

Personal Responsibility

Taking 'personal responsibility' means the following:

1. **You are responsible for ensuring your posts and comments are respectful and, where appropriate, helpful and/or positive. You are responsible for considering the impact of your posts on other members, and for remembering that even with the best of intentions, what you say can still be taken the wrong way unless you carefully consider your choice of words.**
2. You may have a very strong opinion on topics that may sometimes come up. You are responsible for making sure that in any discussion of these topics, you **avoid insulting or alienating other members** who may disagree, and that your **language remains respectful** at all times. While we will allow a certain amount of debate, we will remove posts and comments as soon as they violate our guidelines, and repeat offenders will be warned privately before being removed from the group.
3. **Difficult situations and/or conflict** will inevitably arise as a part of any large group. The internet can cause innocent words to be misinterpreted, and hurt feelings can escalate if the situation is not brought under control quickly. You are expected to be responsible for your contributions and responses at all times, especially during difficult situations like this. If you have serious concerns about a particular member, please contact a member of the moderation team. Otherwise, there are several ways for you to prevent the situation from escalating:
 - a. **Disengage.** While your impulse may be to respond to every relevant comment or post, often this will only make things worse, and if you feel like you are unable to discuss these issues in a calm and respectful fashion, we would ask that you take time away from the group until it is resolved.
 - b. **Address and resolve the situation directly** with the relevant people while remaining respectful. This can involve messaging someone directly or just wrapping up the discussion so the group can focus on mutual support.
 - c. **DO NOT react to provocation or insults.** Personal attacks WILL NOT be tolerated, even if the person in question didn't 'start' the exchange. Tag or message a moderator so they can deal with the post in question, and disengage.
 - d. **DO NOT talk about any difficult situation or individual in an indirect way**, e.g. 'SOME people' or 'THAT post'. Again, this can create a hostile atmosphere, and is against the fundamental principles of our support groups.
 - e. **DO NOT speculate or make assumptions or judgements about others.** This is not respectful. Treat others with the same respect that you would like to be shown.
 - f. **Take responsibility** for how you felt and/or acted. Many conflicts arise out of misunderstanding, so try to be open and honest about your feelings where possible, e.g. 'Your post upset me for the following reasons' rather than 'your post is upsetting'. Otherwise, consider taking time away from the group.
 - g. **DO NOT place blame on others or on the 'other side' of a conflict.** Instead, take personal responsibility for contributing to any hurt feelings and/or protecting yourself from any upsetting comments by removing yourself from the situation. If you are unable or unwilling to act respectfully and responsibly, the moderation team will take action.
4. **Promoting equality amongst members.** These groups will have old as well as new members, and it is important that no one feels left out. People will have different levels of

CLAPA Facebook Group Guidelines

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engagement within the groups, and some members may be very active while others may just read the posts and not create any of their own, but everyone is entitled to feel safe, welcome and respected. This requires **awareness and sensitivity** from everyone, especially those who are more active.

- a. **Please bear others in mind when posting**, and while your post doesn't have to be relevant to absolutely everyone, it should not exclude anyone either, and you should never post 'on behalf' of the group as a whole.
- b. **DO NOT resurrect old issues or posts** to continue discussion, as this is not in the spirit of mutual support and will be deleted.
- c. If you see that posts have been deleted, this will have been done by a member of the moderation team for a good reason. If you wish to discuss this, **DO NOT post about it in the group**, rather message a moderator directly. If you post about it in the group, your post will be deleted as it is not relevant to the group's purpose.

These guidelines are intended to enable you to take personal responsibility to manage your presence within our Facebook groups. Their purpose is to promote a spirit of mutual support within the groups and to ensure they are a supportive and welcoming environment for everyone.

Above all, we ask all our members to be courteous and respectful to others at all times. This means:

- **Treating others as we would like to be treated.** No one wants to feel like they aren't being listened to, so before posting please think about others who may not agree with you, and whether or not you'd appreciate them posting the same sort of thing. Posts that may cause offense or upset will be deleted without warning.
- **Understanding that everyone's experiences and backgrounds are different.** Everyone copes with things in a different way, and this doesn't mean it's better or worse.
- **Knowing when to let things go.** This group's primary purpose is to enable people to support each other. If you know that your comment or post will not do this, then please consider whether the group is the right place for that discussion. The moderation team will delete your post without warning if we feel it does not fit the group's purpose.
- **Listening to others and questioning ourselves.** Everyone in these groups have joined for the same reasons – to support people affected by cleft and to find support themselves. It's important to remember this, and to really listen to the opinions of others and considering their feelings. Everyone has different experiences which may have led them to different conclusions, and if we just dismiss these without considering them then we're not helping anyone, least of all ourselves.

If you do not feel like the Facebook support groups are appropriate for you and would like to talk to someone on a one-to-one basis instead, please see our list of Parent Contacts on the website. http://www.clapa.com/medical/parent_contacts/

To discuss these guidelines or the groups in general, please email anna.martindale@clapa.com