




Guide to successful peer support groups

Building a successful peer support group for people living with all types of diabetes

The National Diabetes Services Scheme (NDSS) is an initiative of the Australian Government administered with the assistance of Diabetes Australia. The NDSS Agent in Victoria is Diabetes Victoria.





Studies show that people who regularly participate in peer-led support groups can better manage their diabetes.

Research has shown that members of the peer support program are more confident about their diabetes and experience lower levels of stress and depression.

Some members have said their quality of life is better due to the friendships and support they received from the support group network.

Browne et al. 2016

Contents

Peer support team	3
Introduction	4
About Diabetes Victoria	5
About Diabetes Victoria's peer support program	5
About support groups	6
Aims of diabetes peer support groups	6
What do support groups do?	6
Group dynamics	7
Purpose	7
Membership of your group	8
Decision making	9
Privacy and confidentiality rules	9
Advice	9
Convenor & co-convenor responsibilities	10
Convenor and other group roles	10
Other roles and responsibilities	10
Delegation and succession planning	11
Regular communication with the peer support team	11
Day-to-day operations	12
Planning group activities	12
Meeting time and frequency	12
Venues	13
Agenda and minutes	14
Activities	17
Guest presenters	17
Special events	17
Online groups and information	23
Children	24
Accommodating children and families	24

Financial and legal matters	24
Grants	24
Costs	25
Getting the most from your group	29
Running a group	29
Inclusion	29
Mail outs	30
Refreshing your group	31
Responding to conflict	32
Support for your work	33
Diabetes Victoria representatives	33
Succession planning	35
Supporting Diabetes Victoria	37
Fundraising and donations	38
Membership with Diabetes Victoria	40
Helpful resources	42
Helplines	42
Diabetes Victoria Multilingual Helpline	45
FAQs	42
Appendix 1 – Meeting notes	49
Appendix 2 – Agenda & minutes template	50
Appendix 3 – Benefits of the Diabetes Victoria peer support program	51

Peer support team



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Welcome to the Guide to successful peer support groups. We have developed this handbook for all new and current diabetes peer support group convenors.

The handbook covers:

- How to run a successful group
- Information on group structures, policies and procedures for a successful group
- Tips on how to overcome any challenges that may arise
- Information about how Diabetes Victoria can help you and how you can help Diabetes Victoria.

This handbook has been designed to be easy-to-use and is available in hard and soft copy. It was created for people who are new to support groups, establishing a new group or taking on a new role. It will also benefit those who are already running support groups and provide clarity for certain situations that may arise.

About Diabetes Victoria

Diabetes Victoria is the leading charity and peak consumer body working to reduce the impact of diabetes in Victoria.



Our purpose is to:

- Support, empower and campaign for all people affected by, or at risk of, diabetes.
- Provide support for all those living with diabetes.
- Contribute to the search for a cure.

We regularly engage with Diabetes Victoria members; including people living with diabetes, their families & carers and health professionals.

About Diabetes Victoria’s peer support program

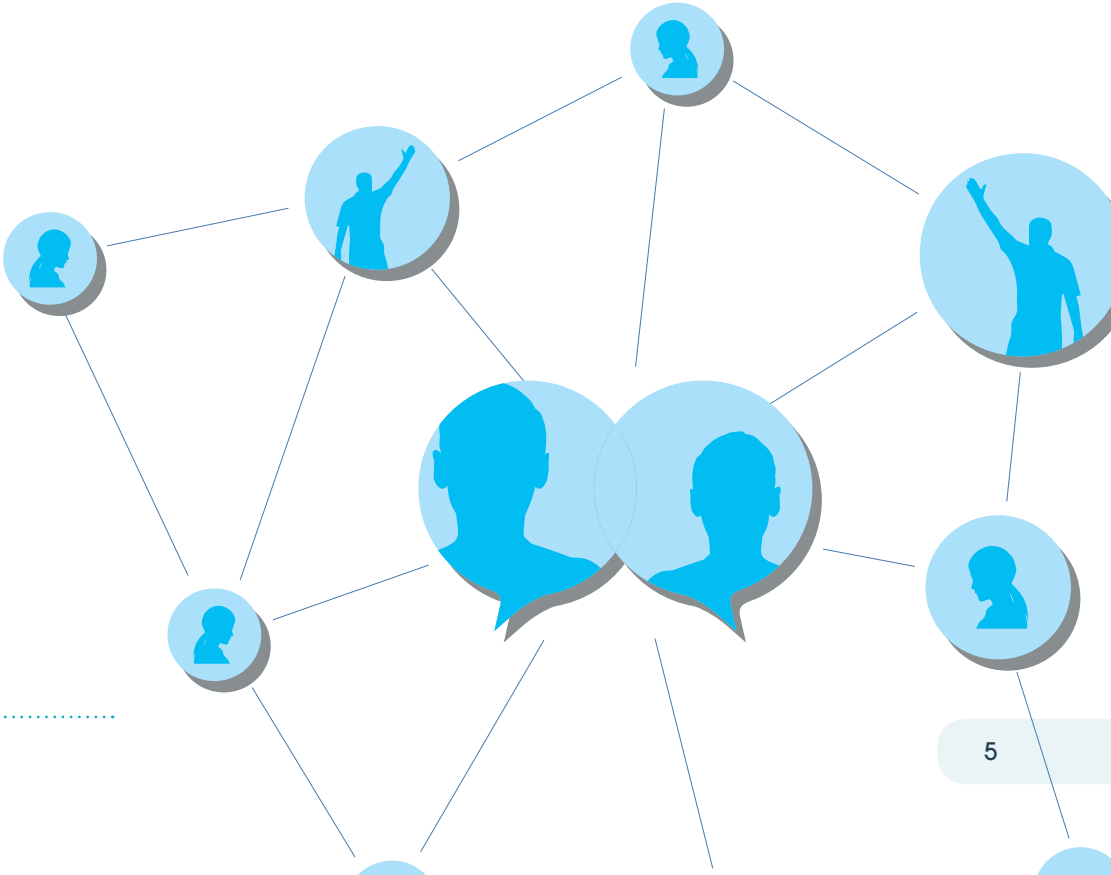


The program is offered to assist and empower all leaders of diabetes peer support groups by:

- Providing information to members and the public about diabetes.
- Hosting community education events throughout Victoria.
- Working with healthcare professionals, including dietitians, podiatrists and diabetes educators, to raise awareness about diabetes complications and management.

Diabetes Victoria provides ongoing support to all peer support groups. This includes insurance cover, annual grants and resources.

In return, peer support groups provide opportunities for local community members living with diabetes to meet and support one another in safe and friendly environments.



About support groups

Aims of diabetes peer support groups



- Meet like-minded people who share common experiences, concerns or goals while living well with diabetes.



- Improve quality of life for people affected by diabetes.
- Empower group members to live well with diabetes.

What do support groups do?

Support groups vary greatly in what they do and how they operate. Ideally, their activities will inform, empower and sometimes even challenge members in ways that are supportive and appropriate to their needs.

“I’m very glad now that I kept the group going, even when numbers were quite small. The regulars all say that they really look forward to coming along ... as do I!”

Teresa Pitt
Melbourne Type 1 Group

“We like the education and information about all aspects of diabetes, especially keep up-to-date with new medications. The social side is also most enjoyable, we’ve met some lovely people over the years and made lots of good friends.”

Roslyn Brown
Banyule Diabetes & Information Support Group

Listed below are some of the most common activities undertaken in the peer support program:

Information sharing

Many people find that it's easier to learn and understand information when they are supported by others. Some diabetes support groups have regular information sessions, often with a guest speaker presenting on a special topic. This is a great way to ensure members have up-to-date information for their diabetes management. It can also provide people with the encouragement they need to talk about their own experiences or concerns. Many support groups also have other ways of sharing information through regular newsletters and emails or connecting through social media.

Social and emotional support

Often, people are relieved and encouraged by meeting other people who share or understand their condition and needs. Friendships and fun are necessary for a successful support group and are important for good mental health.

Advocacy

Peer support groups can act as advocates in their local communities to have the needs of people living with diabetes heard and for raising matters of discrimination. This can be at a local level, or via the peer support program. Examples include membership on a community health service committee, working groups, or on Diabetes Victoria's Consumer Advisory Committee.

