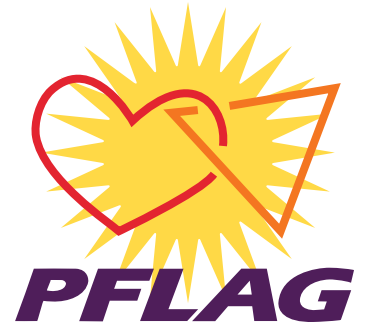


Sample Opening Statement

Source: Amy Mesirow, Northeast Regional Director

Date: October 2015



Welcome everyone to our PFLAG support group. We or someone we care about is LGBTQ. We're glad you're here and encourage all to attend as many meetings as possible. It's our hope that when each of us reaches a point of being whole and secure in our understanding and acceptance of ourselves or our GLBT loved ones we realize that's when the group needs us the most.

This is a support group, not a therapy group. We provide support by listening carefully, sharing our own stories, and discussing our own problem-solving experiences. We're sensitive to each person's stage in the acceptance process. We're supportive rather than confrontational. Anyone who is uncomfortable may talk to me privately.

One ground rule I'd like to ask everyone to adhere to is that we all keep an open mind, be willing to offer support to everyone, and refrain from political or religious comments meant to convince others that our viewpoint is best. We're from different backgrounds and beliefs.

Privacy and confidentiality means we hold all information in confidence. Everyone should feel safe and respected. Everything that's said in this room stays in this room.

We'll go around the circle and share first names, a couple sentences about what brought you to PFLAG or what you hope the group can help you with. If you prefer not to speak, feel free to just say your first name and pass to the next person. After introductions, we'll go around again, and invite everyone to share more about themselves and what they're feeling.

To give everyone time to speak, we have a 5 min. time frame. Please don't be offended if we have to interrupt you because we need to move along to the next member. After the last person has a turn, if time remains, anyone can speak again. Also, some of us will stay after the close of the meeting, if anyone wants to meet one on one.