ACA Delegate Training Handbook

As of May 1, 2026

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION 2
BECOMING A DELEGATE 2
RESPONSIBILITIES OF A DELEGATE 3
- BEFORE THE ABC/CBM 3
- DURING THE ABC/CBM 3
- AFTER THE ABC/CBM 4

DELEGATE RESOURCES 5
- Delegate Checklist 5
- Delegate Training Sessions 5

CONFERENCE SAFETY 5
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS 8
THE DELEGATE CALENDAR 11
REFERENCES 12
- Group Voting and Substantial Unanimity–Twelfth Concept 12
- Sharing at Business Meetings 13
- Allow Everyone to Express Views 13
- Commonly Used Acronyms 14
- WSO Operating Policy and Procedure Manual (OPPM) 14
- The Suggested Commitment To Service 14
- The ACA Twelve Steps with Spiritual Principles 15
- The ACA Twelve Traditions with Meditations 15
- Twelve Concepts for ACA World Service 17
- Serenity Prayer(s) 19
- ABC Mantras That Work 19

INTRODUCTION

This Handbook is a reference guide for Delegates to the Annual Business Conference (ABC) of Adult Children of Alcoholic and Dysfunctional Families (ACA). NOTE: Most general references apply also to CBMs (Conference Business Meetings).

It contains information that is relatively static, which means it will not necessarily change from year to year.

NOTE: There has previously been a separate document called “The Role and Function of the ACA Annual Business Conference (ABC) and Delegates to the ABC”. That information is now contained in the Frequently Asked Questions section of this document.

Delegate Engagement Subcommittee

A Delegate Subcommittee was created in 2016 during the ABC in Delray Beach, Florida. It was called the Delegate Training Sub-Committee (DTSC), but was renamed Delegate Engagement Subcommittee (DESC) in 2022. DESC reports to the ABC Committee.

Our mission is to serve as a resource to help educate Delegates. We provide information on how to prepare for attending Delegate meetings. Additionally, we educate Delegates on how to encourage and inform their groups about practicing the Traditions and Concepts and holding group consciences.

BECOMING A DELEGATE

Each ACA Group or Meeting is autonomous and decides by group conscience who their Delegate shall be. It is highly recommended that the Delegate have been a regular meeting attendee for at least a year and will be able to attend one of the Delegate Training sessions prior to attending the ABC.

Term Of Service for a Delegate

A Delegate’s term is determined by their individual group. While it is important to have a one-year minimum that runs from one ABC to the next ABC, a minimum of two years is suggested for continuity. Many Delegates have also expressed that their first year was primarily about learning the process. Registration opens for a new Conference “season”, beginning in March, which can be an appropriate time for a new Delegate to be chosen by their Group.

When rotating out, a Delegate is asked to mentor the incoming Delegate, sharing the Delegate resources, including previous Delegate Guidebooks. The Delegate Guidebook is a file containing extensive information about the agenda, schedule, proposals, procedures, and reports that will be presented to the Delegates at the ABC.

The Buddy System

There has been a Buddy System that is reliant on the number of volunteers that are available to serve in that role. The goal is to have newer Delegates, who choose to do so, pair with more

experienced Delegates. This system provides support for understanding the ins and outs of the ABC. This will be a topic of discussion during Delegate training sessions.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF A DELEGATE

BEFORE THE ABC/CBM

Upon your acceptance to perform service as a Delegate to the ABC, familiarize yourself with the contents of this Handbook.

Review ***The Twelve Traditions of ACA*** (see BRB Chapter 19), ***The Twelve Concepts for ACA World Service*** and ***The Suggested Commitment to Service***. These are also included at the end of this document for ease of reference.

On the WSO Service Website you will find the latest version of the Operating Policy and Procedures Manual (OPPM), a document that reflects the day-to-day operating guidelines for the WSO Board of Trustees, WSO Committees, and the ABC. There are two Conference-related sections - one about Events and an Appendix that includes the voting rules and processes for the Conference.

When you register as a Delegate you will be asked if you wish to join the WSO Slack Workspace and sign a Slack User Agreement that will be forwarded to you. Slack is an online collaborative communication forum. Using it is optional, but encouraged. The following Help Center provides information about how to use Slack: https://slack.com/help/articles/115004071768-What-is-Slack-. If you prefer not to use Slack, you may choose to communicate by email only.

