

## Online Peer Support (OPS) Chat Rules

**Online Peer Support (OPS)** is a live online chat service for people struggling with eating disorders, disordered eating, or body image issues. Facilitated by trained volunteer moderators, each chat session offers a safe, anonymous space for people aged 14 and older, of all genders, to share experiences, and to benefit from the empathy and understanding of others in a constructive, pro-recovery way.

These chat conversations are intended to provide support, as opposed to therapy – if you would like more information about counselling services and other programs for eating disorder recovery, please visit our [Resources Page](#).

Before joining an OPS Chat, **you must read these Chat Rules and ensure you abide by them at all times**. The Rules are in place to help create a safe space for all participants, avoid triggering topics, and maintain a pro-recovery focus. Participants who are regularly in breach of these rules may be asked to leave the program. If you have any questions about the rules outlined below, please contact [programs@lookingglassbc.com](mailto:programs@lookingglassbc.com).

- **Online Peer Support is not a crisis service.** If you find you are struggling and require immediate help, please contact your local Crisis Centre: [crisiscentre.bc.ca](http://crisiscentre.bc.ca)
- **Confidentiality** is essential. Anything discussed within the group should not be shared outside of the chat. To ensure anonymity, all participants get to pick the display name they use during chats – this can be your first name or another name of your choosing. Anything you share during the chats will be kept in confidence by all group members, except in the following circumstances:
  - You are clearly in imminent danger of seriously physically harming yourself or another person/s;
  - There is reasonable grounds to suspect that you are being abused or threatened by another person/s.
  - If either of these circumstances become apparent, the moderators will report to Looking Glass who will follow up to check in on your safety.
- **Avoid triggers.** There should be no discussion of disordered behaviours in the OPS chats. You can share what you struggle with, but it's important to understand that we are not here to focus on specific behaviours or disordered patterns – we are here to explore recovery. We do not discuss numbers/specifics (calories, weights, diets, BMI's, fitness activity times/distances, etc.), disorder strategies (“how-to's”), self-harm behaviours, or substance abuse. If you are unsure whether a topic is safe to bring up, please ask a moderator in a private 1:1 chat.
- **Respect** fellow group members. Looking Glass is proud to cultivate a diverse community membership, and we expect all group members to listen and value each other's' experiences

equally. We welcome participants of all ages, genders, orientations, ethnic/cultural identities, and backgrounds, and we do not require documentation of a diagnosed eating disorder in order to receive support. We accept each other's stories without judgment.

- **Listen** to the moderators. Our moderators are trained volunteers who give freely of their time and compassion. They have been recruited and deployed in this program because they care deeply about supporting your wellbeing. They are responsible for the safety and success of each group chat, and they must be treated with respect at all times. If a moderator asks you to be mindful of triggering language, please accept their feedback and do not take it as a personal attack.
- **Be mindful** of other people's experiences. We do not make assumptions about other group members, as we have no idea where they are in their recovery or what they may have found helpful/harmful in the past. When talking about various resources and treatment programs, please remember that:
  - If you are currently in a treatment program, try not to mention the exact program name, unless it is a Looking Glass program
  - Sometimes we have negative experiences in treatment programs. You may express these feelings, but please do not "bash" the program, treatment model, or the clinician who provided treatment. Every type of treatment is valid – someone else may respond very well to a treatment you have found unhelpful, and vice-versa
  - Do not assume that everyone in the chat has had the same experience as you. Our chat participants are in all stages of recovery: some have had inpatient treatment, others may have tried some counselling, and many others have never had a formal diagnosis or access to any support. This chat may be the first, and only, resource an individual has tried, and we need to foster an inclusive environment that supports and respects every experience.
- **No personal information** should be shared on the chat – messages containing such information will be hidden by moderators.
  - No contact info (phone, email, social media profiles) can be shared
  - You may share your first name, but not your last name
  - You can mention what city you live in, but not an address or nearby intersection
  - You can talk about the type of work you do or classes you take, but not the particular company, school, or location
- **Participation is voluntary** in all Looking Glass programs. There is no obligation to talk; participants can say as much or as little as they like during chats, and you can always choose to step back and simply observe.