



The role and expectations of a non-nuclear family member support person attending a FLASH parenting group session.

Role The role of the support person is to “support” the parent attending the FLASH group and to be an ‘extra pairs of ears’ for the parent. This is so the parent can check out after the session with their support person their understanding of the topic content of the session.

We only normally accept a non-family member support person on to a course if a parent finds coming to a group alone difficult.

Often the support person only needs to come a few times then the parent is more comfortable with the group and is confident attending alone.

Expectations The impact of a young person displaying “self-harming/distressing/challenging” behaviours can be emotional and difficult for a parent. Many feel stigmatised and isolated. The most regular feedback FLASH group facilitators receive about the FLASH programme is how much the parents value the opportunity to openly talk about these feelings in an environment where that don’t feel judged. Therefore, it is essential that the facilitators give the parents time and space to share their feelings and experiences.

The group facilitators will expect the support person to support the parent they are attending with by encouraging the parent to learn the strategies and being a comforting presence to them. As the support person will not be in the same situation as the parents in the session the group facilitators may not invite the support person to contribute to some of the discussions or activities. The group facilitators will however, always want the support person to feel valued and respected so will involve the support person when possible. The group facilitators will be mindful of the support persons comfort and dietary needs, as they would be of the parent’s needs.

If the support person does not have a young person in the age range of the FLASH group programme the expectation is the support person takes an observation role in the group during the parent’s feedback section. This is to enable the time in the session to be focused on the parents needs and learning.

If the support person has a young person of their own in the programmes age range and are actively spending time with this young person, then it may be appropriate for the group facilitator to invite the support person to feedback on their experiences in the group feedback section and what they have learnt in implementing the programmes one of the parenting strategies.