



AsI Am Adult Groups

Participation and Inclusion Agreement

These participation guidelines are a collaborative agreement - we've developed them together to create an environment that works for everyone. They're not rigid rules, but shared expectations that we all commit to upholding. We recognise that what feels safe and comfortable can vary from person to person.

By agreeing to join an Adult Group, **I am agreeing to follow AsI Am's Adult Participation and Inclusion Agreement.**

This framework is in line with AsI Am's:

1. Complaints policy
2. Safeguarding of vulnerable adults' policies
3. Antibullying policy

I can email adultgroups@asiam.ie if I'd like a copy of these policies.

What AsI Am's Adult Groups Are:

- AsI Am's adult groups are set up as a **safe space** where Autistic Adults can **get together, connect, and have fun.**
- AsI Am's adult groups offer a social activity or peer support space. **It is not a therapy or crisis service.**
- In peer support groups, community members may discuss or raise topics that some may find upsetting. The support these peer groups offer is only support. If you have any significant difficulties or are seeking medical advice, please speak to your GP. If you ever feel you are in a mental health crisis and need urgent help, please refer to the following for additional advice and support.
- **Samaritans – 116123**
- **Bodywhys: 01 – 2107906**
- **Aware: 1800 80 48 48 – Depression**
- **'Text about it' support – <https://text50808.ie/> – 50808**
- **Please note:** AsI Am employees, group/activity leads, and volunteers cannot be your emergency contact.



Additional accommodations:

AsI Am respects the needs of Autistic adults in our community. We ask that any adult who require accommodations in attending any of the groups let us know in advance, to allow the AsI Am staff to prepare for this.

Creating a safe environment in our Adult Groups:

Our values:

We aim to make every group welcoming, respectful, and safe. We recognise different communication styles, sensory needs, and personal boundaries. We celebrate Autistic identity and encourage participation in ways that feel comfortable for you.

Respect & Safety:

- Treat everyone with kindness, dignity, and empathy—participants, employees, group/activity leads, volunteers, and support workers.
- No bullying, harassment, intimidation, or abuse (verbal, emotional, physical, or online). If something feels unsafe, tell a group/activity lead or employee immediately. Please do not try to manage unsafe situations by yourself.

Confidentiality & Privacy:

- What's shared in the group stays in the group.
- Do not record, take photos/screenshots, or share names, stories, or content from sessions. This applies to in person and online groups.

Access & Personal Information:

- Please do not share Zoom links, meeting access details, or group locations with others.
- Please do not share personal contact details (phone, email, social media) during online group sessions. This helps protect everyone's privacy and boundaries.

Substances & Venues:

- No alcohol, intoxication, or illegal substances at any AsIAm event (online or in person).
- Please treat venues, partner locations, and equipment with care and respect.

Topics & Boundaries:

To help keep the space welcoming and comfortable for everyone, please avoid topics that may be harmful, distressing, or unsafe, such as:

- Suicide, self-harm, eating disorders, or mental health crises
- Addiction or substance misuse
- Sexual content, sexual jokes, or sexualised remarks
- Violence, assault, or criminal activity
- Discriminatory language or slurs (e.g., ableism, racism, homophobia, transphobia)
- Politics or religion
- Personal finances
- Comments about appearance, weight, or body image

If someone lets the group know that a topic is making them uncomfortable, please respect their feelings and help the group move on to another topic.

Communication Preferences:

- We welcome all forms of participation, whether that's speaking, typing, or simply listening.
- You can participate in the way that works for you.
- Please avoid interrupting, Group/Activity Leads will support turn taking (e.g., “hands up” on Zoom).

Online Groups (Zoom):

- Speak with honesty, kindness, and empathy.
- Keep your microphone muted when not speaking (to reduce sensory load).
- Cameras are optional; chat is welcome.



- All privacy and no recording rules apply online.

Group Chats, Communication Outside of the Adult Groups:

AsIAm understands the importance of friendship and connection to attendees. Therefore, we acknowledge that adults who attend the groups may wish to remain in contact outside of the AsIAm group.

Please note: AsIAm will not set up, run, or monitor any form of group chat.

We ask that every adult who chooses to take part in the programme use their own discretion to make decisions that ensure their comfort, safety, and happiness.

Warnings, Suspension & Removal:

Our aim is always to support participants to remain in the programme whenever possible. However, there may be times when action is needed to maintain a safe and respectful environment for everyone.

- If a guideline is broken, we will usually start by having a conversation and may issue a verbal or written warning.
- Participants will usually be given opportunities to address any concerns before removal from the programme is considered. While this may involve up to three warnings in many situations, the number of warnings issued will depend on the nature and seriousness of the concern.
- If there is a serious risk to the safety or wellbeing of any participant, AsIAm staff, group leads, and volunteers may suspend or remove someone immediately.
- Following a suspension, participants may be able to return to the programme after a period away from the group (typically 2-3 sessions), subject to a review and assessment by the AsIAm team.

Raising Concerns (Safeguarding):

- If you ever have a worry or need to report an incident, our team will respond in a trauma-informed, Autism-accessible way that prioritises your wellbeing and autonomy.
- When you raise a concern, a member of our staff will listen attentively, validate your experience, and work with you to determine the best next steps. This may involve documenting the issue through an Incident Report or Cause for Concern form, as per our safeguarding procedures.

- If you have a concern, you can speak privately with a Group/Activity Lead, the Programme Manager, or the programme's Designated Liaison Person (DLP):
 - **Programme Manager:** Sam Marcus - 086 821 9782 - sam@asiam.ie
 - **DLP:** Zarah Doyle - 086 102 6246 - zarah@asiam.ie
- Incidents may be recorded using an Incident Report and/or a Cause for Concern form and, where needed, escalated to the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) or Deputy DLP (DDLDP) in line with AsIAm's safeguarding procedures.
- Staff will follow safeguarding steps, including immediate safety actions and reporting to statutory agencies when required.

Plain English Summary

Do:

- Be kind, respectful, and patient
- Keep information private
- Follow group guidance and safety steps
- Respect boundaries and communication styles
- Tell an employee or group lead if something is unsafe

Don't:

- Record, screenshot, or share session content
- Use discriminatory, sexual, violent, or harmful language
- Share Zoom links or personal contact details
- Arrive intoxicated or use illegal substances
- Try to handle unsafe situations on your own