Diabetes Victoria regularly advocates for matters affecting consumers at state and national levels.

Fundraising

Diabetes Victoria is largely supported by generous donations from community members. Diabetes peer support groups have a strong history of helping to raise funds for research. To contact the fundraising team at Diabetes Victoria please email: fundraising@diabetesvic.org.au

Group dynamics

Purpose

Sometimes a clearly defined purpose or set of aims can help to keep your group motivated and on track. This is not necessary for all support groups but can be a great idea.

If you are starting a new group, it might take a few meetings to find your group's purpose. It's important not to rush this process, especially if some of the people involved have not participated in a community group before.

If your group is already established, it could be helpful to review your purpose every year. You could do this at the start of the year or at an annual planning meeting.



When defining or reviewing your purpose as a group, it may help if group members ask themselves:

- What do I want to get out of the group?
- What do I hope others might get out of the group?
- What activities do I think are most important?
- What skills can I bring to this group?

Membership of your group

Different groups have different membership structures. There are many areas to discuss and decide upon when you are starting up or reviewing your group's needs.

Who can be a member of the group?

Membership is open to people living with diabetes and their families/carers. People living with diabetes and parent/carers often lead these groups. However, health professionals can also lead or co-lead these groups.

There are also groups that cater to specific cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Groups may consist of members living with or affected by:



- Type 1, type 2 and pre-diabetes
- A mixture of both type 1 & type 2 diabetes
- LADA (latent autoimmune diabetes of adults)
- GDM (gestational diabetes).

Group size

The number of people in your group can impact what your group does. For example, if the main objective of your group is to provide ongoing education from guest speakers, a larger group will work well.

However, if the purpose of your group is to provide personalised support and social connections, a smaller group might work better.

If your group is small, linking with a nearby support group for guest speaker presentations is a good way to save costs. This can also help group members to meet others in their area.

If your group number is large, you will also need to make sure you have the physical space and catering capacity to accommodate everyone.

Online support groups

Diabetes Victoria supports several diabetes groups that connect online and through social media. This allows for flexible membership numbers and reach.

Membership fees

Some larger, more formal groups charge an optional membership fee or donation as a way of covering group costs. Decisions about membership fees should be made when a group forms and reviewed each year.

Diabetes Victoria membership

We encourage peer support group members to take up membership with Diabetes Victoria as this is the best way to receive up-to-date resources, information and support for managing their diabetes.

If you have any questions regarding these topics, please contact the peer support team at: peersupportgroups@diabetesvic.org.au or on **1300 437 386**.



Decision making

It is vital to agree from the start about the decision-making process that your support group will use.

There are two processes of making decisions in a support group. The first process is by voting (i.e. at least 50 per cent plus one vote) in favour of an idea. Voting could be a simple show of hands or by a secret vote.

The second process is through agreement, which involves talking things through until everyone accepts an idea. Reaching agreement means that everyone's opinion is heard until a fair decision is reached.

Reaching agreement may take longer, but it can mean that group members feel more satisfied with the outcome.

Larger groups sometimes have a committee that makes decisions on behalf of the group.

Privacy and confidentiality rules

Group leaders should have a process in place to ensure that group member details are kept confidential.

If you choose to keep a list of members, this should never be given to third parties. Sometimes, Diabetes Victoria may ask group convenors to provide diabetes support group member details. This information is confidential and for our office use and evaluation purposes only. This information helps us to provide services and programs that are relevant to group members' needs.

Advice

It is very important that your group does not give medical or legal advice to anyone. This is not your role and could expose you to legal risks. If someone in your group is wanting advice of a medical nature, you could suggest they talk to a trained health professional or call Diabetes Victoria on **1300 437 386**. If they are looking for legal advice, a good place to start is their local community legal service.

Alternatively, they can contact our advocacy service at: oncall@diabetesvic.org.au

Convenor and co-convenor responsibilities – Convenor and other group roles

Chosen convenor

All diabetes support groups are required by Diabetes Victoria to nominate a convenor. The convenor is generally the person with whom Diabetes Victoria will communicate with in relation to group activities. There may be two convenors for one group if this has been agreed upon by both the peer support coordinator and individuals whom would like to convene the support group.

A group's convenor runs meetings and guides the decision-making process. They may delegate tasks but need to make sure that people who take on tasks are supported.

Convenors are often the public face of the support group. They usually have their name and phone number on the Diabetes Victoria website as their group's first point of contact. Convenors also receive a free membership during the time of their active role as convenor.

Other roles and responsibilities

Below is a list of roles which may be appointed in a more formal group setting:

- Co-convenor
- Treasurer
- Activities coordinator
- Secretary
- Advertising coordinator
- Library coordinator.

It is also important to note that if this system doesn't work for your group, changes can be discussed. Please talk to the peer support team to discuss options and alternatives.

Sharing responsibilities and workload within your group will help to prevent burnout and ensure that your group doesn't rely on only one or two people. If you rotate roles among members, you will always have more than one person who knows how to do a job.

Your group needs to:



1. Choose what positions or roles it wishes to create.
2. State the responsibilities of each position (this can be a very specific list of tasks or just a general overview).
3. Decide on a process for filling roles.
4. Decide on a process to manage situations where someone isn't doing their job properly or wants to step down from their role.
5. Ensure that someone else can take over running of the group's activities when the group convenor is away or needs a break.

Delegation and succession planning

Some groups may find that sharing responsibilities can take a bit of the pressure off and means that everyone has the opportunity to be involved. Tasks such as looking after emails or member details, finding a location for the next group meeting/event or helping to coordinate when everyone is available to meet can be shared amongst group members.



Some ways to get other members involved include:

- Approaching members in the group at a meeting or via email to see who might be interested in taking on a new role.
- Having a roster in place whereby all group members take it in turns to organise group activities or events.
- Asking new members who join the group if they have any ideas they would like to contribute to the running of the group.

Regular communication with the peer support team

It is important that you inform Diabetes Victoria of any activities or events that the support group wishes to undertake. Regular communication with the peer support team at Diabetes Victoria is very important and allows us to meet the group's needs and its community.

In return for its support, Diabetes Victoria asks all diabetes peer support groups to provide a brief report about activities at the end of each financial year. Your peer support team will provide you with these documents every year.

Your report should list any activities that your group has organised or participated in during the year and a summary of any feedback received.

The reports are used as part of Diabetes Victoria's evaluation and accountability process, and contribute information used in our annual review.

Day-to-day operations

Planning group activities

Some groups choose to plan a year's activities at once. This allows members to plan around activities and allows the group to ensure it has a balance of different activities and topics. As a first step, it's useful for your group to discuss what people want to gain from the year's activities. Together you could discuss:



- What do we want to achieve?
- What types of activity suit our group?
- Who might be able to give us the information we need?

Meeting time and frequency

Generally, diabetes support groups meet once a month or bi-monthly. However, this can vary according to each group's requirements.

Diabetes Victoria suggests that a support group have a minimum of four meetings per year. This ensures community members are provided with the opportunity to attend meetings regularly and build rapport with both the convenor/s and other members.

The day and time of day that you meet depends on the needs and availability of your members. If you want to increase the number of people who participate, you could consider rotating meeting days or times. Remember to consider school holidays, public holidays and religious celebrations into your meeting schedule.

Many support groups find two hours is a good length of time for meetings, although each group will vary depending on their needs.

Having an online support group means that individuals can post information or share stories at any time throughout the day. Groups may also want to organise a time where everyone is online once a week to have an online chat.

All peer support groups are required to inform Diabetes Victoria of meeting/event times and activities running throughout the year. This also helps us to promote these events via the Diabetes Victoria website and through other promotional materials; i.e. newsletters and our Facebook page.

It is preferable to have the dates set at the start of each calendar year, so the peer support coordinator can plan visits to groups.

Venues

To decide whether a venue is suitable, it's best to think about who is currently coming to meetings and who you would like to come to meetings. Meeting in a neighbourhood house, for example, conveys a different message to meeting in a hospital. Meeting at a local community health centre can also mean that the space may be used for free, there is often support from a diabetes nurse educator and access to tea/coffee facilities. Diabetes Victoria recommends against meeting in venues with gaming facilities (for example, licensed clubs).

