



TERMS OF SERVICE FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE 1IN6 ONLINE SUPPORT GROUPS

OVERVIEW

Zero Abuse Project (Zero Abuse) implements free, anonymous, chat-based Online Support Groups (OSGs) for adult male-identifying survivors of sexual trauma. This document outlines the Terms of Service for OSG participants. Please read these terms carefully before participating in the OSG.

DEFINING ONLINE SUPPORT GROUPS

OSGs are online, clinically-facilitated, chat-based peer support groups intended for adults who identify as male and as having experienced sexual trauma as a child and/or an adult.

Online

“Online” means that OSGs are implemented via the internet.

Clinically-facilitated

“Clinically-facilitated” means that the execution of OSGs is provided by licensed mental health professionals with whom Zero Abuse contracts for their services.

Chat-based

“Chat-based” means that all correspondence during all instances of OSGs occur by participants and the facilitator typing words into an online chat forum.

Peer support groups

“Peer support groups” means that each instance of OSGs functions as an environment of supportive correspondence that is peer-led. While the facilitator is on hand to execute the OSG and to provide structure and guidance as needed, it is the participants themselves who lead and engage in discussion.

Adults

“Adults” refers to individuals who are at least 18 years of age.

Identify

“Identify” means that an individual OSG participant personally ascribes to a particular descriptor.

Male

For the purposes of participation in OSGs, “male” refers to personal characteristics that an individual participant identifies as masculine. This is intended as a gendered term and may or may not reflect the participant’s biological sex or sex assigned at birth.

Sexual trauma

“Sexual trauma” refers to any unwanted sexual experience. This may include, but is not limited to, child sexual abuse, sexual assault at any age, sex trafficking at any age, online sexual exploitation at any age, and/or sexual harassment at any age.

IMPORTANT LIMITATIONS OF ONLINE SUPPORT GROUPS

Due to the nature and delivery of OSGs, there are several limitations that all participants must be aware of prior to choosing whether to participate. ***By participating in any instance of OSGs, all participants acknowledge that they understand these limitations and have chosen to participate.***

Anonymity

While disclosure of any personal identifying information (PII) of individual participants is not permitted in any instance of OSGs, and the content of correspondence during OSGs is never made public by Zero Abuse, at no time should any correspondence shared in any instance of OSGs be considered fully anonymous. For example, an OSG participant could take a screenshot of the chat and share it with anyone he chooses. As such, all participants should assume appropriate risk when typing anything about themselves or their experience in the chat.

Confidentiality

The same limits to anonymity apply to the notion of confidentiality. While Zero Abuse and its contracted facilitators and moderators will never publicly share identifiable information about any OSG participant without their consent, at no time should any correspondence in any instance of OSGs be considered confidential. An individual participant could share any aspect of the chat correspondence with anyone he chooses outside of the group without the knowledge of Zero Abuse or other group participants. It is likewise important to remember that the **OSGs are not “therapy” or a “therapy group,”** therefore traditional tenets of clinician-client confidentiality do not apply.

Adherence to participation rules and qualifications

While all OSG participants agree in theory to qualifications to participate in all instances of OSGs, there is no mechanism by which to verify that each participant has factually adhered to those qualifications. For example, a participant could join the OSG who is under age 18, who identifies as other than male, and/or who has not experienced sexual trauma. Additionally, while participants must be non-offending survivors (meaning that they have not themselves caused sexual trauma to another), there is likewise no mechanism by which to verify that any individual participant is not a previous or current perpetrator of sexual trauma or any other crime.

Mandated reporting

Since no PII of any individual OSG participant is disclosed, collected, or stored, it is not possible for Zero Abuse and its contracted facilitators or moderators to report any information to the authorities that would constitute a mandated report under federal or state laws. If it becomes apparent to the facilitator that a participant is in imminent danger of harming himself or others, and/or that current abuse of a child is suspected or occurring, the facilitator will attempt to engage with the individual participant via the direct messaging feature of the OSG chat platform. During this engagement, the facilitator may attempt to obtain information from the participant that would facilitate making an actionable report to authorities in the participant's community. Individual participants are under no obligation to provide this information to the facilitator. As such, neither Zero Abuse nor the facilitators or moderators are responsible for any acts of self-harm, harm to others, or suspected or actual child abuse that is disclosed or arises before, during, or following any instance of OSGs.

