



Support Group Meeting Topic #2

Suggested Discussion Topics for the Book: “Easier Done than Said: Living with a Broken Voice”

Goal: Meeting participants will have a better understanding of the information covered in this easy-to-read book. Meeting participants will describe how they cope with SD and what changes they have made in their lives because of SD. Participants will walk away with an action plan on how they can continue to improve their own coping capabilities or ability to live a positive life with SD.

Introduction and background statement: *To be read by meeting facilitator:*

This book is designed to address the challenges associated with SD. It was written by people who suffer from SD and professionals who work with SD patients. It is a compilation of shared experiences from within the SD community.

Instructions:

Option 1: *Have the handout available for meeting participants so they can write down their answers and take notes during the discussion. Divide the list of 10 questions among the meeting participants. Explain that each participant will have five minutes to respond to the topic they have been assigned. Ask for a volunteer note-taker to help compile a summary. Have some copies of the book available so that it can be consulted if necessary during the discussion.*

Option 2: *Break the group into pairs and assign (or having each pair pick) one of the topics. Each pair will discuss the question for a set time. Then bring the group back together and debrief each pair's discussion.*

Ice-Breaker Exercise: *Have the moderator led a contest/game to identify the components of the larynx and their specific functions in voice production. (Chapter 1).*

Suggested Discussion Topics

1. The book states that voice is important for communication, social interaction, career, and personal identity. For which of these four categories do you think voice is most critical? Why? (*Chapter 2*)
2. What was the most difficult part of dealing with SD before you were diagnosed? (*Chapter 3*)
3. The book postulates that one cannot advocate on behalf of others until one has achieved a measure of acceptance about SD. However, some people feel that advocating helps them accept SD. In your opinion, does advocacy lead to acceptance or is acceptance a pre-requisite for advocating? (*Chapter 3*)

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4. One of the differentiators of the Six Stages of Acceptance model is that people do not progress in a linear fashion towards acceptance, as they do in the traditional five step approach. What is the highest level you have attained on the model? What techniques do you use to help you return to a higher level when you feel yourself slipping to a lower level? (*Chapter 3*)
5. How do you define “complete acceptance” of SD? What makes someone “well-adjusted” to life with SD? (*Chapter 3, 4*)
6. How do you know if your treatment has been “successful”? What does “success” look like? (*Chapter 4*)
7. What positive things have you gained by having SD? (*Chapter 4*)
8. How has SD affected your work life? Have you avoided certain types of work within your chosen profession because of your SD? Have you developed new work-related interests or talents as a consequence of having SD? (*Chapter 5*) [*Suggest adding a follow-up question like “how have you adjusted your work responsibilities to accommodate your SD?”*]
9. Conduct an informal support group poll to see how your support group’s responses compare to the overall survey results. (*Appendix*)

For questions 3 and 9, be sure to position the questions so that the participants walk away with a positive feeling of self-help or ideas for how to move forward. Otherwise, it could be very easy to slip into a very negative/depressing discussion about how everything has gone wrong. While it’s important to give people in support groups a chance to vent such frustration, the support group should also try to help them find their way to the end of the tunnel by focusing on moving forward. Finding the positives or ways forward is always the harder part and the benefit of a group.