

ACA MEETING FORMAT

Meeting lasts 1.5 hours

Hello. My name is (*your first name*). Welcome to (*name of meeting*) meeting of Adult Children of Alcoholics.

Please be sure all cell phones are turned off during the meeting.

We meet to share the experience we had as children growing up in an alcoholic or dysfunctional home. That experience infected us then and it affects us today. By practicing the 12 Steps, by focusing on the Solution, and by accepting a Higher Power of our understanding, we find freedom from the effects of alcoholism and other family dysfunction. We identify with "The Problem" and learn to live in "The Solution", one day at a time.

Will you please join me in a moment of silence followed by the Serenity Prayer?

I've asked _____ to read The Problem (or The Laundry List)

I've asked _____ to read The Solution.

I've asked _____ to read The 12 Steps.

You may have related to our readings even if there was no apparent alcoholism or addiction in your home. This is common because dysfunction can occur in a family without the presence of addiction. We welcome you.

If you are attending an ACA meeting for the first time, will you please introduce yourself by your first name? This is not to embarrass you, but so we may welcome you and get to know you. (*Lead applause*). We are glad you are here. Keep coming back. May we go around the room and introduce ourselves by our first name. My name is _____.

The ACA program is not easy, but if you can handle what comes up at six consecutive meetings, you will start to come out of denial. This will give you freedom from the past. Both you and your life will change.

In the beginning, many of us could not recognize or accept that some of our current attitudes or behaviors result from some experience related to alcoholism or dysfunction in our childhood. We behave as adult children, which means we bring self-doubt and fear learned in childhood to our adult interactions. By attending six meetings in a row and attending regularly thereafter, we come to know and begin to act as our True Selves.

We encourage each member to share openly about his or her experiences as time allows. This is a safe place to share your adult and childhood experiences without being judged. To allow everyone a chance to share during the meeting, we ask each person to limit their sharing to five minutes. (*Three to four if the meeting is large*)

What you hear at this meeting should remain at the meeting. We do not talk about another person's story or experiences to other people. Please respect the anonymity of those who share with us today.

We do not cross talk during the sharing time. Cross talk means interrupting, referring to, or commenting on what another person has said during the meeting. We do not cross talk because adult children come from family backgrounds where feelings and perceptions were judged as wrong or defective. We accept without comment what others say because it is true for them. We work toward taking more responsibility in our lives rather than giving advice to others.

Safety Statement: *It is this group's conscience to provide a safe, respectful, and inclusive meeting place for all attendees, which we view as critical to achieving our primary purpose: helping adult children to achieve emotional sobriety. In order to provide a welcoming environment for everyone, we ask that each person here refrains from any language and behavior that threatens the well-being of any of our members. Some people attending ACA meetings have not grown beyond their victim or victimizer scripts and may attempt to meet their own needs through manipulation of newcomers, who are particularly vulnerable to abuse. This includes predatory behavior which we define as exploiting someone's vulnerabilities for self-serving purposes including romantic, sexual, financial, emotional, or psychological. If any person feels unsafe or in jeopardy at any time and for any reason, we encourage you to report that to a trusted servant of this group, such as the Chair. We also remind you that it does not go against any ACA Traditions to call the proper authorities if someone may have broken the law.*

Today's meeting is a _____ (Step Study, Open or Topic discussion, Tradition Study, Speaker or other). We will begin sharing now and will end at _____ (approx. 15 minutes before the close of the meeting).

(Leader can call on people who raise their hands, or you can go around left to right/ right to left – leader or meeting choice)

We can now begin sharing.

(Group sharing ends.)

It's now time for the 7th Tradition (*pass the basket*) which states that "Every ACA group ought to be self supporting, declining outside contributions." Newcomers are

encouraged to buy literature/books and need not contribute at their first meeting.

Can someone read the 12th Traditions?

Now it's time for the:

- Secretary's Announcements.
- Treasurer Report
- Intergroup Committee Report

Does anyone have any other ACA-related announcements?

(If time allows) Does anyone else have a burning desire to share? **&/or** That's all the time we have for sharing. Thank you for being here and please keep coming back. If you did not have a chance to share, please speak to someone after the meeting if you need to talk.

It is time to read The Promises?

Will_____please close the meeting with the prayer of your choice? (*stand and form a circle by holding hands*)

Keep coming back. It works.