

## Guidelines for a Safe MTS Small Group

- 1. Attendance:** All participants are encouraged to attend each session to gain maximum benefit for themselves and others.
- 2. Absence:** Each participant must call their facilitator in advance if absence from a group meeting is unavoidable.
- 3. Confidentiality:** Each participant must understand and commit to creating a safe and trustworthy environment for all group participants by ensuring that anything heard in the group is confidential and cannot be shared outside the group.
- 4. Time:** Each participant must commit that the group will begin and end on time, meeting for two hours each scheduled week.
- 5. Prayer:** The group participants will determine how and when prayer will occur within the group, keeping in mind the safety and needs of each participant.
- 6. Sharing:** All participants are encouraged to share to the extent they are ready – honesty and vulnerability are encouraged.
- 7. Boundaries:** Group time is distributed equally among group participants, and unnecessary graphic details of abuse or trauma are not to be shared with the group. The focus of the group is to discuss the effects of abuse and trauma, not the details of what happened.
- 8. Listening:** Each participant will actively listen to other group members without interrupting, talking over, arguing, engaging in side conversations, talking or texting on the telephone, or coming in late.
- 9. No Comparisons:** All abuse and trauma are harmful, and the impact is unique to the participant that experienced the abuse or trauma. It is important that each participant refrain from comparing his/her experience to the experiences of other participants in the group. A participant should never minimize the effects of another participant's trauma or abuse.
- 10. Touch:** Always ask for permission before touching another participant.
- 11. Feelings:** All participants are encouraged to fully express their feelings. No participant should stop this process by interrupting, minimizing, making light of, or any other interjection that may thwart the participant's full expression of his/her feelings.

**12. Silence:** Each group participant must understand that silence is an important part of the group process. Participants must avoid interjecting comments or advice when/if another participant becomes silent while sharing.

**13. No Advising:** Participants do not give advice to other participants.

**14. Cell Phones:** Each participant must silence his/her cell phone during the group time and may only use his/her cell phone during scheduled breaks.

Participant Initials: \_\_\_\_\_