

## ACA: 14 Traits Of An Adult Child

1. We became isolated and afraid of people and authority figures.
2. We became approval seekers and lost our identity in the process.
3. We are frightened by angry people and any personal criticism.
4. We either become alcoholics, marry them or both, or find another compulsive personality such as a workaholic to fulfill our sick abandonment needs.
5. We live life from the viewpoint of victims and we are attracted by that weakness in our love and friendship relationships.
6. We have an overdeveloped sense of responsibility and it is easier for us to be concerned with others rather than ourselves; this enables us not to look too closely at our own faults, etc.
7. We get guilt feelings when we stand up for ourselves instead of giving in to others.
8. We became addicted to excitement.
9. We confuse love and pity and tend to “love” people we can “pity” and “rescue.”
10. We have “stuffed” our feelings from our traumatic childhoods and have lost the ability to feel or express our feelings because it hurts so much (Denial).
11. We judge ourselves harshly and have a very low sense of self-esteem.
12. We are dependent personalities who are terrified of abandonment and will do anything to hold on to a relationship in order not to experience painful abandonment feelings, which we received from living with sick people who were never there emotionally for us.
13. Alcoholism is a family disease; and we became para-alcoholics and took on the characteristics of that disease even though we did not pick up the drink.
14. Para-alcoholics are reactors rather than actors.

## Testimonials

*“I’ve used ACA personally and my life-long symptoms of anxiety and depression are now reduced.”*

– Gary S., M.D.

*“I wish I found this program 10 years ago.”*

– Krista K., ACA Member

*“I prescribe ACA to all my patients with anxiety and depression.”*

– Satish M., M.D.

## ACA and Therapy (ACA Big Red Book)

- “Therapy with an ACA informed counselor can be a gateway to unparalleled levels of recovery.”
- “Informed counseling is a must for clarity and progress.”
- “We encourage informed counseling to help the adult child accomplish the greatest level of emotional healing.”

Source: *Adult Children of Alcoholics*. 2006.

## To Get Started...

We invite you to a meeting. Go to “Find a Meeting” on our website at: <https://adultchildren.org/meeting-search>

Health Professionals may receive a free copy of the Big Red Book of ACA at: [hichair@adultchildren.org](mailto:hichair@adultchildren.org)

**For More Information:**  
[www.adultchildren.org](http://www.adultchildren.org)

# Information for Health Professionals

## Adult Children of Alcoholics®/ Dysfunctional Families

**Help for your patient with Anxiety, Depression, PTSD and Other Effects of Childhood Trauma**



This ACA WSO publication is under fellowship review, with a goal of eventual Conference approval. Fellowship comments are invited.

To submit feedback, please visit  
<http://litreview.adultchildren.org>

## PROMISES OF THE PROGRAM

1. We will discover our real identities by loving and accepting ourselves.
2. Our self-esteem will increase as we give ourselves approval on a daily basis.
3. Fear of authority figures and the need to “people-please” will leave us.
4. Our ability to share intimacy will grow inside us.
5. As we face our abandonment issues, we will be attracted by strengths and become more tolerant of weaknesses.
6. We will enjoy feeling stable, peaceful, and financially secure.
7. We will learn how to play and have fun in our lives.
8. We will choose to love people who can love and be responsible for themselves.
9. Healthy boundaries and limits will become easier for us to set.
10. Fears of failure and success will leave us, as we intuitively make healthier choices.
11. With help from our ACA support group, we will slowly release our dysfunctional behaviors.
12. Gradually, with our Higher Power’s help, we will learn to expect the best and get it.

## ► Isn’t ACA Just Another 12 Step Program?

ACA can be an adjunctive treatment and support system for many medical and mental health issues. ACA is unlike other 12 Step programs in that members are encouraged to look at dysfunction and traumas from childhood. ACA has a premise that we were born whole and became fragmented due to family dysfunction and trauma. This dysfunction (abuse, neglect, addiction) is encoded into our bodies and mind as the false self — traumatic memories and flawed thinking.

### ► About ACA

- Primary Purpose: Carry the message of recovery to all who suffer from being raised in an alcoholic or dysfunctional environment.
- Primary Benefit: ACA Recovery work helps your patients address the effects of family dysfunction and reclaim their wholeness and true self.
- Requirements for Membership: A desire to recover from the effects of family dysfunction.
- 3,000 meeting locations worldwide.

### ► What We Do In ACA Meetings

- We share what is happening in our lives, and how we are dealing with these issues in our recovery program (i.e., share our experience, strength, and hope.)
- We build a personal support network.
- We practice our recovery by supporting each other and being of service.

### ► ACA Offers Participants...

1. Group meetings available worldwide, in person, by telephone and online.
2. The only requirement is a desire to heal from family dysfunction.
3. Supplementary to and not a replacement for professional counseling.
4. Members help each other heal in body, mind and spirit.
5. ACA has no dues or fees.
6. Meetings provide a welcome environment to participants from diverse backgrounds.
7. Maintenance of anonymity.

### ► Your Role As A Practitioner...

1. Encourage your patients to join a supportive environment to supplement your ongoing clinical care.
2. Suggest patients try the program for at least six meetings.