DURING THE ABC/CBM

The agenda may include the following:

- Confirmation of the Conference Chair(s)
- Approval of the Minutes of the previous ABC or CBM
- Ratification of Board members (at the ABC, typically)
- Ballot Proposals that received at least 66.7% Yes votes
- Committee and Board Motions
- Time-sensitive Floor Motions
- Board and select Committee reports, including financial reports

A Parliamentarian will assist the Conference Chair(s) and the Delegates in following procedures in accordance with the Conference-related sections of the OPPM. These procedures are generally a modified version of Robert's Rules of Order. Robert's Rules is based on the principle of equal voting rights for all members of a group. When a situation arises that the OPPM doesn't cover, we generally default to Robert's Rules. The Parliamentarian may be a member of the Fellowship or a paid consultant who is familiar with 12 Step Programs and our Tradition of anonymity.

Other volunteer service roles that required to be filled for the Conference meetings are

- IT support

- Point of Order - someone who responds if a Delegate thinks that something is out of order or if someone is not following guidelines
- Point of Information - someone who will answer questions about the overall process or to clarify information that presented that may be confusing for the Delegates
- Point of Information - someone from the Board and/or the Office Manager who will answer specific questions.
- Point of Safety - someone who will address concerns raised by Delegates who feel the tone of the meeting feels unsafe
- Timekeeper(s) - gentle reminders for both sections and individual shares
- Tech Support
    - Someone to unmute speakers when they are called on to speak
    - Someone to validate the names/registrations of those in attendance
- Other support as requested, such as someone to read a question/comment from Delegates who may feel uncomfortable speaking in the meeting.

AFTER THE ABC/CBM

1. Be sure to immediately complete any voting that takes place using World Wide Online Voting. This will be announced at the end of the meeting. More information can be found in **APPENDIX VIII – ABC and CMB VOTING RULES in the OPPM**

2. Complete the Delegate Survey. A link will be emailed to all Delegates and Trusted Servants. This provides valuable input on potential future topics and ways of structuring the meetings.

3. Create a Delegate Report for your group. Provide your group with your report and include the voting results on the Proposals and other information noted below. Delegates frequently confer on Slack to assist each other with this task.

Sample Delegate's Report from the ABC/CBM

Date: _____

Prepared by: _____, Delegate

Number of Delegates in Attendance: ___ Number of Countries Represented: ____

Details:

Things to consider for your report:

We suggest reviewing the Conference agenda and consider what your group may like to know. Among other things, this could include:

- Financial reports
- Literature projects for fellowship review
- Available service opportunities
- Ballot Proposal outcomes
- Motions and outcomes

- Committee Reports
- Confirmation of Board Members
- Carryover business to be handled at the next meeting (ABC or CBM)

DELEGATE RESOURCES

Delegate Checklist

- ❏ Be watchful for the emails you will receive with updates about upcoming Conference information.
- ❏ Be sure to register annually before each ABC (This registration will also apply to any CBMs that follow for that cycle)
- ❏ Attend a quarterly Board Meeting with the Fellowship
- ❏ Check the Conference website regularly to find updates **https://adultchildren.org/conference/** - especially Resources for Next Meeting, which will have the agenda and reference materials - and Delegate Orientation, which has important dates, help videos and training information
- ❏ Familiarize yourself with the WSO Slack workspace
- ❏ Familiarize yourself with the Delegate voting process in the OPPM
- ❏ Attend an online Delegate training session, or listen to the recording online if unable to attend
- ❏ Acquaint yourself with the ***Portal*** prior to the ABC/CBM
- ❏ Write an ABC/CBM Report to take back to your group.
- ❏ Complete the post-meeting Delegate Survey.
- ❏ NOTE: There is generally online voting AFTER the CBMs. **WWOV** Remember to vote.
- ❏ Consider volunteering for a WSO Committee, Region, or Intergroup
- ❏ Click on the Contact Information box on the Conference web page if you have questions
- ❏ Attend the fun filled, after-conference Dance Party!

Delegate Training Sessions

Training sessions are held to educate Delegates about their role. During these sessions, essential information is delivered and there is an opportunity for questions and concerns. While most of the information is geared towards the newer Delegate, it is highly recommended that experienced Delegates also attend because the information does change from year to year.

In some cases, there may be a mock proposal presented that will help explain the process of voting on proposals and motions. This simulation has been helpful as a teaching tool in the past.

CONFERENCE SAFETY

Setting the Tone Statement - ABC/CBM

Please show courtesy towards others:

- **Be patient.** English is not everyone's primary language. Be mindful of using:
  - Slang - action item; back burner; buy-in; ducks in a row; circle back
  - Acronyms - ASAP; DM; etc
  - and long, complicated sentences.

