

## ACA Literature Policy

ACA groups have asked ACA WSO for guidance on the use of literature during ACA meetings.

In keeping with Step Twelve, the primary purpose of ACA WSO is to carry the message to all who may suffer from being raised in an alcoholic or other dysfunctional environment.

ACA WSO does not have any authority to guide groups in their affairs. ACA WSO may share the experiences, strengths and hopes of the groups that have shared with us about any given topic and make suggestions, and then only very mild ones at that.

A group's choice of literature is strictly a group's decision, and the ultimate authority of such group affairs is a Loving God as may be expressed through the group's conscience. So says our Second Tradition.

The ACA program, from the outset, has held that valuable information exists outside of the program literature. ACA WSO neither endorses nor opposes any outside causes (literature) in observance of our Sixth Tradition.

Given our program's history<sup>1</sup> of using literature from outside the program and our individual tendency to look for or fear outside authority, groups understandably look for some objective guidelines that they can use to decide what literature they can use during the meeting. The Traditions, we suggest, provide that guidance amply. The group's conscience, grounded in Traditions and Higher Power, is a time-proven, objective basis for groups to use in deciding all of their affairs.

So how might groups grounded in Traditions and Higher Power decide which literature to use during their meetings?

Generally speaking, there are two types of literature: ACA Conference Approved and Non-Conference Approved Literature.

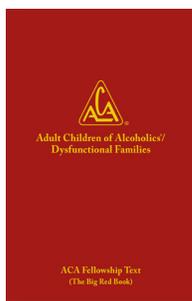
### ACA Conference Approved Literature

ACA literature is written by ACA members who have experience with the ACA Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts.

ACA Conference Approved Literature is developed in collaboration with the ACA WSO Literature Committee. It is submitted to the Board of Trustees for their review and approval to present it to the Annual Business Conference, and is presented at the Annual Business Conference for Conference Approval.

For the first 30 years of ACA's existence, our fellowship relied upon the reports of the Identity, Purpose and Relationship Committee, popularly known as the "Identity Papers" trifold pamphlets and literature from outside the program.

Our "Identity Papers" state who and what we are as children raised in alcoholic or otherwise dysfunctional families. ACA members identify with the Problem Laundry List, and work the



steps toward the Solution. In November 2006, we published our Fellowship Text. The 22nd Annual Business Conference of Adult Children of Alcoholics voted unanimously to approve the Fellowship Text as the fellowship book.

Taken together, our ACA Conference Approved Literature is our "most comprehensive description of the ACA experience from our fellowship view...

[and] offers hope for recovery from the effects of growing up in a dysfunctional family".<sup>2</sup>

However, our Fellowship Text suggests that there is more to ACA recovery than what is in our Conference Approved Literature:

"We realize this is only a beginning. With this book, we hope to begin a discussion on the greater meaning of ACA recovery. We believe this discussion will lead to new levels of clarity for adult children. With this in mind, we leave the reader with a question to consider as you read this book: 'What does ACA mean to you?'"<sup>2</sup>

Towards the end of our Fellowship Text we are again invited to explore and understand the ACA recovery program, "... to see what [emotional sobriety] means in real-time, day-to-day terms".<sup>3</sup>

In essence, our program allows for new levels of clarity, understanding, and daily experimentation by ACAs – a program of open-mindedness that lies squarely on our Second Tradition.

### Non-Conference Approved Literature

It has always been accepted that ACA groups should remain open in choosing literature. That is, ACA meetings may draw from various sources.

Each group is cautioned to be extremely careful and mindful of the ACA Twelve Traditions as they make their decisions.

The group's conscience may weigh the potential benefit of using non-conference approved literature against the potential cost to ACA's Twelve Traditions.

Perhaps after considering the questions below, each meeting might decide to inform the members which literature they have decided to use for their meeting.

### Suggestions for Consideration/Discussion

- **First Tradition** – Does it support the growth of ACA and promote unity and consistency of our Twelve Step message?

