

# Support Groups

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Nothing provides social support, education, peer learning, and personal empowerment quite like being in a support group.

At first though, joining and sharing your HIV status with a group of strangers may be scary for fear of rejection or judgment. However, meeting other people who are HIV positive that share the same concerns, fears and medical issues can reduce the stigma and relieve stress from the daily challenges of living with HIV. For some, it's also the first place where they can acknowledge to another person that they are infected.

The stigma and fear associated with being HIV positive can cause many people to close themselves off from close family and friends, and disclosure can also lead to being ostracized. Support groups are able to fill the need for socialization. Support groups can help reduce physical and emotional isolation by providing an opportunity to meet and connect with other people, and even build lasting friendships. They can also offer new ways to see life, help one take charge of your medication and care, develop new skills, and improve overall quality of life.

HIV support groups can be found online, and most are free to attend. Here is [a list of Known HIV Support Groups in the AIDSNET Region](#).

Support groups are also available for other concerns that individuals may be facing (i.e. mental health, drug, alcohol, etc.), and the following list of resources may be helpful. (PLEASE NOTE: These support groups/resources are not HIV specific.)

**Alcoholics Anonymous® International** — A fellowship of men and women who want to do something about their drinking problem.

**Lehigh Valley Drug and Alcohol Intake Unit**  
100 N. 3rd St. Easton, PA 18042 Phone: 610.923.0394

**NAMI** — A local nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the lives of those affected by serious mental illness.

**Narcotics Anonymous** — A global, community-based organization offering a recovery from the effects of addiction.

[Download this list for a reference of all groups listed on this page.](#)