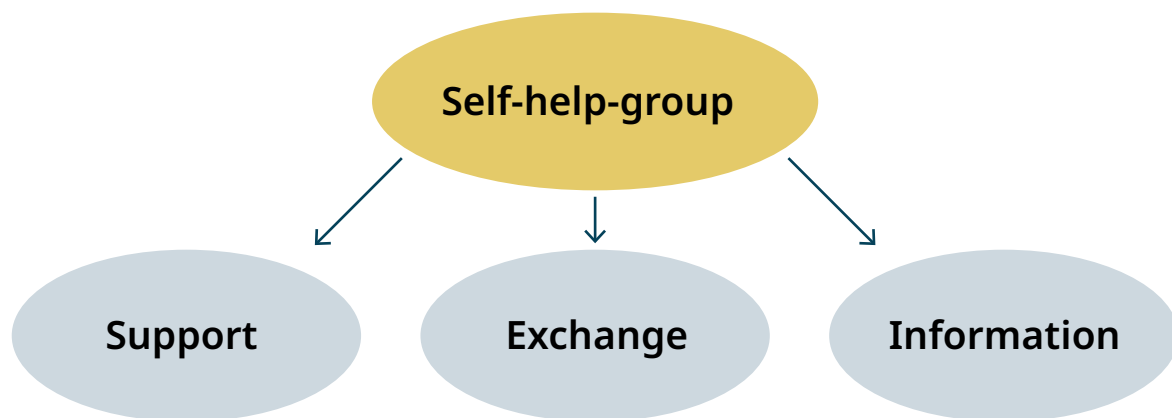




Self-help, what is that actually?

In the literal sense, self-help means having the ability to master problems on one's own. Community self-help goes far beyond this and is rather to be understood as a collective process. People who want to help and support each other join together in self-help groups and organisations.

An important part of community self-help is health-related self-help. It offers people with chronic diseases, disabilities and their relatives a platform for self-determined exchange.



The variety of self-help groups is great. Interested people can find a self-help group for almost any illness, including rare diseases, disabilities or psychological problems.

The self-help contact points provide support in finding local self-help groups. They are there to refer those affected, to document existing groups and to help with the founding of new ones.

In the groups, the members are completely among themselves. They are not run by professional staff (e.g. doctors). They offer those affected a space for sharing their own experiences, for emotional support and motivation. The groups plan the exchange individually. For example, a meeting can be organised as a discussion group, digitally, or as an experience weekend. The aim of the groups is to improve the individual life situation through regular exchange and mutual help.

Most regional self-help groups are united in self-help organisations. These are networked with each other throughout Germany. This also serves to jointly represent interests in politics and society.

Many self-help organisations join together in umbrella organisations. These represent the interests of chronically ill and disabled people at federal or state level and focus their work on further developing the quality of self-help.

As the largest umbrella organisation in Germany, BAG SELBSTHILFE represents the interests of more than one million disabled and chronically ill people and their relatives and advocates for self-determination, self-representation, integration, rehabilitation and participation of disabled and chronically ill people in order to achieve legal and actual equality.

Health-related self-help occupies a firm place in German society. Alongside outpatient, inpatient and rehabilitative care, it represents the fourth pillar in the German health system. With its offers and activities, health-related self-help supports the professional offers of the health care system, closes gaps in care and is an important component of the German health landscape.

Self-help in Germany is mainly financed by membership fees, but is also supported and promoted by social insurance providers and the public sector. This enables it to act completely independently and transparently.

Health-related self-help offers a protected space in which every piece of information is treated confidentially and every person has the security of being able to openly address problems and questions.

You can find more information on health-related self-help at:

www.bag-selbsthilfe.de