- **Fourth Tradition** – Will the decision to use such material affect other groups in the local area or our fellowship as a whole?
- **Fifth Tradition** – Does this decision by the group remain in line with ACA's primary purpose?
- **Sixth Tradition** – Is the use of outside literature an endorsement of a particular author? Would the meeting be a "book study" if making the work of a particular author the focus of the meeting rather than an ACA recovery meeting?
- **Eighth Tradition** – Does using such literature border on, or move the meeting toward a therapy session and away from the Twelve Step recovery program of self-help groups?
- **Tenth Tradition** – Would such use violate any copyrights of others?

Would the decision of the group to use non-conference approved literature identify us a different way or define our recovery outside the Twelve Steps?

Our First Tradition states that personal recovery depends on ACA unity and that our common welfare should come first.

Our Traditions also state that ACA groups refrain from expressing an opinion on any outside issues (Tenth Tradition), and be mindful of the need not to endorse any related facility or outside enterprise (for example literature, videos or similar format\*) lest problems divert us from our primary purpose (Sixth Tradition) of carrying the ACA message of recovery to the adult child who still suffers (Fifth Tradition).

Our Traditions remind us that our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion (Eleventh Tradition) while we are directed to not conflict with other groups or ACA as a whole when exercising our group's autonomy (Fourth Tradition).

It is suggested that all outside literature brought into the meetings be in keeping with the ACA Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. Our program also suggests that to help avoid confusion, such literature be kept separate from ACA Conference Approved literature.

The use of Conference Approved Literature supports fellowship unity and identity, and avoids potential diffusion of the ACA message.

Ultimately, however, each group, guided by their group's conscience, is free to do as they deem fit for their members' recovery purposes.

\* Commercially available videos and literature are outside enterprises and their use might align the group with a particular belief system or modality of recovery. This alignment would interfere with the individual members' absolute right to choose for themselves what they believe in or how they apply the steps to their own recovery.

<sup>2</sup> Excerpted from ACA Fellowship Text pp. viii-ix.

<sup>3</sup> Fellowship Text p. 628.

<sup>1</sup> Early History of ACA ... Interview with Tony A.

## THE TWELVE TRADITIONS

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on ACA unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority – a loving God as may be expressed in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for membership in ACA is a desire to recover from the effects of growing up in an alcoholic or otherwise dysfunctional family.
4. Each group is autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or ACA as a whole. We cooperate with all other Twelve Step programs.
5. Each ACA group has but one purpose – to carry its message to the Adult Child who still suffers.
6. An ACA group ought never endorse, finance or lend the ACA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every ACA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Adult Children of Alcoholics should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. ACA, as such, ought never be organized, but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. Adult Children of Alcoholics has no opinion on outside issues; hence the ACA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, TV, films, and other public media.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions are reprinted and adapted with permission of Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc.

## ACA CONFERENCE APPROVED LITERATURE

### Books and Workbooks

- Fellowship Text (BRB)\*\* (also available as audio book and e-book)
- Twelve Steps of Adult Children (Yellow Workbook)\*\*
- The Laundry Lists Workbook
- Strengthening My Recovery (daily meditation book) (also available as e-book)
- The Laundry Lists Workbook

### Booklets

- Good Enough Group booklet
- Identity Papers booklet
- Newcomer booklet
- Cross Talk Booklet

### Three Ring Binder

- New Meeting Packet

### Trifolds

- 25 Questions: Am I an Adult Child?
- ACA Is... \*\*ACA Literature Policy
- ACA Sponsorship: Fellow Travelers
- Conducting a Business Meeting
- Early History of ACA...interview with Tony A.
- Hospitals & Institutions: Guidelines for H&I Meetings
- Hosting an ACA Sponsorship Workshop
- Issues for Meetings
- Suggested Banking/Accounting Procedure
- To the Beginner in All of Us
- The Tool Bag
- Twelve Concepts for ACA World Service and Suggested Commitment to Service

### Available for free from [www.adultchildren.org](http://www.adultchildren.org)

- Twelve Steps
- Twelve Traditions
- ACA Is...
- The Laundry List, The Other Laundry List, The Flip Side of the Laundry List, The Flip Side of the Other Laundry List
- The Problem
- The Promises\*\*
- The Solution
- Sample Meeting Format

Aside from what is listed above, we continually offer new literature and new translations. To discover the latest offerings and translations, please check [www.adultchildren.org](http://www.adultchildren.org).

\*\*Available in ACA WSO approved translation

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# Literature Policy

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Dysfunctional Families

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