

Appendix A

SAMPLE MEETING FORMAT

Meeting Opening Format

Hello. My name is _____. Welcome to [GROUP NAME] BEGINNER’S MEETING of Adult Children of Alcoholic and Dysfunctional Families. At this time, please silence all electronic devices.

At ACA, we meet to share the experience we had as children growing up in dysfunctional homes, and how that experience affects us in our adult lives today. Dysfunctional homes often, but not always, include alcoholism or other forms of drug abuse. Family dysfunction can also occur in rigidly religious, militaristic, or punitive homes—or homes dominated by control, harsh judgment, & perfectionism. Any type of abuse or neglect creates dysfunctional home environments, as can parental mental illness or other forms of parental disability. Persistent debt or gambling can be other signs of family dysfunction. Those adopted, raised in foster care, or raised in single-parent homes may also find healing in ACA.

1. Will all those who care to, please join me in the ACA Serenity Prayer?
2. Will a friend please read The Laundry List or The Problem?
3. Will a friend please read The Solution?
4. Will a friend please read one of the versions of the 12 Steps ... ACA or Tony A.’s?
5. Will a friend please read the Tradition of the month?

It now is time to go around the room and introduce ourselves by our first name. If you are a newcomer to ACA and this is one of your first six ACA meetings, please let us know so that we may welcome you. I’ll start. Again, my name is _____.

I’m going to begin passing around the Service Sign-Up Calendar. If you’ve been involved with ACA for at least 3 months, please consider signing up for the GREETER or CLOSER service positions at future meetings.

Keep coming back. This program is not easy, but if you can handle what comes up six meetings in a row, you will start to come out of denial. This will give you freedom from the past. Both you and your life will change. By attending six meetings in a row at the beginning and regularly attending thereafter, we come to know our true selves, and learn to behave responsibly. We do this by identifying with our common characteristics and the “ACA Solution.” We choose to become our own loving parent. We come out of denial and share the pain of childhood memories. We experience love and acceptance from members of our ACA groups. We grow in awareness that experiences from the past form a pattern. We learn that pattern can change. So please keep coming back. Listen, learn, and most of all, share your feelings.

Appendix A

SAMPLE MEETING FORMAT [continued]

During our meetings, we practice self-discipline by sharing the opportunity to speak and honoring others by listening. We ask that everyone abide by the following suggestions:

- We indicate we have finished speaking with a closing statement such as “I’m finished,” “I’m done,” “Thank you for letting me share,” etc.
- We do not interrupt someone speaking until they indicate they have finished.
- We use the words “I, me, and my” to share from our own personal experience.
- We do not “cross talk,” meaning we do not refer to or comment directly on anyone else’s sharing. We share our experiences only. We simply listen and do not offer advice.
- We are courteous, allowing everyone time to share. Keep shares between 3–5 minutes.
- We remember that anything heard at a meeting stays at the meeting. It is not for gossip or public disclosure. Please respect the privacy of those who share today.
- Everyone at this meeting is responsible for adhering to these safety suggestions. It is my responsibility as Chairperson to remind participants of the guidelines if necessary.

We will now move into tonight’s topic which is After the topic introduction is read, I’ll start things off with an opening share. I’ll then open up the meeting to shares from beginners ... those in ACA less than a year. About halfway through the meeting, I’ll open up sharing to everyone.

[BEGIN TOPIC INTRODUCTION]



Appendix A

SAMPLE MEETING FORMAT [continued]

Meeting Closing Format

- We are approaching the end of our meeting. Before we begin closing, does anyone else have a burning desire to share?
- It is now time to pass the basket for our Seventh Tradition, which states that “Every ACA group ought to be self-supporting, declining outside contributions.” A suggested donation of \$2.00 will ensure we will meet our financial commitments to use this room.
- While people are contributing, I want to emphasize that this is an ACA beginner’s meeting. We encourage people to also attend other ACA non-beginner’s meetings to learn about topics not covered here, to access additional service opportunities, and to expand their fellow traveler support network.
- Are there any other ACA-related announcements?
- Will a friend please hand out the chips?
- That’s all the time we have. Thank you for joining us, and keep coming back. And now it’s time for “The Promises.” Would a friend please read The Promises?
- Keep coming back—it works! We will now close with the ACA Serenity Prayer



Appendix A

ACA MEETINGS WHERE I FEEL MOST COMFORTABLE

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