Some other factors you might need to consider in finding a venue that suits your group are:

- Group size
- Availability
- Closeness to public transport
- Suitable car parking facilities
- Access for people with disabilities
- Hiring costs
- Catering facilities
- Enough space for your needs
- Other facilities (such as toilets, whiteboards, overhead projectors)
- Comfort and feel.

Local government councils have lists of venues that are available to the public.

Health professionals, such as diabetes educators and community health nurses, are also likely to know of or have access to suitable spaces. If you are planning to meet somewhere that has a hiring cost, make sure they know that you are an unfunded community group as this might make you eligible for a discount.



Here is a list of venue ideas for a group meeting:

- Library
- Community hall (i.e. scout hall)
- Welfare/community agency
- Café
- Group member's house
- Park.

Although most groups generally meet at the same venue, changing the meeting place occasionally to engage group members can be a great idea. Some groups hold social dinners or participate in fun runs and other social activities. Contact the peer support team if you require assistance finding a venue for your support group.

Agenda and minutes

For more formalised groups, an agenda can be a good way of keeping track of discussions or topics for a particular meeting. A good agenda has some regular items and includes a time allocation for each item. It's helpful to distribute the agenda before the meeting so that people have time to prepare. Always review the agenda at the beginning of a meeting so that people have a chance to raise other issues for discussion.

Common agenda items are:



- Welcome (including guests) and introductions
- Apologies
- Review of this meeting's agenda
- Thanks and acknowledgements (for work or achievements since the last meeting)
- Issues for discussion
- Evaluation (discussion of how the meeting went)
- Summary of tasks allocated in preparation for next meeting
- Reminder of next meeting date and topics for discussion.



Other agenda items

These depend on the nature of your group. Some groups include an administrative section in every meeting, others do this irregularly. Topics include:



- Finances (budgets including bank balance, expenditure, annual profit and loss statements).
- Correspondence (often this is a folder handed around and any items requiring discussion are listed as agenda items).

Minutes

Minutes are a simple record of what has been discussed and decided at a meeting. They do not need to be a word-for-word record, but it is important that all decisions and actions are noted. Some groups include meeting minutes in a more informal way in their own support group newsletters which can be a great idea as well (see formal minutes and agenda template in appendices).

Group ground rules

Groups sometimes struggle because people have different ideas about what is acceptable behaviour in the group setting. Setting some ground rules for your group can help to ensure that everyone is treated with respect. These rules may evolve over time, so it is important to ensure that they are relevant to your group.



Here are some common ground rules that you may like to use:

- We will show respect for each other by listening, not talking over others, not making assumptions and not putting people down.
- We will treat personal information as private. This means not sharing members' stories with people inside or outside the group without their consent.
- We will turn off our mobile phones (or if we must have them on, we will be considerate about when and how we use them).
- Where possible we will help to pack up at the end of the meeting.
- We will share our experiences and/or give other group members a turn to speak.
- We will take special care to make sure that what we say does not belittle or discriminate against other people.
- We will accept members with diverse cultural/religious/gender beliefs and backgrounds. If people are feeling sad or upset, we will support them to the best of our abilities and not pretend everything is okay.
- We will recognise that people come to our group with very different needs and that these cannot all be met in the group.
- Bullying under any circumstance will not be tolerated within the group setting or on social media. Please be wary of the actions you take and language you use with others.
- We will promote a healthy environment by not smoking and offering suitable, healthy food choices at support group meetings.





The most important thing
to remember is the reason
why a support group exists
and comes together.

Contact the peer support coordinator if issues that involve bullying, discrimination or any other kind of unacceptable behaviour occur.

In the instance when a group is not willing to provide a supportive or safe environment for community members, Diabetes Victoria will no longer be able to provide funding or promotion of your group.

Activities

Guest presenters

Many diabetes support groups invite guests to present at their meetings or events. This is a great way for members to hear up-to-date information, and also allows presenters to promote their service. Guest presenters could be:



- Local health or allied health professionals in your area (i.e. dietitian, podiatrist).
- Diabetes Victoria staff.
- People from your own or another group who are experts in a particular area.
- A representative from a diabetes device company to talk about diabetes technology.

Remember that guest presenters don't have to make a formal presentation. They can help run an activity (i.e. a planning meeting or a physical activity session).

The peer support coordinator at Diabetes Victoria can help you to organise guest presenters for community education forums and launches. (There is a booking system for this purpose). Some groups also keep their own list of guest presenters.

If you are having a guest presenter, make sure you:



- Advise them in writing of the start and finish time, the format of the event, the length of the presentation, what topic you would like them to present and who else may be speaking.
- Check what equipment and space they need (i.e. laptop, projector/ screen, microphone).
- Provide clear directions about how to get to the venue and what space and equipment you will provide.
- Let them know if you want them to stay for the whole event (some might prefer to just attend for their speaking engagement and should be offered the opportunity to do so, especially if they have travelled a long distance or it is an evening meeting).
- Ask them if they are willing to provide their presentation for sharing with the support group members.

Special events

Special events are an important way to raise the profile of your support group and diabetes generally. Diabetes Victoria encourages support groups to form partnerships with local health services and allied health professionals to plan and run special events. This usually makes the planning somewhat easier and increases the reach and interest for the event.

Special events usually take the form of community education forums or stalls at shopping centres. There are a number of diabetes-related events that offer opportunities to organise local activities:



- World Diabetes Day (every year on the 14 November).
- National Diabetes Week (every year in the second week of July).

Diabetes support groups can also hold diabetes-related activities as part of local events, such as health expos and field days.

Tips for planning special events

Events – big or small – require careful planning and coordination.

The questions you should ask when doing publicity also apply for planning events.

Here are some other tips to help make sure your event runs smoothly and enjoyable for everyone



- Make lists of what to do, what to bring, who to thank.
- Make a timeline for planning purposes.
- Advertise the event well ahead of time and consider sending reminders to those who have RSVP'd their attendance.
- Remind key people about their roles and responsibilities at least a week before.
- Plan the cleaning and packing-up.



If you are having a forum, seminar or big meeting:

- Aim to group similar topics and allow time for breaks between speakers.
- Consider running an active session after lunch breaks to keep people engaged.
- Consider dividing up into smaller groups and workshops if there will be lots of people (i.e. you can make use of break-out rooms).
- Allow time for late starts and presentations that go over time (aim to have a set finishing time).



- Brief speakers on the audience and anything that will help them to meet the group's needs (for example, their level of knowledge about the speaker's topic).
- Organise people to fill formal roles – first aid, time keepers, computer trouble-shooters.
- Make people feel special (good food, tea and coffee, flowers on tables, attention to detail, quality materials, thank everyone for coming).

Social activities

Social activities are often the key to a successful support group. Friendships may form, and they are very important for people who are isolated and may not have many opportunities to relax and socialise outside of their home. It is important to note that attending any social event is completely voluntary and there should be no pressure to join.

Most groups have some time to socialise in every meeting, often sharing snacks or a meal before or after the main part of the meeting.



Many groups also have extra social activities. These can include:

- Walks or other physical activity
- Group outings to a museum, zoo, cinema, botanical gardens (often you can buy group tickets for these occasions)
- Daytrips
- Camps or weekends away
- Film nights
- Parties to celebrate achievements or milestones.

When planning social activities for your group, remember to consider affordability and people's mobility. Local councils and community health centres can sometimes organise mini-buses for support group outings.

Newsletters

A newsletter can be a helpful way to share information. It may also be a way to remind group members about upcoming meetings and pass on information of interest to those who don't regularly attend meetings. It could include:



- Group meeting times and topics
- Advertisements for special events
- New information from Diabetes Victoria
- Healthy recipes
- Physical activity ideas (for example, local walking paths and bike tracks)
- Member profiles
- New research.

Creating electronic newsletters (e-newsletters) can greatly decrease your costs – just make sure you can print and post copies to people who don't have access to email.

When you're writing and laying out your newsletter, tailor it to your group member's needs. Make sure that the font is easy to read (especially to visually-impaired readers) and that pictures are clear. If you are quoting or replicating an article in your newsletter from another source, always get permission from its author. Rude, sexist or racist jokes have no place in a diabetes support group newsletter.

If you would like any further help with developing a newsletter for your group, please contact the Diabetes Victoria peer support team.