- **Use “I” and “me” statements.** Avoid saying, “you”, “they”, “we.”
- **Be honest and clear.** Yet remain gentle and compassionate.
- **Acknowledge any problem**. Focus on the intentions and the solutions.
- **Listen and learn**. Be willing to be uncomfortable and challenged.
- **Be mindful**. Many attendees have experienced social and structural inequity.

Understanding Our Feelings
There is a difference between being unsafe and feeling uncomfortable.

Uncomfortable could be the feelings that arise when we witness disagreement or when we hear an opinion we do not like.
Unsafe could occur when someone is shouting, cursing or is using abusive language. This behavior may trigger us to shut down or to act out in response. Thus, unsafe and bullying behavior affects the true group conscience process.

Service coming from gentleness, love, and respect builds trust, open mindedness, and cooperation.

This is your conference. You play an important role in deciding what to do when sharing is **not safe** or **requires courtesy.**

Safety Protocol at the ABC/CBM

Conference safety is a responsibility we share. The Chairs of the conference, Parliamentarian and Points of Safety may inform the participants of safety concerns and request actions. Also, Delegates may raise concerns.

Actions from the Chair or Parliamentarian:

1. If something is said in an unkind manner or tone, the Chair will ask the person to rephrase it in a more courteous tone.
2. When a gentle reminder is not changing the behavior, the Chair or Parliamentarian may pause the proceedings and take a group conscience about addressing the situation.
3. If the meeting starts to lose a sense of safety, the Chair or Parliamentarian may briefly mute all speakers to stop discussion.
   During this pause, the Chair may read any of the Tradition Meditations 1, 2 or 9 (see below)
   Or they may choose to play the 2+ minute breathing video:
   https://youtu.be/G25IR0c-Hj8?si=ByOzxh8fv45OvkN3

A Delegate's concern:
Delegates can report unsafe statements/actions directly to the Point of Safety (POS) person in the Zoom chat. When the Point of Safety receives a complaint they take steps to find a resolution:

- Determine the safety concern.
- Explore safety and comfort with the Understanding Our Feelings statement (above).
- Support the delegate until they are ready to return to the Conference.
- Take further action with the Conference Chair or Parliamentarian if necessary.

A breakout room will be available for direct conversation between the delegate and the Point of Safety.

Meditations to Read During a Pause

- Tradition 1 p.496

Meditation

Higher Power. I am your trusted servant seeking to support my ACA group and its primary purpose. Please remind me that the life of my program and my own recovery depends upon my willingness to put the group's welfare above my own will. Help me recognize unity.

- Tradition 2 p. 502

Meditation

Higher Power. I understand that you make your voice heard in a-group conscience. I ask you to remind me that the life of my program and, therefore, my own recovery depends upon my-willingness to put the group's welfare above my own will. Where I disagree with the common view of my fellows in service, allow me to state my case honestly and respectfully. Allow me to listen to and consider the views of others. May I state my view and support all group decisions, including the ones I might disagree with. Your will, not mine, be done.

- Tradition 9, p. 537

Meditation

Higher Power. May I remember that ACA and its meeting and service structure are different than my family of origin. May I be patient and avoid reaching for the easiest way out when I am confronted with a difficult situation. Help me and my ACA group ask for help in keeping our meetings safe and recovery oriented. Also help us celebrate the things that we do right.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

NOTE: Some of the topics covered in this section have further explanations in the document.

What is the Annual Business Conference (ABC)?

- The ABC is a meeting of the ACA Fellowship where Groups (Meeting, Intergroup, or Region) have the opportunity to send a Delegate to represent them to discuss and vote on fellowship business, including:
  - Various issues related to the business of the ACA World Services Organization (WSO), including those brought forth by the Fellowship through the Ballot Proposal Process and/or through a Floor Motion and/or by the WSO Board of Trustees and WSO Committees.
  - Reviewing reports of the work of the WSO and its committees over the past year, and ask any questions as time allows;
  - Ratifying Board Members for the WSO Board of Trustees – see the Operating Policy and Procedures Manual (OPPM) and ACA WSO Bylaws Article IX.5;
  - Having an annual meeting is a legal requirement for a not for profit organization, which is what WSO is.

To access the Minutes from the previous ABCs, please browse the content on the Past Conferences page on the main website and the ABC Committee.page on the Service website.

When is the ABC held?

- The ABC is scheduled to be held sometime between the end of April and mid-May. All efforts are made to schedule this event at a time that does not conflict with holidays, such as religious and by custom, such as Mother's Day.

