



Since the 1980s, ASHA's community-based network of affiliated HELP groups has offered support and information for anyone with questions about herpes. The Helper continues its profile of these groups by chatting with Gary, the lead coordinator of [Metro Detroit HELP](#).

How did you become involved with Metro Detroit HELP?

After attending my first meeting here, I not only came back but also started going to meetings of groups on other cities on a regular basis! The facilitator in Detroit at the time asked if I would help out, which I did and in the late 1990s, leadership of the group was handed to me.

What typically occurs at a meeting?

That largely depends on who shows up. If it's a "newbie" we go in a different direction than if only regulars are there, but generally we do brief introductions and anyone who wants to talk about their story is invited to do so.

What topics do the members usually want to discuss?

Most often questions are about medication, and things like what to expect with outbreaks. Dating issues are important too, and this usually involves discussions around partner notification, such as when in the relationship to talk about herpes, what to say, and so on. This is one area where the "old timers" in the group are really valuable in sharing their experiences with someone who's newly diagnosed.

What would you tell someone who's thinking of attending a meeting, but not quite sure?

GO! As hard as it is going to the first meeting, it will be a valuable first step to take. Anyone with questions about the group can find us online at www.metrodetroithelp.org. Our e-mail address is info@metrodetroithelp.org.

Those who don't live near a HELP Group can connect with ASHA staff and others online through our [HSV Message Board](#), a free and anonymous service from ASHA.