Information-sharing

Over time, most groups obtain diabetes resources that can be helpful to their members. These resources could become part of a library and shared with the members of the group. It is important to make sure that information about diabetes is regularly checked and updated. If you are not sure of any resources in your library, please check them with Diabetes Victoria.

Advocacy

In Diabetes Victoria's experience, people with diabetes are unfairly burdened by the cost of managing their diabetes and can experience discrimination and disadvantage in work, education and the wider community. They may also find it hard to access services, facilities and programs for their specific needs. These issues require changes in policies and systems at local, state and federal levels.

Sometimes groups choose to take an active role in advocating for change. This can mean lobbying politicians, writing to newspapers and helping to raise awareness. Audiences for this kind of advocacy are often local councillors or local members of parliament.

Advocacy can bring your group closer together, improve self-esteem and lift your group's profile locally. It is most successful when peer support groups work together towards the same goal.

Diabetes Victoria's advocacy coordinator can help groups with any advocacy queries. Please email: oncall@diabetesvic.org.au

Visiting other groups

Visiting other diabetes support groups or related groups can be a great way to build networks and share resources and information. You could also jointly host speakers about issues that you have in common.

Advertising your group

Your group is the face of Diabetes Victoria in your community. The activities you undertake help to extend our reach to people with diabetes, their families and carers. All support group contact details are listed on the Diabetes Victoria website where the public can access information about a support group in their area and who to contact.

Diabetes Victoria can also promote upcoming group events via social media. Please provide notice ahead of time if you have a request to promote an upcoming event.

Building awareness

Actively advertising your group means that local people are more likely to know about your activities and give support to your group. Great ways to build awareness are to:



- Provide group flyers, posters or newsletters to local organisations; such as libraries, general practitioners, pharmacies, community health centres, migrant resource centres, members of parliament, and other community services.
- Organise stalls in your local area during events such as National Diabetes Week and World Diabetes Day. Please be aware that any resources or flyers created for your support group with the Diabetes Victoria logo must be approved by a member of the peer support team. Diabetes Victoria has specific guidelines which must be adhered to when a publication, resource or promotional flyer is produced. To help you with this, Diabetes Victoria's peer support coordinator can provide you with the organisation's style guide, please contact: peersupportgroups@diabetesvic.org.au



- The yearly peer support grant provided by Diabetes Victoria may be used to help make copies of pamphlets and distribute them out to the wider community.

Email, social media and web-based networks are also important ways of promoting your group, but it is important to keep in mind that not all individuals may use or have access to this form of communication.

You could also use the media to help publicise your group event. Please contact the peer support coordinator at Diabetes Victoria for help and guidelines about working with the media.

Planning your advertising

When planning the promotion of your group, answering some basic questions can be useful:



- What do we want to say and why?
- What is our budget for advertising?
- Who is our audience (who do we want to come to our meetings)?
- What messages will appeal to our audience?
- Where will our messages be seen/heard by our audience?
- How will we get our message out there?

Forms of advertising

Answering these questions will largely determine what kind of publicity you undertake. Diabetes Victoria recommends using certain language (to refer to people living with diabetes) when creating posters, flyers and handouts for your group. For a better understanding of how language can affect your message and how it is received, please see Diabetes Australia's Language Position Statement here: <http://bit.ly/DA-language>

Adv

Online groups and information

Online interaction and support have grown rapidly over the last few years. Social media provides a space for people to engage in online communities of shared interest. Individuals have the opportunity to take part in discussions and offer support, without having to move from their normal routine and at a time that suits them.



Examples of social media include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Social networking sites such as Facebook
- Microblogging sites such as Twitter
- Video and photo sharing sites such as Instagram, YouTube and Flickr
- Weblogs
- Forums and discussion boards.

The internet is sometimes seen as a tool for younger people, but the latest research indicates that over 80 per cent of Australians – nearly 17 million people – use the internet (Chronic Illness Alliance, 2012).

Online peer support can be a cheap and very effective way to connect many people with similar interests (Chronic Illness Alliance, 2012).

Diabetes Victoria has some support groups that provide purely online support while others offer both face-to-face meetings and online support.

In the instance that a support group would like to interact online, the peer support coordinator must be informed. As support groups are affiliated with the organisation the online support group page should also be representative of both the support group and Diabetes Victoria.

The following information was taken from the *Chronic Illness Alliance peer support Framework* and clearly outlines the way discussion over social media should be conducted:

While the direction of discussion is driven by the participants, acceptable standards of behaviour need to be defined.

Experience suggests that this is best done by the nominated moderators of the forum modelling good behaviour. Nevertheless, any discussion forum needs a clear set of rules. In addition to good Internet etiquette, other issues that may need to be addressed for a peer support forum are:

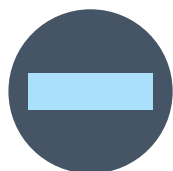


- A clear statement that the forum is not about providing medical advice.
- Policy on promoting products or services (it is common for commercial organisations to sign up as members and make favourable comments about their own goods and services).
- Whose comments are welcome? Is the forum only for peers or are carers and family members welcome to join? Perhaps carers need their own forum to chat about issues relevant to their carer role.

* You can view the rest of the framework at the following website:

chronicillness.org.au

There are a number of issues that individuals should be aware of when using social media, including privacy and security. You can ask the peer support team for a copy of the Diabetes Victoria social media house rules.



Unacceptable behaviour includes:

- Making derogatory, defamatory and discriminatory remarks about fellow group members or the organisation.
- Harassment or threatening behaviour towards another group member.
- Damaging the reputation of Diabetes Victoria or fellow group members.
- Posting photos of individuals or Diabetes Victoria events without obtaining appropriate permission.
- Unauthorised use of the Diabetes Victoria logo.

If using Facebook, consider whether your group's page will be open (available to all) or closed (invite-only).

Remember that social media and online networks can provide a fantastic avenue for communication and peer support if it is used in a positive and inclusive manner with appropriate moderation.

Children

Accommodating children and families

Lack of childcare can be a big barrier to participating in support groups. If your group would like to welcome people who have young children or if the support group is for children with type 1 diabetes, it's worth considering how you will accommodate children. You could:



- Allocate a space in the room for children and provide a box full of toys.
- Ask people to sign up for a roster to play with the children (usually in a quiet corner of the meeting space) so that everyone gets to participate.
- Meet in a venue that has a childcare facility, for example a community health centre.
- Avoid holding meetings at times that clash with school drop-offs, pick-ups and holidays.
- Consider meeting in a child-friendly venue if you have lots of members with children, for example a park or restaurant with a playground.

Diabetes Victoria promotes the safety, wellbeing and inclusion of all children, including those with a disability. We take our commitment to child safety standards seriously and abide by legislative requirements at all times.

Financial and legal matters

Grants

Once a year Diabetes Victoria provides the opportunity for peer support groups to apply for a grant to assist in managing your group. Forms are sent from the peer support staff and include information as to the possible costings your group may encounter in the next year, how you spent previous grant funding and the group account you would like to put the funding into. The grant can assist your group with many potential costs. For further information please discuss with the peer support team.

Costs

There are often costs associated with running a support group. These could include:



- Venue hire
- Photocopying and printing (meeting notes, publicity materials, newsletters)
- Advertising (newspaper ads)
- Telephone, postage and stationery
- Refreshments
- Guest speaker expenses (i.e. travel, professional fees, small gifts or donations to the speaker's organisation).

Sources of income

Diabetes Victoria grants a financial contribution annually to each Diabetes Victoria diabetes support group to assist with covering basic costs. Beyond this, diabetes support groups should aim to be financially self-sufficient by covering their own costs.



Common ways to cover costs are to:

- Ask everyone to make a gold coin donation at each meeting (this should usually raise enough to cover costs of basic refreshments and a small thank you gift for speakers).
- Charge a membership fee (usually with a concession rate for people on pensions or low incomes).
- Seek sponsorship (for example, asking the local fruit shop to supply fruit for catering/refreshments). Check with Diabetes Victoria if you are thinking of taking this approach.

From time to time, government departments or philanthropic organisations offer funding opportunities that could benefit support groups. Diabetes Victoria always tries to inform groups about these as soon as possible. Local councils usually have an annual grants process for community groups, so it is worth contacting the council in your area and asking to be put on their mailing list.

