

Skills for Life Community Gatherings

What are Community Gatherings?

The purpose of Skills for Life client-led gatherings is to provide opportunities for peer connection in a community-based setting.

Schedule

Currently, we gather every month for brunch at a restaurant in the Boston Area. We typically meet before noon on the 3rd Sunday of the month, except when that falls on a holiday.

Typical Agenda

Meet at agreed upon time & location

- Meet at the restaurant lobby and wait for a table (usually 15 minutes)

Once seated:

- Introduce names, pronouns, something we want to share
- elly shares SFL updates and announcements
- Place individual food and drink orders
- Take turns talking and playing games while eating
- Everyone pays their individual bill + tip and tax

Once meal has ended and bills have been paid:

- Leave immediately or when comfortable
- Stay with group to explore neighboring options (shops, movies, etc.)

Expectations

- Respect Group Values
- Plan your own transportation route to and from gatherings - ask your Occupational Therapist for support in advance
- Bring enough money (usually suggested \$20-30) to cover your own meal plus tax and tip (usually 20%)

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Group Values

We value respect and privacy:

- Respect everyone's identities (including names, gender pronouns, abilities and struggles)
- Do not share names or identifying stories outside of gatherings
- If someone consents to connecting outside of a gathering, respect boundaries (e.g. do not ask for favors, for money, etc.)

We value direct communication:

- Advocate for your needs so people know how to respect you
- Use "I" statements - speak for yourself rather than assuming others feel the same way
- Remain committed to understanding and being understood
- Try not to interrupt someone mid-sentence
 - If you want to say something but can't find an opportunity to speak, you can say, 'Can I jump in?'
 - If someone is talking to you and you want them to stop, you can say, 'I need a break'

We value learning from mistakes and conflict:

- Mistakes and conflict happen in any group interaction
 - If something happens that you would like to name and address in the moment, we encourage you to do this
 - If you would prefer not to directly address your concerns in the moment, we encourage you to connect with your OT afterward

We value building long-term connections:

- If you want to continue to talk with people outside of gatherings:
 - Write down your contact info for elly to circulate with the group