



MEMBERSHIP DONATIONS— WHY BOTHER?

Your donations will enable our group to undertake some or all of the following activities:

- Providing material that will help you and your family understand your illness
- Raising public awareness (including health care officials) of CFS/FMS
- Maintaining a Hot Line/PenPal List & an E-Mail PenPal List for people who are in crisis or just need contact with someone else who has CFS/FMS.
- Sending out a newsletter twice a year (printing and postage)
- Participating in community health fairs
- Making donations to national CFS/FMS organizations for research
- Compiling new member packets
- Maintaining memberships in CFS/FMS national organizations
- Helping children and young people who have CFS/FMS
- Providing helpful educational materials; compiling a lending library
- Networking with other related organizations
- Reaching other people who have CFS/FMS
- Searching for grants to help support country-wide programs

We ask for a \$1 donation (or more if you'd like) per person per meeting. A donation is just that — a donation. Don't stay home if you aren't able to make a donation. We want you at the meeting.

BH CFS/FMS Support Group has received Articles of Incorporation for Non-Profit Status by the Secretary of State of South Dakota and is a 501(c)3 tax-exempt organization. Donations are tax deductible to the full extent allowed by law.

We all benefit in some way, either directly or indirectly, by educating the public and health care professionals about Chronic Fatigue Syndrome/Fibromyalgia Syndrome.



Black Hills Chronic Fatigue Syndrome/ Fibromyalgia Syndrome Support Group Guidelines

We are a group of people with a common bond, sharing our concerns, feelings, experiences, strengths and wisdom.

Our discussions are designed to foster positive attitudes and are directed toward solutions. We share our problems, but we do not dwell on them. We provide hope.

We listen, explore options and express our feelings. We do not prescribe, diagnose, judge or give medical advice.

We know that what we share is confidential.

Our leaders are not "the experts," but one of us.

We each have the opportunity for equal talking time or the right to remain silent; we can share as much or as little as we want. Just say "pass" if you are not ready to share.

We actively listen when someone is talking and avoid interrupting and participating in side conversations. Please do not be offended if we say "shh" if you are participating in a side conversation when someone else is speaking. If a speaker welcomes questions **during** his/her presentations, please interrupt.

We encourage "I" statements. Please stick to your own experiences and avoid generalities.

Our meetings supplement and **do not** replace medical care.

We do not promote or provide specific medical advice. We are not here to sell or promote a product. Please advise one of the leaders if you are approached by someone in our group trying to sell/promote a product at our meetings.

We each share the responsibility for making the group run smoothly. Volunteer to help if you can.

Having benefited from the help of others, we recognize the need to offer our help to others.



WHAT IS A SUPPORT GROUP?

Black Hills Chronic Fatigue Syndrome/
Fibromyalgia Support Group is:

- A place to go for information about CFS/FMS
- A gathering of people who share a common bond – the challenge of coping with CFS/FMS and all its effects on our lives
- A place where members can be assured of confidentiality and anonymity
- A group of special friends who are good listeners and care about you
- A place where you can laugh at the ridiculous side of CFS/FMS and be understood
- A place to receive reassurance, comfort, friendship and social support
- An inexpensive sharing experience
- A place to give and receive strength and

WHAT A SUPPORT GROUP IS NOT

Black Hills Chronic Fatigue Syndrome/
Fibromyalgia Syndrome Support Group is NOT:

- A therapy group
- Too large (we provide an opportunity for you to interact with a small or larger group)
- A casual gabfest (we meet at regular specified times for the specific purpose of learning more about Chronic Fatigue Syndrome and Fibromyalgia Syndrome)
- A social gathering (although socialization is a benefit)

BASIC NEEDS OF SUPPORT GROUP MEMBERS

- Anonymity (for those who wish to remain anonymous) - this is a must
- A sense of safety in the group
- Acceptance by the group
- Recognition – a chance to contribute to the group
- A feeling of belonging to the group
- Self-worth – each member is valued by the group
- Empowerment – each member can share in decision making



WHY HAVE A SUPPORT GROUP?

Black Hills Chronic Fatigue Syndrome/
Fibromyalgia Syndrome Support Group was
established to:

- Educate, support and provide hope – three important goals
- Learn about Chronic Fatigue Syndrome/Fibromyalgia Syndrome
- Receive the help we all need sometimes
- Share with others who have fought the same illness (some stories cannot be shared with just anyone)
- Learn good coping skills from others who have traveled the same road (self-esteem which has been battered returns when we realize others share the same illness)
- Provide a healing environment (studies show that support groups can provide physical benefits in persons who are ill)
- Allow us permission to be ourselves
- Provide an opportunity for family and friends to learn about living with a person who has Chronic Fatigue Syndrome/Fibromyalgia Syndrome
- Validate our illness so that even when

GUIDELINES FOR WHEN WE HAVE A GUEST SPEAKER

- The speaker's role is to come to our group to give information.
- It is inappropriate to ask diagnostic questions of a speaker.
- Specific questions about medications should be taken up in a doctor's office or in conjunction with your doctor. The doctor needs a whole history.

**Meetings are held from 10 a.m. —noon the third
Saturday of every month in the Rushmore Room
at Rapid City Regional Hospital
353 Fairmont Blvd., Rapid City, SD
For information contact:
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