The Diabetes Victoria peer support coordinator can help groups to prepare funding submissions for any grant opportunities.

Bank accounts

Diabetes Victoria peer support groups who wish to access funding will preferably have a bank account in the group's name or the name of its auspice body. If this is not possible, an account in the name of the convenor or secretary who represents the group will suffice.

If you do wish to receive funds via cheque, some financial institutions, especially community banks and credit unions, offer free accounts for community groups. They usually require evidence that the group is legitimate. Minutes of the meeting which signatories were appointed will sometimes suffice. Otherwise, you might need to have a signed letter from Diabetes Victoria on our letterhead.

If cheques are required it is a good idea to have at least two signatories, both of whom are active members of the group. It is wise to require cheques to be counter-signed, so four signatories are preferable. This covers situations in which one or more signatories are ill or on holidays. Should a signatory leave the group, it is vital to appoint a replacement signatory immediately.

Financial records

Groups should maintain a register of all income and expenditure. They should also keep receipts. Diabetes Victoria staff can help if your group is having difficulty with financial systems. It is important to ask early, so that problems can be averted or resolved quickly.

Financial reporting

Diabetes Victoria peer support groups are required to provide revenue and expenditure documents as accountability needs to be assessed each year. A bank balance of the group will need to be supplied.

Insurance

Diabetes Victoria provides insurance cover for all diabetes support groups and group activities. This insurance covers legal liability for personal injury or property damage as a result of an occurrence or happening in connection with Diabetes Victoria. Our insurance policy is held in conjunction with the Victorian Government's Department of Health and Human Services. A copy of the insurance policy is mailed to all Diabetes Victoria convenors annually, in mid to late July.

Public liability insurance

Public liability insurance protects Diabetes Victoria against the financial risk of being found liable to a third party caused by accidents. This cover is only applicable if activities are being held under Diabetes Victoria's auspices, for example general meetings held by peer support groups and events organised by Diabetes Victoria.

Any physical activities conducted by the peer support groups such as walking in the park, cycling and so on are not covered by Diabetes Victoria's public liability insurance. People participating in these activities generally accept the inherent risk of participating in the event or activity. Under no circumstances would Diabetes Victoria be held liable for such injuries.

If a personal trainer conducts physical activities at events, it is the responsibility of the trainer to obtain adequate insurance in the form of professional indemnity and related covers to protect themselves for any losses incurred as a result of professional negligence.

The limit of public liability insurance is \$20 million and is applicable anywhere in Australia but only in respect of activities connected with Diabetes Victoria.

Participating in research

From time to time, academic and medical institutions approach Diabetes Victoria or diabetes support groups directly, seeking people to participate in diabetes research. Diabetes support groups should check with Diabetes Victoria before committing to any research activities, to ensure they have been endorsed by Diabetes Victoria. This helps to ensure that people are participating in ethical and appropriate research.



If you would like to find out more
about research, please visit:
diabetesvic.org.au/diabetes-trials



Getting the most from your group

Running a group involves helping a group to stay on track and making sure that everyone has a good experience in the group setting. In diabetes support groups, the convenor is usually running the group. They can temporarily pass this role onto someone else in the group if they have a lot to say on a particular topic. The energy and enthusiasm that a convenor brings to the group can really influence the group and its members.



At the beginning of a meeting, a good facilitator:

- Welcomes newcomers and initiates introductions if necessary.
- Reminds everyone about the purpose of the group and/or the topic of the meeting.
- Outlines the agenda, checks that all topics have been included and that everyone present is happy with the order of proceedings and time allocated to each item.



As the meeting progresses, a convenor will:

- Keep an eye on the time and alert members when time is running out for discussion.
- Follow the discussion and summarise key points.
- Take notice of who is speaking a lot, who is yet to speak, who looks uncomfortable or confused or cross or tired, and who is getting talked down.
- Actively encourage people to contribute if they haven't done so.
- Stay alert to any areas of disagreement and take responsibility for either proposing a process to resolve the disagreement, or at the very least, asking people to propose a way forward.



At the conclusion of a meeting, a convenor will:

- Summarise what has been achieved in the meeting.
- Summarise tasks arising from the meeting.
- Remind people of the next meeting date and topic.
- Thank everyone for their contributions.

Inclusion

Diabetes Victoria peer support groups bring together people who want support and information.

It is important that everyone feels that they can participate easily and that they feel safe to express their values and experiences.

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People participate in groups differently, according to many different personal factors. Yet your own group dynamics will also be a powerful influence on how welcome people feel. You can take positive steps to make sure your group doesn't seem cliquish or unfriendly to newcomers or people who seem different.

To make your group inclusive and welcoming of everyone you could:



- Ask newcomers to arrive a little early so that the convenor can talk to them about how the group operates and introduce them to the group ground rules.
- Appoint a member of the group to talk to newcomers at meetings and ring them after their first meeting to address any questions or concerns.
- Introduce newcomers to at least a few people before the meeting starts, so that they feel like they know a couple of friendly faces.
- Use nametags at every meeting (in a bigger group, this could be helpful for everyone).



- Regularly include an introduction segment so that people get to know each other – this doesn't have to be boring! Each time you could ask members to say something different about themselves, for example they could name their favourite place to go or a favourite book or magazine.
- Make sure that your group's choice of venue, catering, meeting times and events can accommodate the needs, beliefs and values of members and prospective members. This might mean, for example, ensuring that your venue is accessible for wheelchairs, making sure there's vegetarian food available and not scheduling events during certain religious celebrations (i.e. Ramadan).



- Hire an interpreter (if English isn't the most common language of your group, you could always hold your meeting in another language and offer an English interpretation).
- Encourage everyone to reflect on their use of language. For example, describing a person's lifelong same-sex partner as their 'friend' can be seen as insulting.
- Make sure that everyone knows and agrees to the group ground rules.

If you would like your group to be more diverse, make sure that your publicity can be seen in the places that prospective members will go. For example, you could ask your local migrant resource centre to promote your group and even assist you to include some words on your poster in languages other than English. Consider putting up notices in gathering places such as churches, mosques and synagogues. These are small acts, but they give a very strong signal that you welcome and value difference.

Mail outs

All new groups are provided with a mail out from Diabetes Victoria to promote groups and first or ongoing meetings. The letter can be provided to people within the area of where the peer support group is located and sent to potential relevant members.

Groups are permitted to have a mail out every three years thereafter. If you wish to have a mail out done for your group, please contact the peer support coordinator on: peersupportgroups@diabetesvic.org.au

Refreshing your group

The ups and downs of groups

All groups go through phases. Sometimes, energy is high and there is a strong sense of group identity and unity. At other times, groups seem to lose their direction and/or their cohesion. If people are honest within their group, then together they are more likely to weather any ups and downs.

Over the years, you should expect your group to grow and change. It's useful for future members if you can document the phases of your group. This helps people to know that a slump can be short lived and also reminds them that times of high productivity and group unity won't last forever. How to refresh your group

Most groups get low on energy in their lifecycle. Here are some ideas to get you started again:



- Have an evaluation session, asking everyone to draw, write, sing or act out things that are important to them about the group. Then, together, draw out the key themes.
- Use the learnings from your evaluation as a starting point for a planning session about what you could do to strengthen your group. Brainstorm, make lists, assign tasks – just make sure what you've planned is realistic for your group's size and capacities.
- Have a publicity drive – new members can bring new energy and ideas.
- Do something different! Sometimes a change of scene does wonders. Go on an outing with your group or invite a speaker to come and talk to you about something that's not diabetes (naturally, it's important to focus on diabetes most of the time).



- Consider a partnership. Working with another support group, community group or service provider can open up new possibilities for action.
- Play some games. Support groups are often very good at sitting around talking and this is one of their most important functions – but sometimes it's good to shake things up a bit. There are lots of books of games and activities suitable for groups.
- Have a surprise discussion topic every third meeting (everyone can put topics in a hat and you can draw one each time).



- Find out who can do what in your group. Run training for skills your group is lacking.
- Discuss issues of local concern and consider what your group could do to address these. For example, is there a particular service lacking in your area? You could develop some strategies to advocate for change.