What is a Conference Business Meeting (CBM)

- CBMs are additional meetings scheduled for Delegates throughout the year where further business can be discussed. They were created by a motion at the 2025 ABC to handle spillover business from ABC.

What is a Delegate?

- A Delegate is an elected representative of a registered Group who serves to communicate the voice of their Group at ABCs and CBMs. They are given the autonomy to vote in a manner that represents their group's conscience to the best of their ability, taking into account any new information that is presented. (see Concept III)
- See more information about Delegates in the Annual Business Conference section of the OPPM.

What is the importance of attending the Delegate meetings?

- Attending Delegates meetings provides the opportunity for a Group to have a voice, according to the Right of Participation as stated in The Twelve Concepts.
- Every Group is encouraged to elect a Delegate to represent their group conscience via voting at the ABC/CBM per Concepts I, II, III, VI, and XII.

How does a group select a Delegate?

- Groups or meetings are autonomous and can decide for themselves who their Delegate shall be. It is suggested that the Delegate have been a regular meeting attendee for at least a year and will be able to attend the ABC or the CBM, as well as attend one of the Delegate Training sessions. Since Delegates provide service throughout the year, anytime is a good time to choose a group representative. Registration dates and requirements for Delegates are found at adultchildren.org.

Can an individual be a delegate for more than one group?

- No, an individual can only serve as a Delegate for one registered Group, whether it's a meeting, an Intergroup, or a Region.

Can a group have more than one delegate?

- An individual group may have only one registered Delegate at a time. However, the Group may register an Alternate Delegate. Two individuals may, therefore, alternate holding the position of the Group's voting Delegate, e.g., the Delegate will cover the first day and the Alternate Delegate will cover the second day.

What is the term of service for a Delegate?

- The term of service for a Delegate is from one ABC to the next ABC. It is suggested that a Delegate serve at least two consecutive terms for the sake of continuity, although each group or meeting is autonomous in making this decision. In our experience, the Delegate is just learning the role of the Delegate in their first term, and will feel more confident in their second term. It is important to consider rotation of service as is suggested for all group positions in The Suggested Commitment to Service (see References Section)

How do I register as a Delegate?

- Delegates register on the Conference web page. Delegates are required to register again at the start of a new ABC "season". Registration is open at various times throughout the year.

Can a non-delegate observe the Delegate Meetings, and if so, how do they register?

- Yes. We offer the opportunity for anyone to observe via a virtual live stream of the ABC for non-delegates. The form to register is on the Conference website. There is no deadline for Observer registrations.

Is there any training for Delegates?

- Yes, training sessions are held prior to each meeting. There are always at least two such sessions scheduled to accommodate different time zones. They are generally announced both by email and on the Conference website, specifically in the Delegate Orientation section.

What are Ballot Proposals?

- Ballot Proposals are the specific actions or changes being sought from WSO, submitted by ACA Meetings/Intergroups/Regions to be considered by Delegates as part of the

agenda at the upcoming ABC. (See more in the Ballot Proposal Committee section of the OPPM)

What does it mean to be a registered group (meeting, Intergroup, or Region)?

- This means these groups have officially registered themselves with the WSO and are listed on the WSO website. Each registered group will have a unique meeting identification number.

Does a meeting have to be affiliated with an Intergroup or Region to have a Delegate?

- No. At this time, affiliation with an Intergroup and/or Region is voluntary for meetings.

If our group is unable to participate in the ABC, is it still advantageous to have a Delegate?

- Yes, it is definitely advantageous for a group to have a Delegate. A Delegate keeps the group informed of the workings of the WSO and the Conference, as well as the opportunities for service work. Also, to accommodate global time zone issues that might prevent Delegates from attending the actual Delegate meeting, voting on Motions and Ratifications is now handled through Worldwide Online Voting that takes place after the close of the meeting each day.

When is the ABC Agenda available?

- Typically at least two weeks prior to the Delegate meeting.

What is the ACA World Service Organization (WSO)?

- ACA WSO is a service body and a legal entity.
- The Fellowship created the WSO in 1991 to operate the day-to-day business, such as literature development and production. Per the Bylaws (see Article IX.4), during the Conference Delegate Meetings, the Fellowship gives direction to the WSO.
- See more in Concepts VI and VII

What are the Concepts, how do they relate to the ABC, and why are they important?

