

The Clare Project Social Drop-ins: Group Agreement

These groups are spaces where trans, non-binary, intersex, gender-variant and gender-questioning people can meet, socialise, provide peer support to one another, and find out about local and national support. You can bring a friend or family member along if you need them there to support you. Please get in touch with The Clare Project to see if the group is suitable for you.

At these spaces, it is expected that people will respect the group's core values:

Self-determination

Respect, and do not make assumptions about, each other's different identities, pronouns, and experiences. This includes people's past medical history or gender/sex assigned at birth. Do not tell one another how to identify or present, or question someone's identity or expression.

Anyone who is trans, non-binary, intersex, gender-variant or gender-questioning is free to attend. This is regardless of their sex, including intersex variation, gender identity or expression or lack thereof, age, disability, learning difficulty, neurodiversity, race, ethnicity, nationality, immigration status, belief, religious belief or lack thereof, sexual orientation or lack thereof, pregnancy, maternity, marriage or civil partnership.

Respect each other's right to participate in any way they feel comfortable. Online, this includes whether their camera is on or off, or they use the chat function only. Respect each other's communication styles and learning needs and give everyone a space to speak. If at any point someone would like to take a break, they can feel free to do so.

Acceptance Accessibility & Inclusion

Confidentiality

Respect each other's right to confidentiality. Do not share the names or details of anyone attending the group with anyone outside of the group. Group facilitators will only share information about group members with external organisations when it is necessary to keep someone safe.

Take responsibility for your language and behaviours and apologise should you cause any offence. The group facilitators will moderate the discussion and resolve any issues that arise. In rare circumstances where a person is intentionally homophobic, transphobic etc., towards another community member, that person will be asked to leave the group until the issue is resolved.

Safety

Health & Wellbeing

Respect that other members of community may find certain topics difficult and not want to participate in certain discussions for their own wellbeing. Please give content warnings before bringing up difficult topics. Please avoid excessive swearing or graphic descriptions of things such as sexual encounters, transphobic incidents, self-harm or suicide attempts. If you need to talk about one of these things, we encourage you to speak to a member of staff, we are happy to talk about anything with you on a one to one basis.



Online facilitated social: frequently asked questions.

I experienced transphobia today. Can I talk about it in the online group?

You are free to bring any issue to the group. However, this is something that might need a content warning. Raise your hand or otherwise let the facilitator know you would like to speak. Say, 'I would like to talk about transphobia I experienced today.' You will be asked if you want to talk about it 1:1 or in the group. If you would like to talk about it in the group, anyone who does not wish to participate in the discussion can mute the conversation. The group facilitators will let the group know when the discussion is over, by posting in the group chat.

I feel myself to be in crisis, for example I am very suicidal. Can I talk about it in the group?

The Clare Project facilitators are able to support people with psychosocial issues and provide signposting to local crisis services. However, the online group social may not be the best place to bring these discussions. Please contact the Clare Project or a group facilitator and ask for a 1:1 chat for advice, support and signposting, if you feel yourself to be in crisis.

I have specific access needs related to my disability or neurodivergence. What do I do?

Please let us know about any specific access needs you have, either when you arrive or before you intend to come along. People can attend using a computer or telephone. People can use the video function or the chat function. We will attempt to describe what is going on in the group for people who cannot see other's faces or read other's messages. Sessions two hour in length will have short break in the middle.

I don't feel able to take part in a big group discussion, can I be put in a smaller group?

You are free to ask the group facilitators to be put into a smaller 'breakout room' to chat. The group facilitators will ask who wants to be put in a smaller room, if there are two to five people that want to, the smaller room will be created. A group facilitator may or may not be able to join this separate chat. You will be free to leave this separate chat and rejoin the main group at any point.

Someone shares their belief in the group. Talking about it makes me uncomfortable (e.g. about a religious belief). Will the group facilitator change the topic of conversation?

Anyone is free to bring any of their beliefs to the group, unless they are specifically sharing a view that is racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, interphobic etc., in which case the group facilitators will ask that person to stop speaking, or if appropriate to leave the group. If someone is merely discussing their experience or belief, and you feel uncomfortable, feel free to mute the conversation and notify the group facilitator using the chat function. The facilitator will let you know when the discussion is over.

I do not think the group facilitator gave me enough chance to speak.

Sometimes the group facilitator will change the topic of conversation in order to give everyone a chance to speak. They may make decisions that you disagree with. If this is the case, ask to speak one of the facilitators after the group. They will arrange a 1:1 with you in order to discuss your issues. If you would like to make a formal complaint about a group facilitator, please use The Clare Project Complaints Policy.



In-person drop ins: frequently asked questions.

I think I might be trans but I don't feel like I "look" trans. Can I drop in anyway?

Anyone who is in any way questioning their gender identity is welcome to come to the drop-in. We know that there is no one way to "look" trans and you are welcome to come presenting in any way you want. We always try and make sure we have access to gender-neutral toilets where you can get changed once you arrive, if you want to try out new gender presentations in a safe space.

I feel nervous coming to the group. Can I bring my non-transgender partner with me?

People who are trans, non-binary, intersex, gender variant or gender questioning can come to our drop-ins, and bring with them a non community member for support if they need support to attend. However, please make sure you bring someone who is going respect our group agreement. If you are concerned about bringing someone with you, speak to our staff members for advice before coming along.

A member of the group asks for advice around identity or expression, e.g. 'passing'. Can I give them advice?

People are encouraged to share their lived experience at any point in the group. However, please bear in mind that we are all on our unique journeys, and that there is no one way to identify or express yourself, and not everyone in the group will relate to any one person's individual lived experience. For example, 'passing' is a contentious term for some.

I have specific access needs related to my disability or neurodivergence. What do I do?

Please let us know about any specific access needs you have, either when you arrive at the group or before you intend to come along. We try to make sure our meet ups are all wheelchair accessible, with adequate seating, in a quiet environment, with access to gender neutral accessible toilets, close to a bus stop and/or accessible parking. Where food and drink are provided, there will be vegan and gluten-free and nut-free options.

Someone in the group keeps getting my pronouns wrong. What do I do?

It is in The Clare Project's Group Agreement that everyone respects one another's pronouns. It may be a simple mistake if someone gets pronouns wrong. Correct the person, if you feel able to, or talk to a member of staff who will speak to them on your behalf.

Deliberately misgendering someone is a form of transphobia and if someone is doing this, please report it to a member of staff who will ask that person to leave the group until this situation is resolved.

I feel like one of the other people who attends the group is bullying me. What do I do?

The Clare Project is supposed to be a safe space for everyone and we have a zero tolerance with bullying. If you feel like you are being bullied, please approach a member of staff that you trust. We will speak to the people involved and try and resolve the situation. Anyone who is being deliberately homophobic, transphobic, interphobic etc., will be asked to leave the group until the situation is resolved.