



## Dig Deeper: Progressive Group Discussion Starters

This is a large list of group discussion starters that can be used in any order. There are more choices than you may need so select topics based on the needs and interests of the group. **There are four progressive discussion points for each topic based on the KEY in the box below:**

### **KEY: Topics in Bold**

1. INTRODUCTION – Getting discussion started.
2. EXPLORATION – Exploring further.
3. IN-DEPTH – Looking even deeper.
4. COPING – Positive focus on coping skills for positive change and recovery

### **Setback/Relapse Prevention Triggers**

1. A common relapse trigger for you...
2. A challenging relapse trigger...
3. A situation that could realistically happen that you imagine could be difficult for you...
4. How you best can cope with preventing setbacks and relapse (what works or what do you need?)

### **Stress Management**

1. Your favorite healthy escape
2. A situation that is especially stressful for you...
3. What would you consider to be overwhelming...
4. What works for you when it comes to relaxing and coping with stress...

### **Support**

1. The most important quality in a person whom you would consider to be a recovery support...
2. A quality in others can be difficult for you to deal with... (For ex dishonesty, gossip, jealousy, etc.)
3. Challenges of finding positive people for support in the world today...
4. Ways your support system helps you...

### **Decision-Making**

1. A recent decision you made, big or small...
2. A decision you made that was influenced by others (either for good or bad)
3. A decision that challenged your ethics or sense of right and wrong...
4. Successfully coping when decisions don't go as planned...

### **Anger Management**

1. A recent situation that triggered anger...
2. Reflect on how anger manifests itself in your body and mind...
3. Discuss some of the roots of your anger, possibly from childhood experiences...
4. Your most effective tools/skills for keeping yourself from acting out in anger...

### **Self-Perception**

1. A recent self-discovery about yourself...
2. A past self-discovery that surprised you...
3. Something that caused your self-perception to change or evolve...
4. Your personal strategies for fostering a positive self-image...

### **Anxiety**

1. A recent or current situation that causes you anxiety...
2. An everyday anxiety you find challenging...
3. A lifelong anxiety that has taken work for you to try to manage or overcome...
4. Your go-to anxiety relief strategies and activities...



## Negative Moods

1. Some triggers that can turn a good mood, bad...
2. Everyday activities that can be challenging during low moods...
3. How past experiences can contribute to “down” or depressive moods today...
4. Strategies and activities that bring you joy, alleviate sadness, or improve your mood...

## Health and Wellness

1. A recent health-related concern or achievement...
2. Maintaining physical and mental well-being includes...
3. Your thoughts on the connection between mental and physical health...
4. Key aspects of your personal wellness plan for both physical and mental health...

## Relationships

1. A recent interesting experience in a relationship...
2. Characteristics of your communication style in relationships...
3. Some negative patterns in your relationship dynamics you need to work on...
4. Strategies that help for effective conflict resolution and maintaining healthy relationships...

## Adapting to Life Changes

1. A recent change that you found challenging...
2. Your typical response to change includes... (including strengths and weaknesses) ...
3. An impactful experience with a major life change...
4. What helps the most when it comes to adapting positively to change...

## Substance Use

1. One reason why you used (or use) substances...
2. Past situations where urges to use substances has been strong at one point in your life...
3. The role of substances for you in dealing with emotions...
4. An essential aspect of your specific plan for maintaining recovery and positive life change...

## Resilience

1. A recent life situation that required resilience (bouncing back) ...
2. Some of your own personal strengths that contribute to your resilience...
3. How your own insecurities and negative thoughts potentially can interfere with resilience...
4. A resilience-building practice or skill you have for navigating challenges...

## Time Management

1. A recent time-related challenge you faced successfully...
2. Personal reasons why time is one of your most valuable resources...
3. A personal fear or concern you have when it comes to having enough time...
4. One of your most effective current time management strategies...

## Self-Compassion

1. A recent situation where self-compassion played a role in the outcome...
2. An example of a positive way you can think and speak to yourself to practice self-compassion...
3. Some of your own barriers or limitations in practicing self-compassion...
4. One of your favorite strategies for cultivating self-compassion in daily life...

## Personal Growth

1. One specific goal of yours for personal growth...
2. A realization or insight that contributed to your personal growth...
3. A difficult or powerful breakthrough that you had in your personal growth journey...
4. Some things you need in your life to create an environment for increased personal growth...



## **Gratitude**

1. One of the first things that comes to mind when you think of gratitude...
2. Ways how expressing and experiencing gratitude impacts a person's wellbeing and recovery...
3. Specific meaningful aspects of your life that you may at times overlook or take for granted...
4. A regular practice or skill that helps you build and maintain a gratitude-based mindset...

## **Creativity**

1. A recent creative endeavor or expression...
2. How creativity plays a role in your life and your own positive change process....
3. Challenges or obstacles that might block or limit your creativity...
4. One strategy you developed (or need to develop) for incorporating creativity into daily life...

## **Boundaries**

1. A recent situation where you set boundaries...
2. Challenges in establishing and maintaining boundaries...
3. How your personal values (what's important) contribute to your boundaries...
4. Some effective strategies for setting, communicating, and maintaining boundaries...

## **Forgiveness**

1. A recent experience involving forgiveness (or the need to forgive) ...
2. What you need to be successful in forgiving yourself and others...
3. The potential impact of holding onto grudges on your well-being...
4. Skills and practices for cultivating forgiveness and letting go...

## **Self-Awareness/Insight**

1. A moment when you practiced self-awareness...
2. Challenges in staying present, self-aware, and mindful...
3. Key aspects in the connection between self-awareness and emotional regulation...
4. Ways to incorporate mindful self-awareness into daily life for personal growth...