Responding to conflict

Some groups experience conflict at some point. When any group of people comes together, there are going to be occasional disagreements and moments of poor communication. This isn't always felt as conflict, but if it results in people being upset, then they can have serious consequences for the whole group.



The following does not always create, but may cause conflict:

- Poor communication, where people do not have the resources, the time or the opportunity to give their views and to hear other people's views.
- Power struggles or personality differences between group members.
- Different ideas about the group's aim, the roles of certain people, or what decisions have been made.

Conflict can sometimes be a healthy way to discuss some issues and challenges and therefore, if handled in a responsible and respectful way, can have a positive impact and help the group grow.



If there appears to be conflict, tension, frustration or upset in your group:

- Acknowledge that it exists.
- Bring the issue out into the open and ask people to talk about a way to resolve the conflict. This is NOT the time to talk about the conflict itself, but rather, a time for working out what to do about the conflict.
- Avoid complaining or blaming individuals.

Ask that people talk about the behaviours or issues of concern, and how these are affecting them. For example, "I was left to clean up by myself after the last meeting and this made me late to pick up my children. This has happened three times this year and it makes me reluctant to say I'll help out."



- Give people an uninterrupted opportunity to express their needs and concerns without blaming.
- Be clear about what needs to change and how change could be achieved.
- Highlight areas of agreement and issues still to be resolved.
- Celebrate points of agreement and continue addressing conflict until everyone is happy with the outcome.

Support for your work

Diabetes Victoria representatives

Diabetes Victoria employs a range of staff with skills and expertise that could benefit your group. These staff work across metropolitan and rural Victoria.

Below is a list of staff whose services are available free or at reduced cost to peer support groups. For further information please contact the NDSS Helpline on **1300 136 588**.

Peer support coordinator

The peer support coordinator is responsible for supporting and providing advice to peer support groups.



In particular, this means:

- Helping you promote your group
- Helping you find sponsorship and funding for your group
- Advising you on potential guest speakers and new diabetes topics
- Networking with other organisations and agencies
- Planning and evaluating peer support events and seminars
- Keeping groups informed about new research, programs or diabetes-related projects
- Coordinating peer support groups' involvement in various events, activities and forums.

Engagement officer – type 1 peer support

The engagement officer provides resources, information, support, events development and referrals for people living with type 1 diabetes, parents, family and carers.

Advocacy coordinator

The advocacy coordinator assists people with diabetes who experience discrimination or who need support in the workplace, schools or other settings.

Prevention & health promotion team

Implements and manages the Life! program, a state-wide program to support Victorian adults to reduce their high risk of developing type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease and learn more about the steps they can take to live a healthy life. To receive information on the Life! program, please call: **13 7475 (13 RISK)**.

Parents' Voice

Supports and drives an online network of parents who are interested in improving the food and activity environments of Australian children.

Membership and fundraising staff

Provide support and information in regard to signing up as a Diabetes Victoria member or any member queries and conducting or joining fundraising initiatives.

Education services staff

Provide various group sessions and programs for people with type 1 and type 2 diabetes, telephone or individual consultations with credentialed diabetes educators, and professional development for health professionals.

Dose Adjustment for Normal Eating (DAFNE) is a 5-day training course for people with type 1 diabetes to personalise their insulin dosage accordingly to the food they eat. Visit dafne.org.au for more information.

Diabetes Education and Self-Management for Ongoing and Newly Diagnosed diabetes (DESMOND) is a structured group education program which delivers information about diabetes over six hours. Visit desmondaustralia.com.au for more information.

Please note that a discount to DAFNE and DESMOND applies to Diabetes Victoria members but not peer support groups (unless, of course, the peer support group members also hold a Diabetes Victoria membership).

Publications

Diabetes Victoria also has a range of publications that help to keep peer support groups informed about diabetes and events.

Member newsletters

Members of Diabetes Victoria and peer support convenors each receive Diabetes Victoria's quarterly publication Circle magazine, the national Diabetes Australia magazine. They also are emailed Membership Matters, Diabetes Victoria's monthly e-newsletter. These publications keep you up-to-date on diabetes issues, introduce new products and services, and provide information on getting involved in diabetes-specific events within your community.

Diabetes Victoria information sheets

It is very important for diabetes peer support groups to have access to current information about diabetes. Diabetes Victoria produces information sheets on a wide range of diabetes-related topics.

Groups are welcome to copy the resources for their members' educational purposes. For information sheets, visit: diabetesvic.org.au/resources

In addition to Diabetes Victoria's information sheets, we are always publishing new brochures, booklets and books. A full list of resources is available from Diabetes Victoria's online shop: <https://shop.diabetesvic.org.au>

Succession planning

Change is a feature of all support groups, and sometimes groups reach a point where they feel they cannot or should not keep going.

This can happen for many reasons; including:



- The group has served its purpose
- Existing members can no longer keep up the work of running the group
- Existing members feel that the group no longer meets their needs, or that their needs are being better met elsewhere
- There are not enough members for the group to be viable and no prospect of recruiting new members.

Some groups think they must end the group because their leader or group founder is leaving, or because they have dwindling numbers. These issues can usually be overcome if people want the group to keep going.

Closing down or dramatically changing a group should be a decision shared by everyone. If you've tried the suggestions on page 23 to refresh and reinvigorate your group and still think that winding up is the best option, then there are a number of steps to take:

- 1.** Inform Diabetes Victoria that your local group is closing, so we can update our records.
- 2.** Inform all members and local health professionals that the group is closing.
- 3.** Encourage people who would still like to be part of a support group to contact Diabetes Victoria to find out the details of their nearest support group.
- 4.** Return any remaining annual grant funds and/or money raised through fundraising for Diabetes Victoria (your group may specify which organisation or trust Diabetes Victoria should allocate this money to).
- 5.** Close your bank account.
- 6.** Do something positive so that your group ends on a happy note and members are left with fond memories. Discuss what you have achieved and what people have gained from being members of the group. Celebrate!



Supporting Diabetes Victoria

Supporting Diabetes Victoria

If your group would like to assist with fundraising, please contact Diabetes Victoria on **1300 437 386** or email: fundraising@diabetesvic.org.au

Thank you for being a valued part of the Diabetes Victoria community!

The generosity of peer support groups and the broader community is vital if we are to continue our important work in providing education programs, raising awareness of diabetes and funding diabetes research. There are many ways that your group can get involved and help to support Diabetes Victoria's work.

Fundraising and donations

Community fundraising

Community fundraising can be a fun and rewarding way to raise money for Diabetes Victoria while connecting with friends and family, raising awareness of diabetes and promoting your support group.

Community fundraising is a wonderful way to raise important funds for diabetes education programs and research.

Get started by placing a Diabetes Victoria fundraising tin at your local meeting place (please contact the Diabetes Victoria peer support team if you are interested in receiving a tin). Other suggested fundraising activities include:



- Trivia night
- Treasure hunt
- Movie/karaoke night
- Bake sale.

Any funds raised from fundraising initiatives can be allocated to specific areas of interest such as:



- Diabetes education programs
- Diabetes Camps Victoria
- Diabetes research
- General support for the work of Diabetes Victoria.

If you require more information on fundraising, or to request a copy of our Community Fundraising Guide, please contact the fundraising team at fundraising@diabetesvic.org.au or call **1300 437 386**.

Please note that support groups are required to have written approval from the Diabetes Victoria fundraising team before collecting donations on behalf of Diabetes Victoria or using the Diabetes Victoria logo.

In 2018, Diabetes Victoria was able to provide funding support to 27 Victorian diabetes research projects. However, a further 99 research applications could not be supported.

Friends of the CEO is a dedicated group of regular donors whose personal interest, commitment and contribution enables us to make a difference to the lives of people affected by, or at risk of, diabetes. Become a regular donor today! Email fundraising@diabetesvic.org.au to request a *Friends of the CEO* donation form.

Each year, the Diabetes Victoria CEO, upon advice, identifies priority projects so that the generosity of the *Friends of the CEO* can have maximum impact. Support may fund initiatives such as the introduction of a new innovative program, or support for critical needs in existing programs.

