people and returning participants
 - Introduction Question: What brought you to this group and what are you hoping to gain from participating?
 - Check-in: What's something good or interesting that happened last month?
- **7-8 PM** Structured Peer Support Group Discussion
- **8-8:30 PM** Casual discussion on the topic

Group Norms

To have a fair and comfortable experience at Rainbow Spectrum Pride, we have created the following group norms. These norms apply to our Zoom meetings and any other online interactions we may have with the facilitator and with other participants. If we work together, we can make this a fun and rewarding experience for everyone.

- **We support one another.** Our job as a group is to make one another feel heard and like our feelings are valid. We show we care by listening attentively and trying to be fully present when others are talking.
- **We intend to create a safe space.** We come from a range of diverse backgrounds and have different beliefs, understandings, and lived experiences. We respect and accept one another's different ethnicities, gender identities, sexual orientations, political leanings, spirituality, and religion. Discriminatory language or actions will not be tolerated.
- **We respect one another.** It's likely that we may disagree on some things, and that's okay. Even during these times, however, we will treat each other the way we'd like to be treated ourselves. We will speak without attacking one another, interrupting, raising our voices, using profanity, or threatening others.
- **We arrive on time and ready to participate.** We'll be at our screens and in our private environments five minutes before the start of the meeting. The facilitator will let everyone into the Zoom meeting and start at 7:00 pm.

- **Our meetings are confidential.** Part of making everyone feel safe and comfortable sharing is the knowledge that what we say is for the group to hear only. We won't discuss specifics of other people's contributions or identifying information with family, friends, or the wider community. You are welcome to share about the topics we discussed and your experience with people outside of the group, in general terms.
- **We're mindful of our language.** To the best of our ability, we'll avoid using profanity, insults, or other derogatory terms.
- **Give each other the benefit of the doubt.** We assume the best intentions in other group members.
- **Try to be adaptable to the group process.** We try to keep to a predictable schedule, but sometimes unexpected things can happen. For example, sometimes we may be forced to start or end a few minutes later than normal, or we might decide to try a new format if something isn't working for everyone. We'll give as much notice as possible for any changes.

Online Etiquette

- **No cross talk, side conversations, or other calls while someone is speaking in the group.** Everyone deserves to be treated with respect when it's their turn to speak, so we'll focus our attention on them when it's their turn. If we must take a phone call or speak to someone outside the group, such as a family member or support person, we'll mute our microphones and leave the room to

do so.

- **Confidentiality at home.** As this is a virtual group, we need to ensure that others in our homes cannot see or hear our Zoom conversations, so we'll either wear headphones or ensure no-one else is around during our meetings.
- **Turn off all devices except for the one used for our session.** We'll shut down other programs and turn off notifications on devices. It is best to have our hands free by using headphones.
- **Avoid eating during the meeting.** We are welcome to keep a non-alcoholic drink with us.

Policies

The following are policies we will follow while participating in Rainbow Spectrum Pride.

- **No use of recreational drugs and alcohol.** To make this a safe space for everyone where we all are fully present, using drugs or alcohol during meetings or arriving under the influence is prohibited.
- **Maintaining a safe space:** Hannah is unable to offer individual support as she needs to facilitate the entire group, so we'll use our own self-calming strategies or take an intentional break if we are feeling too upset at the moment. The facilitator will ask me to take a break if they deem it necessary. Facilitator will do a safety check-in with the group member after the group by phone or email.

- **Expressing concerns about the group:** If we have strong concerns over the behaviour or words of another group member, we'll voice them privately to the facilitators by email.
- **No soliciting.** The sole purpose of Rainbow Spectrum Pride is to support autistic people, and so solicitation of a product or service during our meetings or other communications is inappropriate. Members found to be doing this will be asked to stop.

Breach of Policies, Norms, and Online Etiquette

If a member is having difficulty following the group norms, policies, and/or online etiquette, they will be reminded of them with a verbal warning by the group facilitator. After receiving two warnings, if the member continues to have difficulty following expectations, they will receive a detailed written warning. Further violations will result in removal from the group, including removal from consideration for future groups. Certain actions that are particularly offensive, disruptive, or harmful may result in immediate removal from the group without warning.

Disability Justice Principles

Rainbow Spectrum operates under Disability justice¹ principles and incorporates the basis of restorative social justice. Here are the foundations of our work and their brief explanation:

¹ Disability Justice Principles. <https://www.sinsinvalid.org/blog/10-principles-of-disability-justice>

1. Intersectionality
2. Leadership of Those Most Impacted
3. Anti-Capitalism
4. Cross-Movement Solidarity
5. Wholeness
6. Sustainability
7. Cross-Disability Solidarity
8. Interdependence
9. Collective Access
10. Collective Liberation

INTERSECTIONALITY “We do not live single issue lives” –Audre Lorde.
Ableism, coupled with white supremacy, supported by capitalism, underscored by heteropatriarchy, has rendered the vast majority of the world “invalid.”

LEADERSHIP OF THOSE MOST IMPACTED “We are led by those who most know these systems.” –Aurora Levins Morales

ANTI-CAPITALIST POLITIC In an economy that sees land and humans as components of profit, we are anti-capitalist by the nature of having non-conforming body/minds.

COMMITMENT TO CROSS-MOVEMENT ORGANIZING Shifting how social justice movements understand disability and contextualise ableism, disability justice lends itself to politics of alliance.

RECOGNIZING WHOLENESS People have inherent worth outside of commodity relations and capitalist notions of productivity. Each person is full of history and life experience.

SUSTAINABILITY We pace ourselves, individually and collectively, to be sustained long term. Our embodied experiences guide us toward ongoing justice and liberation.

COMMITMENT TO CROSS-DISABILITY SOLIDARITY We honour the insights and participation of all of our community members, knowing that isolation undermines collective liberation.

INTERDEPENDENCE We meet each others’ needs as we build toward liberation, knowing that state solutions inevitably extend into further control over lives.

COLLECTIVE ACCESS As brown, black, asian, indigenous, white and queer-bodied disabled people we bring flexibility and creative nuance that go beyond able-bodied/minded normativity, to be in community with each other.

COLLECTIVE LIBERATION No body or mind can be left behind – only moving together can we accomplish the revolution we require.