## **Purpose and Meaning**

1. A recent experience that brought a sense of purpose...
2. Your current understanding of life's purpose...
3. For you the connection between meaning and mental well-being includes...
4. Strategies for aligning daily activities and goals with meaningful and purposeful values...

## **Grief and Loss**

1. Share a recent experience where you navigated grief or loss...
2. Discuss how you typically cope with feelings of grief...
3. Explore the stages of grief and their impact on mental health...
4. Develop personalized strategies for grieving and honoring memories...

## **Joy and Positivity**

1. A recent moment that brought you joy...
2. A source for enhancing positive feelings and inspiration...
3. Ways that positive thinking and emotions increase your happiness and wellbeing...
4. Your practices for fostering joy and positivity in daily life...

## **Decision to Change**

1. A recent decision to make a positive change in your life...
2. Factors influencing your motivation and positive drive to change...
3. Obstacles and barriers that could potentially hinder or derail positive change...
4. Effective strategies for enhancing and maintaining commitment to positive changes...



### **Sleep Hygiene**

1. A recent experience related to your sleep patterns...
2. Factors that impact the quality of your sleep...
3. Your beliefs on the connection between sleep and mental well-being...
4. Key aspects of a personalized sleep hygiene routine for you include...

### **Compassion for Others**

1. A recent experience where you showed compassion to others...
2. Some challenges in expressing empathy and compassion...
3. The impact of compassionate acts on your own well-being...
4. Needed practices for incorporating compassion into your daily interactions...

### **Resilience**

1. A time when you faced a setback and demonstrated resilience...
2. External factors that have contributed to your resilience...
3. Circumstances that can challenge your ability to be resilient when under pressure...
4. Some of your resilience-building practices for coping with and facing future challenges...

### **Feelings and Emotions**

1. An emotion you have been dealing with lately...
2. Ways that your feelings impact your choices and behaviors today...
3. Challenges for you in identifying, expressing, or managing feelings...
4. Items on your recovery plan for navigating and adapting to unexpected or difficult feelings...

### **Personal Values**

1. One core personal value and its importance in your life...
2. How developing new values contributes to recovery and positive life change...
3. A situation where your values are (or were) challenged...
4. What works for you when it comes to staying true to your values in various life situations...

### **Mind-Body Connection**

1. An experience where you noticed a strong mind-body connection...
2. Your thoughts on how physical health impacts mental well-being...
3. Some challenges in maintaining a healthy mind and body...
4. Your ideas for developing a holistic approach to caring for both your mind and body...

### **Self-Reflection**

1. A recent moment of effective or meaningful self-reflection...
2. The role of self-reflection in your own path toward personal growth...
3. Challenges in your ongoing self-reflection journey...
4. Ways to enhance regular self-reflection practice for continuous personal development...

### **Coping with Change**

1. A specific practice that helps you cope effectively with change...
2. Some of your initial reactions (good and not so good) to unexpected changes.
3. Challenges for you in dealing with change...
4. Your coping mechanisms for navigating changes in life, especially the difficult ones...

### **Nature and Well-being**

1. A positive experience connecting with nature and its impact on your well-being...
2. Personal therapeutic benefits of nature-based activities...
3. Barriers and obstacles to spending time in nature...
4. What is needed for your plan for integrating more nature into your life for mental health...



### **Hobbies and Interests**

1. A hobby or interest that brings you joy...
2. How your hobbies contribute to your positive functioning...
3. The challenges for you in keeping up with health hobbies and interests...
4. Strategies and ideas for developing new positive hobbies and interests...

### **Travel and Exploration**

1. A memorable travel experience and its impact on you...
2. How travel influences your perspective and personal growth...
3. Challenges, obstacles, and benefits of exploring new places...
4. Some places you'd like to visit, and the life experiences you hope to gain...

### **Favorite Media**

1. A book, movie, or show that had a significant impact on you...
2. The emotional connection you feel with certain pieces of media...
3. How your patterns of media consumption affect your mood and mindset...
4. Some uplifting or inspiring media recommendations for the group...

### **Pet Companionship**

1. The positive influence of having pets in your life...
2. The therapeutic benefits of interacting with and observing animals...
3. Challenges and rewards of pet ownership...
4. Strategies for incorporating more positive animal related activities into your routine...

### **Food and Well-being**

1. A favorite meal or food memory...
2. The connection between your diet and mood, for you...
3. Challenges for you in maintaining healthy eating patterns and choices...
4. Aspects of your plan for maintaining a balanced, healthy yet enjoyable approach to food...

### **Humor and Laughter**

1. A recent experience that made you laugh...
2. The therapeutic benefits of humor on mental health...
3. Sources that can reliably bring healthy laughter into your life...
4. How humor can be used as a coping mechanism...

### **Childhood Nostalgia**

1. A cherished childhood memory...
2. The impact of childhood experiences on your current well-being...
3. Ways to reconnect with positive aspects of your childhood...
4. Ways you incorporate lessons and experiences of childhood into your life today...

### **Technology and Entertainment**

1. Your thoughts on current technology or entertainment trends...
2. The positive and negative impacts of technological advancements...
3. The role of social media in your life and well-being...
4. Strategies for mindfully managing your use of technology and entertainment...

### **Group Close Out Option**

1. One thing you appreciated about this group today...
2. Something that you heard from others that resonated with you today...
3. A challenge you identified or discussed today that you will strive to overcome or manage...
4. Some things that you will take home with you and try to remember to work on to enhance progress...