Emotional harm

As an anonymous, chat-based peer support group, OSGs function as a guided conversation among group participants. Each participant comes to the chat with his own personality, needs, victimization experience(s), and perspectives. While blatantly abusive language by any participant will not be tolerated, correspondence shared in the chat may nonetheless affect participants in unexpected or unwelcome ways. Sexual trauma and its impact are topics that, by their very nature, may elicit uncomfortable or unpleasant thoughts, emotions, and/or sensations. By participating in the group, participants acknowledge that they may be exposed to such impacts, and that Zero Abuse, the facilitators, and the moderators are not responsible for any negative emotional impacts of participation in OSGs. **Zero Abuse strongly recommends that all group participants have supportive resources outside of the OSGs, such as a therapist, an in-person group, a hotline, supportive friends/family members, or other similar resources.**

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF ZERO ABUSE PROJECT

Zero Abuse makes OSGs publicly available to adult male survivors of sexual trauma via the 1in6.org website and through a paid subscription with a third party vendor, JotCast. 1in6 is a program of Zero Abuse Project, and the 1in6.org website is owned by Zero Abuse Project. As with all programs at Zero Abuse, 1in6 - which includes all instances of OSGs - are subject to change or discontinuation at the discretion of the Zero Abuse Board of Directors and/or executive leadership at any time.

JotCast is the online platform utilized by Zero Abuse to implement OSGs. As a third party vendor not owned or operated by Zero Abuse, JotCast may change or discontinue the use of its platform or change any aspect of the platform in accordance with its business practices.

Zero Abuse may cancel any instance of OSGs due to unforeseen conflicts, natural disasters, or illness that prevent the facilitator from facilitating the group; major holidays; technical issues involving the 1in6 website or JotCast platform; and/or events that render Zero Abuse or JotCast unable to provide the group. Any disruptions to planned OSGs will be announced as far in advance as possible.

As a condition of offering OSGs publicly to adult male survivors of sexual trauma, Zero Abuse will provide or ensure the following:

- OSGs will be made publicly available at no cost to participants.
- OSGs will not require pre-registration for participation, meaning that participants' personally identifiable information (PII) is not required and will not be collected.
- OSGs will be conducted as chat-based groups only, meaning that no video or audio capabilities will be enabled for facilitators, moderators, or participants at any time.
- Each instance of OSGs will be facilitated by a licensed mental health practitioner and moderated by a contracted individual who may or may not have licensure or other substantive experience in mental health services.

In order to preserve the safety and fidelity of OSGs to every extent possible, Zero Abuse reserves the right to take any of the following actions:

- Block a participant from being able to participate in all or part of any instance of OSGs.
- Ban a participant from being able to participant in any future OSGs.
- Require a participant to change their username if the original username could reveal PII.
- Prohibit a participant from using words or phrases that are abusive toward the facilitator, moderator, or any participant.
- Prohibit a participant from using words or phrases that are excessively graphic in their description of sexual assault or abuse.
- Private-message a participant if the facilitator feels that doing so is necessary or helpful.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARTICIPANTS

By participating in any instance of OSGs, participants have the right to the following expectations about the OSGs:

- That no PII will be collected, shared, or stored by Zero Abuse at any time.
- To be able to fully participate in any instance of OSGs provided that the participant adheres to the rules, guidelines, and qualifications for participation, as announced by the facilitator at the beginning of each group.
- To be regarded respectfully by the facilitator, moderator, and other group participants.

In order to preserve the safety and fidelity of all instances of OSGs, all participants assume the following responsibilities when choosing to participate:

- Adherence to the rules, guidelines, and qualifications for participation, and to seek clarification from the facilitator if/when needed.
- Recognition that the topic of sexual trauma can be emotionally difficult and that participating in the group may result in negative or uncomfortable feelings.
- Recognition that the facilitator may choose to block, ban, or private message any participant if doing so is in the best interest of the individual participant and/or group participants as a whole.

WAIVER OF LIABILITY

By participating in any instance of OSGs as outlined in this document, on the 1in6 webpage, and on the instruction and guidance of the OSG facilitators and moderators, all participants acknowledge and agree that Zero Abuse Project, the group itself, and its facilitators and moderators are not providing medical, psychological, legal, or therapeutic advice or services. Participation is voluntary, and each participant is responsible for his/her own well-being and decisions. All participants understand that discussions in the group are for mutual peer support, and that Zero Abuse Project and its board of directors, staff members, contractors, and funding entities are not liable for any actions that any individual participant takes or any outcomes or losses experienced by any participant before, during, or after participation in any instance of OSGs.

Zero Abuse Project reserves the right to update these Terms of Service at any time, with an updated version available on the 1in6 website.