To find out more, or if you would like to join the *Friends of the CEO* by pledging a committed monthly gift of at least \$5 to Diabetes Victoria, please call **1300 437 386** or email: fundraising@diabetesvic.org.au

If you pledge a monthly gift to Diabetes Victoria, we will provide you with the following supporter benefits:



- Regular newsletters, outlining the progress made on projects supported by the *Friends of the CEO*
- Recognition on the Diabetes Victoria website
- Invitations to Diabetes Victoria events.

Planned giving

Bequests to Diabetes Victoria have made a huge difference to our service provision over the years. You can help the next generation of people living with diabetes by making a gift to us in your will.

Our experienced bequest team can assist you to arrange a bequest. They can meet with you anywhere in Victoria or post information to you.

Please contact Diabetes Victoria's donor relations manager at: bequest@diabetesvic.org.au
All enquiries are handled in the strictest confidence.

Membership with Diabetes Victoria

Join a supportive community of more than 35,000 Diabetes Victoria members and take an active step in understanding and managing your diabetes. Learn about the latest in health and wellbeing, management, research and technology. Be provided with up-to-date information on living with, or caring for someone, with diabetes. Members also have free or discounted access to Diabetes Victoria events, programs and services that are important in the management of diabetes.

Being informed and supported by your diabetes community can be important, particularly for those who are newly diagnosed. Diabetes Victoria offers membership that cater for people living with type 1, type 2, gestational diabetes, families, carers and health professionals. It can connect you to relevant and reliable information. Your membership strengthens Diabetes Victoria as the leading charity and peak consumer body working to reduce the impact of diabetes in Victoria. Don't miss out on the many valuable benefits and services that are free, exclusive or discounted for members.

Be informed



- Your membership kit will provide you with all the information you need to get you started. Our monthly member e-newsletter, Membership Matters and quarterly member magazine Circle, feature the latest diabetes news, reviews, product comparisons and information that will help keep you informed and up-to-date with all things diabetes.
- Access the interactive member area of our website to receive special partner offers, get creative in the kitchen with our diabetes friendly recipes and keep you up-to-date with upcoming events relevant to your diabetes type.

Be educated



- A variety of events are held each year to inform and educate the diabetes community on a range of topics, including Living Well with Diabetes Victoria. This series of events also connect people living with type 1 and type 2 diabetes to their local diabetes community. Living Well with Diabetes Victoria events are held in both metro Melbourne and rural Victoria. Diabetes Victoria members attend for free.
- Attend our education programs. These are run by diabetes nurse educators and dietitians and are conducted throughout Victoria.
- Be a part of our supermarket tours, conducted by local dietitians in your community. These tours help people to make healthy food choices, as well as how to understand and read food labels.

Better service, support and representation



- Contact your membership team at membership@diabetesvic.org.au or **1300 437 386** for any questions, feedback or requests.

Pay less



- Pay less with a 25 per cent discount on Diabetes Victoria products through our online shop and over the phone.
- Discounts and exclusive offers from our member benefit partners from more than 200 retailers, including Savers, Coles, HOYTS, foot health and travel insurance providers.

Be connected

Experience the opportunity to share information, gain support and advice on services and programs within your community.

How do I register?



- Online at: diabetesvic.org.au/membership
- Phone **1300 437 386** with credit card details and speak to one of our friendly staff.

Type of membership



- **Full member:** \$54 a year.
- **Concession:** \$33 a year, for concession card holders, anyone between 22-26 years of age and anyone over the age of 65.
- **Family:** \$55 a year, for two or more people living with diabetes in the same household.
- **Health professionals:** \$58 a year, for health professionals e.g. dietitian, general practitioner, diabetes nurse educator, endocrinologist.
- **Kids & teens (under 22):** FREE, any kids, teens and young adults under the age of 22 who are registered with the NDSS will become a free member of Diabetes Victoria. Their membership will be activated at the same time as they are registered with the NDSS.

Helpful resources

Are you and your members registered with the NDSS?

The National Diabetes Services Scheme (NDSS) is an initiative of the Australian Government administered with the assistance of Diabetes Australia. The NDSS Agent in Victoria is Diabetes Victoria. The NDSS provides blood and urine testing strips, syringes and pump consumables at subsidised prices. Registration to NDSS is free and valid for life.

The peer support program is funded by the NDSS.

Books

Healthy Shopping Guide

Diabetes Australia's best-selling Healthy Shopping Guide contains more than 1500 examples of suggested food products commonly found on supermarket shelves. It shows you how to read food labels, understand nutrition claims and spot those that are misleading.

The Healthy Shopping Guide includes a nutrients section, helping you to make healthy food choices. Whether or not you have diabetes, this handy pocket-sized guide takes all the hard work out of food shopping.

This booklet normally costs \$7.50. If you attend a Diabetes Victoria supermarket tour you will receive a free copy.

To order a copy of the booklet please call the NDSS Helpline on **1300 136 588** or search for the book on the Diabetes Victoria online shop at: shop.diabetesvic.org.au

Fiona McDermott – Inside Group Work

This Australian book is slightly more advanced than some others and is a great resource for people wanting to deepen their understanding of the different ways that groups can operate. It includes an extensive discussion about the role of power in groups. This isn't a difficult book – it's very practical and readable.

Websites

Diabetes Victoria's website at diabetesvic.org.au is a tool for communication between the organisation, members of Diabetes Victoria and the public. The website provides information about diabetes, education services, nutrition, donations, membership, fundraising and diabetes products.

The website also provides links to support group convenors and support group locations across the state.



Diabetes Victoria
Multilingual Helpline
1300 801 164

NDSS Helpline
1300 135 588

Diabetes Victoria
1300 437 386

Here are some other websites that might provide useful information or ideas:



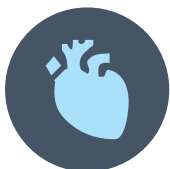
- **Chronic Illness Alliance** – aims to build a better focus in health policy and health services for all people with chronic illnesses: chronicillness.org.au
- **Type 1 Diabetes Network** – an online peer support network of people with type 1 diabetes providing information and resources as well as a web-based forum: t1dn.org.au
- **Health Issues Centre** – a provider of accredited, innovative training programs for consumer leaders and health service staff: healthissuescentre.org.au
- **HypoActive** – a support group promoting an active lifestyle for people with type 1 diabetes: hypoactive.org



- **Royal Children's Hospital (Victoria)** – Melbourne's hospital for kids: rch.org.au
- **Better Health Channel** – health and medical information that is quality assured, reliable, up-to-date, easy to understand, regularly reviewed and locally relevant: betterhealth.vic.gov.au
- **Dietitians Association of Australia** – the peak body of dietetic and nutrition professionals: daa.asn.au



- **Australian Podiatry Council** – Professional body representing practitioners in Australia and New Zealand: apodc.com.au
- **Kidney Health Australia** – a non-profit organisation whose focus is to improve kidney health outcomes which lead to substantial improvements to the quality of life for people with kidney disease: kidney.org.au
- **National Heart Foundation** – informing the public and assisting people with cardiovascular disease: heartfoundation.org.au



- **National Diabetes Service Scheme** – providing fact sheets on diabetes-related information such as: peer support, travel and sick days: ndss.com.au
- **Nutrition Australia** – an independent member organisation that aims to promote the health and wellbeing of all Australians: nutritionaustralia.org
- **QUIT Victoria** – is dedicated to eliminating the pain, suffering and costs caused by tobacco: quit.org.au or call **13 78 48**
- **The Cancer Council Victoria** – a non-profit cancer charity organisation involved in cancer research, patient support, cancer prevention and advocacy: cancervic.org.au



- **Stroke Foundation Victoria** – information about stroke, stroke resources, life after stroke, stroke prevention, events and stroke research: strokefoundation.com.au
- **Vision Australia** – a non-profit organisation providing services, facilities, and information to vision impaired persons: visionaustralia.org



Diabetes Victoria Multilingual Helpline

Diabetes Victoria staff can provide information about diabetes prevention, management and support in many languages.

This service is free and easy to use. There are more than 170 languages available. Simply follow these steps:

1. Call **1300 801 164**, Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm.
2. Say the language you need.
3. Wait on the line for an interpreter. Please stay on the line, it may take a few minutes to connect.
4. Talk to Diabetes Victoria staff with the interpreter's help.



