

Helpful Tips on How to Start Your Support Group

- Designate a group leader and an alternate leader
- Gather a group of volunteers to form a steering committee.
- Encourage wives, partners and family members to attend meetings.
- Develop an email list (a good method to quickly communicate in a cost efficient manner). VERY IMPORTANT! Lists are to be kept confidential.
- Have a sign-in sheet to keep track of who attends
- Have a person or persons who can help with clerical functions and keeping your email list up to date.
- Share the responsibility of finding speakers for the meetings with others in the group, or alternate months with those who can help.
- Have a table with Us TOO materials and books available each meeting
- Order hard copies of the *Hot SHEET* from the Des Plaines home office at 630-795-1002. Copies are free to new groups for one year. After that we only ask you help with the shipping charges. Approx. \$35 per year.
- Encourage members to come to the meetings to get their own hard copy of the *Hot SHEET*
- Use the *Hot SHEET* to discuss hot topics in the prostate cancer world.
- Plan on having a monthly newsletter, meeting announcement or webpage to inform the members of that month's program (important marketing tool).
- Assign someone to be the accountant to keep track of donations collected and expenses used for.
- Plan on having members donate a few dollars at each meeting to help fund the necessary monthly expenses of printing, mailings, coffee, snacks, etc.
- Plan on offering Newly Diagnosed Kits for new patients. (Available "free" from home office).
- Assign one person to make sure the new folks are greeted and feel welcome. Give them extra attention and let them talk about their situation.
- Post SEA Blue Posters and place About Us TOO brochures in hospitals and doctor's offices to advertise monthly meetings, time and location. (Posters and brochures available "free" @ home office)
- We recommended that your meeting location has free parking and is centrally located.
- Plan small fundraising events to raise money so your leaders can attend special trainings or educational symposiums.
- Give your members a chance to give feedback about the meetings, and to give suggestions on what they would like meetings to offer. Have a "comments" box.
- A mailing list can be a method to inform current patients and their family of a new or existing group. As more people hear about the support group, word of mouth helps to increase membership.
- If feasible, plan on offering snacks, i.e. granola bars, fruit, coffee, water, etc (preferably prostate-

healthy!)

- Monthly Program Speakers/presenters: The medical staff at a local hospital(s), cancer centers, offer a varied and wide assortment of professional talent in their respective departments including oncology, surgery, radiology, dieticians, counseling, etc., from which to offer a large assortment of interesting and informative monthly meeting presentations.
- Talk to other Us TOO leaders in your state to get referrals of speakers they have enjoyed.
- Allow members of the support groups to offer their own situations as possible presentations, or panel discussions. Alternate with members of the group to give a short presentation on what's new in PC world. Use the *Hot SHEET*, internet, "News You Can Use," etc.
- Assign someone to find a prostate healthy recipe or food each month and share with the group.
- Plan a potluck event with prostate healthy choices once or twice a year and invite family and caregivers to attend. Pick a special theme or time of year like Valentines Day or a summer picnic. This helps build camaraderie and trust within the group.
- Use the Us TOO logo on all of your announcements, newsletters, and communications. This will help to get the Us TOO name to be recognized and branded in your community and with your attendees. Contact Terril@ustoo.org for the logo.
- Plan on having representatives from the group attend Us TOO annual meetings when offered. A great deal of information can be obtained in networking with other support groups both nationally and internationally.
- Stay in contact with the **Us TOO International home office 1-800-808-7866**, and your Program Director/Support Group Services **Terri Likowski @ terril@ustoo.org or 877-978-7866**.