- The Twelve Concepts outline the relationship between WSO and the larger Fellowship. If the Twelve Steps are a guide to personal recovery work, and the Twelve Traditions are principles regarding organizing groups and service bodies, the Twelve Concepts are fundamental guiding principles around how the WSO functions and how it relates to the Fellowship.
- Some of the ACA Twelve Concepts that outline the role of the ABC in the relationship between the Fellowship and the WSO include Concept I, II, VI, VII, and XII.

What is the "Inverted Pyramid", and how does that relate to the ABC?

- The "Inverted Pyramid" is a term used across various 12-step programs. It is a fundamental principle regarding the relationship between the service bodies (Intergroups, Regions, and WSO) and the entities that they serve (meetings and individual members).

- From the ACA WSO Bylaws (IX.4) *The group conscience obtained from the delegates in attendance shall provide direction, recommendations, and/or Special Committees to the Board for conducting the business of ACA WSO.*

What is "The Conference"?

- There are two ways in which the phrase, "the Conference", is used in ACA:
  - The Delegate meeting
  - The set of people serving as Delegates
- Each Delegate serves, collectively, with all other Delegates, at the ABC as "The Conference."

Where can I submit a question not answered here?

- You can send an email to **abc@acawso.org**.

THE DELEGATE CALENDAR

(all dates are approximate and subject to change)

January, February, March,

1. The Ballot is published and voting takes place:
   a. In January, an email is sent to all registered group contacts that includes a link to the Ballot. Each registered ACA group is asked to discuss and vote on whether these Proposals merit discussion at the ABC.
   b. In February the Ballot Prep Committee holds online Proposal Presentations (Town Halls). These meetings provide an opportunity for Proposal submitters to further explain their Proposals and to answer questions from ACA members in attendance.
   c. In mid-February, a voting link is emailed to the contact persons for all registered groups. The deadline for Ballot voting is early April. More information about the Proposal and Ballot processes is found at https://acawso.org/category/ballot-prep/
2. The second Conference Business Meeting (CBM) is a day-long meeting typically held in late January or February. The Delegates address business that may be held over from their last meeting. Proposals may be offered as new business. The meeting agenda is worked out by the ABC Committee.
3. March - The Board Meeting with the Fellowship

April, May, June, July

1. April is the lead up to the Annual Business Conference. Dates for Delegate Training sessions will be posted on the Conference web page. Registered Delegates are also notified by email. It is helpful for all Delegates- new or experienced - to attend at least one of these training sessions.
2. The Portal is made available on the Conference web page, two to four weeks before the ABC. Delegates are strongly urged to familiarize themselves with the content. Any questions may be asked at the training sessions, on Slack or directly by email to the ABC Committee (abc@acawso.org) or the relevant WSO Committee, or the Board. The

Portal includes the Proposals that are on the ABC agenda, Committee and Board motions, Committee reports, voting rules, and other helpful information.
3. Consult with your group about their thoughts on the Proposals and motions that will be on the agenda so that you can represent their perspective. However, if you hear new information your group is not aware of, you are free to vote your own conscience.
4. The Annual Business Conference is the main event in May. Typically it takes place over a weekend, Saturday and Sunday. There may be additional activities on Friday evening.
5. June - The Board Meeting with the Fellowship
6. June and July is a good time to explore WSO committees with a goal to learn about their purpose and how they function. There may also be an opportunity to volunteer.
    a. Often, inspired by the ABC, Delegates may meet online to learn from each other and to discuss improvements to the organization.
    b. Meetings and groups may also begin to consider making a Proposal.

August, September, October

1. The Ballot process currently begins:
    a. In August, the Ballot Prep Committee emails the “Call for Proposals” to each registered ACA Meeting contact. The meeting contact is asked to follow up with their group to see if they would like to submit a Proposal. The deadline to submit a Proposal will be included in that email and posted on the WSO Service Website.
    b. A Proposal is an idea or issue put forward by a group or committee that holds global significance for the Fellowship. Help with submissions is available from the Ballot Prep Committee - bpc@acawso.org.
2. September - The Board Meeting with the Fellowship
3. The first Conference Business Meeting (CBM) is typically held in late September. This is a day-long meeting where Delegates address business that may be held over from their last meeting. Proposals may be offered as new business. The meeting agenda is worked out ahead of time by the ABC Committee.