You can talk to our diabetes educators and dietitians when:

- You or someone in your family has been diagnosed with diabetes
- You have difficulty taking care of your diabetes
- You are not sure about your diabetes diagnosis or symptoms
- You do not know what information you need
- You do not know where to get information about your condition
- You do not understand the information you have been given
- You are not sure about what to eat.



You can talk to our advocacy officer when you:

- Face discrimination at work or other areas of public life because of your diabetes
- Need help to secure your rights
- Need help to discuss your needs about diabetes
- Need help to link in with services
- You have ideas or suggestions for improving diabetes services and information.

FAQs

About Diabetes Victoria

Diabetes Victoria is the leading charity and peak consumer body working to reduce the impact of diabetes in the Victorian community. Established in 1953, we work to support, empower and campaign for Victorians affected by, or at risk of, diabetes.



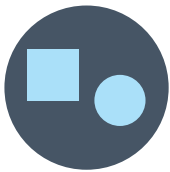
- We are the Victorian Agent for the National Diabetes Services Scheme (NDSS).
- Our organisation's patron is The Governor of Victoria – The Hon Linda Dessau AC.
- We run the NDSS Helpline (1300 136 588) to help people with diabetes navigate the diabetes world.
- We provide education, information and support to promote and empower self-management for all people with diabetes.



- We seek to improve diabetes self-management, awareness and prevention through targeted programs.
- We work with communities and partner organisations to maximise our impact.
- We organise diabetes camps every year in partnership with the Royal Children's and Monash Children's Hospitals.
- We present Kellion Victory Medals every year to celebrate people who have lived with diabetes for 50 or more years.
- We are a member-based organisation and offer membership for people living with diabetes, their families, carers and health professionals.



- Funded by the Victorian State Government, we run the Life! program – Australia's largest prevention program for type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease.
- We coordinate around 90 diabetes support groups across the state, helping people with diabetes to connect with others on their diabetes journey.
- We support schools and aged care facilities to ensure that people with diabetes are safe at every stage of their life.
- We advocate for people with diabetes – in relation to driving restrictions, workplace discrimination, insurance coverage and many more issues.



- We celebrate diversity and work with our priority communities to ensure fairness and health equity.
- We raise awareness for all types of diabetes through media campaigns and health promotion.
- We hold Australia's largest consumer diabetes event, Diabetes Expo, every two years.
- We support good evidence-informed public health policy in our own right and through funding support for the Obesity Policy Coalition and Parents' Voice.
- We fund vital diabetes research. We do this by funding (in partnership with Deakin University) the Australian Centre for Behavioural Research in Diabetes (ACBRD) and the annual Diabetes Australia Research Program (DARP) grants.



- We hold a Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status with the Australian Tax Office. We are an ISO-accredited association and have received the ACNC Charity Tick.

What is the difference between type 1 and type 2 diabetes?

Type 1 diabetes is an autoimmune condition. Usually the onset is abrupt, and symptoms are obvious. Type 1 diabetes is more commonly diagnosed in children and young adults but can occur at any age. Type 1 diabetes is always treated with insulin.

Type 2 diabetes is the form of diabetes that is related to ageing, family history and lifestyle factors (overweight and inactivity). It occurs when the insulin is not working effectively (insulin resistance) or the pancreas does not produce enough insulin (or a combination of both).

Most people with diabetes have type 2 diabetes. It usually develops in adults over the age of 45 years, but it is increasingly occurring at a younger age.

Type 2 diabetes is managed with healthy eating, exercise and weight control. Tablets and insulin may also be required.

What is gestational diabetes?

Pregnancy brings changes within the mother's body to ensure the normal growth and development of the baby.

Gestational diabetes occurs when the mother's body is unable to cope sufficiently with the increased level of hormones from the placenta. These hormones block the action of the mother's insulin. This is called insulin resistance.

During pregnancy, a mother's body needs two to three times more insulin than usual to keep blood glucose levels normal. When a woman develops gestational diabetes, her pancreas is unable to produce the extra insulin needed at this time.

Gestational diabetes is diabetes that occurs for the first time during pregnancy and goes away after a baby is born. In some women, the diabetes may not disappear after birth. Also, women who have had gestational diabetes have an increased risk to develop type 2 diabetes.

What is LADA?

Latent autoimmune diabetes in adults (LADA) is a slow-onset form of type 1 diabetes occurring in adults over 30 years of age. LADA is frequently misdiagnosed as type 2 diabetes.

If I was diagnosed with type 2 diabetes and now as part of my treatment need to take insulin, does that mean I now have type 1 diabetes?

No. Some individuals living with type 2 diabetes need to take insulin in conjunction with medication to help stabilise blood glucose levels. Type 2 diabetes is a progressive condition and treatment usually needs to change over time so that blood glucose levels can be kept within the target range. In the early stages the body may be producing more insulin than normal, but after having type 2 diabetes for several years, the pancreas becomes exhausted and makes less insulin.

The management of type 2 diabetes involves regular physical activity, healthy eating and losing excess weight. This will help the insulin work more effectively. Tablets and insulin injections may also be needed so that blood glucose levels can be kept within the target range. Losing weight and being physically active can delay the need for tablets or insulin. Even when medications or insulin are commenced, regular physical activity and healthy eating remain the cornerstone of diabetes management.

References

1. Browne JL, Bennet A, Halliday JA, Holmes- Truscott E, Speight J (2016). Diabetes peer support in Australia: A national survey. Diabetes Victoria, Melbourne.
2. Alliance, C. I. (2012). peer support Network. from chronicillness.org.au/index.php/peer-support-network



“We rise by lifting others”
Robert Ingersoll

Appendix 1 – Meeting notes

Meeting notes		
Date and time:	No. of attendees:	Who's taking notes?
Item	Who	When
What is being discussed? What needs to be done?	Who is responsible?	When does it have to be completed by?
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		

Appendix 2 - Agenda and minutes template

‘Insert group/ association logo’		‘Insert group name’	
Date:	Venue:	Present:	
Time started:	Time finished:	Apologies:	
Convenor:		Guest speaker:	
Welcome & housekeeping:		Welcome New members Apologies	
Convenor/treasurer:		Updates	
Correspondence in:			
Correspondence out:			
Members updates:			
Diabetes Educator updates:			
Morning tea ‘insert time’:			
Guest speaker:			
Group participation:			
Summary of today’s meeting:			
Take home messages:			
Next meeting:	Date:	Time:	
Topic:	Guest speaker:		
Task and follow up for next meeting:			

* Thankyou to the Banyule Diabetes & Information peer support group for providing this template

Appendix 3 - Benefits of the Diabetes Victoria peer support Program



Diabetes Victoria's Peer Support Program

We will offer access to:

- Public liability and professional indemnity insurance for group-related activities.*
- Ongoing support from the peer support team.
- Regular contact with the peer support team via telephone or email.
- Free counselling sessions for convenors, through our Employee Assistance Program.
- Annual grants.
- A free convenor (leader) training and networking day every year.
- Support, to assist you in running events.
- Health professional advice and speakers (if needed).
- Promote your group:
 - On our website, Facebook and Twitter pages.
 - In publications such as The Loop e-newsletter and Circle magazine.
 - Through targeted mail-outs to NDSS registrants.
 - At our events across Victoria.
- A wide and diverse range of peer support groups within the Diabetes Victoria family.



***Please discuss your group-related activities with the peer support team.**

In return, a peer support group will provide:

- An active phone number and email address to Diabetes Victoria.
- A minimum of four opportunities each year for your local diabetes community to meet and support each other.
- An annual income and expenditure statement from those who have received a Diabetes Victoria grant in the last financial year.
- Group evaluation each year.
- Updates on your support group's activity and membership.
- NDSS peer support group checklist.
- Group profile and participation form (when you join the program).
- Tell your group about Diabetes Victoria's membership benefits.



diabetesvic.org.au/membershiptype

To find out more, contact us on: 1300 136 588 or via email at: peersupportgroups@diabetesvic.org.au



Developed in consultation with consumers.

ISO-753 Peer Support Program - Benefits Flyer
The National Diabetes Services Scheme (NDSS) is an initiative of the Australian Government administered with the assistance of Diabetes Australia. The Victorian Agent for the NDSS is Diabetes Victoria.

Page 1



The design of this handbook was developed in collaboration with consumers at all stages including topics, wording and graphics and review. Diabetes Victoria is appreciative of their input.

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