November, December

1. The Ballot Process continues:
    a. The Board and WSO Committees collaborate to draft the WSO Analysis for each Proposal, offering relevant information and context.
    b. Translation teams begin translating the Proposals.
2. December - The Board Meeting with the Fellowship

REFERENCES

Segments of the BRB “Handbook For Adult Children” Section III

Group Voting and Substantial Unanimity–Twelfth Concept

Most ACA groups conduct business meetings with some form of rules of order or general consent. ACA groups are cautioned to avoid too much formality in conducting business meetings. Typically, a chairperson leads the business meeting, recognizes motions, and oversees discussion on the motions. Each person at the business meeting usually shares once on the motion before the chairperson asks if the group is ready to vote on the motion.

Some groups are more informal. They do not make motions or vote formally. Instead, the group discusses a topic or issue until a general consensus is reached by the group. In this form of

business meeting, the chairperson of the meeting would listen to the discussion among the group and sense when a consensus is reached. The chairperson would then state that consensus to see if there is agreement with those attending the business meeting. The chairperson might say: “I sense that the group has decided to change the meeting time from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m.” If the group agrees then consensus is reached; the decision is made. In determining a consensus, the chairperson states the consensus in an impartial manner and remains open to the will of the business meeting participants.

There is a principle from our Twelve Concepts for ACA World Service known as “substantial unanimity.” The Twelfth Concept states: “that all important decisions be reached by discussion vote and whenever possible, by substantial unanimity.” Substantial unanimity applies to the most important business of meetings, Intergroups, and Regions, in addition to the Annual Business Conference. Substantial unanimity means that decisions reached by ACA meetings or service bodies need to reflect the clear will of the group. Each group and service committee must decide the “important decisions” that require substantial unanimity. Substantial unanimity is always greater than a simple majority and should exceed a two-thirds majority of those voting on the ACA business at hand. If agreement cannot be reached, it is best to postpone action on the motion or topic.

The election of service committee members typically is settled by a simple majority vote, which is acceptable and well below substantial unanimity standard. There are other examples of ACA business being settled by a simple majority. But we are always mindful of the need for substantial unanimity on business of greater importance. (Pages 595-596)

Sharing at Business Meetings

Because our program focus is on recovery, ACA members occasionally attend business meetings to share their feelings without addressing the issues for discussion. While feelings are an important part of our recovery, we have found that it is best to share on the business at hand because of the limited time that most business meetings operate under. At business meetings, we ask questions, listen, and think about our response before speaking.

That said, ACA business meetings are not without emotion. Some ACA members speak with feelings and compassion while staying on the topic and without acting inappropriately in the meeting.

We ask that children not be brought to a business meeting so that disruptions can be avoided. This is true for our Inner Children because they, too, need attention and are equally disruptive in meetings. If a person is at a business meeting and realizes he or she has not negotiated a settlement to keep the Inner Child from misbehaving at the meeting, then that person needs to excuse himself or herself from the meeting to negotiate or renegotiate with the Inner Child. By taking care of our Inner Child, we are better able to participate in group business.

The chairperson of the business meeting can ask individuals who act out to leave unless they can conduct themselves in accordance with the rules of order, discuss only the business at hand, and accept the group conscience processes, deliberations, and decisions gracefully. (Pages 596-597)

Allow Everyone to Express Views

Keep in mind the right of everyone to express an opinion. Participating in a business meeting allows us to practice learned recovery tools. The minority opinion is important. There should be an emphasis on obtaining a group conscience of all the participants on all issues, particularly

when there is disagreement. A group conscience is the method by which we invite a loving God into our group decisions and discussions. The group comes to an agreement on a given business item after each person has expressed his or her views. An agreement or course of action may not appear after the first round of discussion. If so, the chairperson of the business meeting asks for more discussion among the group members until a consensus is reached.

Some groups will use a combination of the consensus discussion approach and entertaining formal motions. A motion is a statement made by an individual attending the business meeting. The motion calls for an action to be taken by the group. The person might say: “I make a motion to change the meeting time from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m.” If a motion is made and seconded by the group members, there is usually discussion and then a vote is taken. General motions are usually passed by a simple majority. More serious motions such as removing someone from office or changing the meeting time can require a two-thirds majority. (Pages 594-595)

Commonly Used Acronyms

- ABC - Annual Business Conference
- CBM - Conference Business Meeting
- WSO - World Services Organization
- OPPM - Operating Policy and Procedure Manual
- WWOV - World Wide Online Voting

WSO Operating Policy and Procedure Manual (OPPM)

The current version of the OPPM can be downloaded by clicking **HERE**.

The Suggested Commitment To Service

(BRB Handbook For Adult Children Section III)

I perform service so that my program will be available for myself, and through those efforts, others may benefit. I will perform service and practice my recovery by:

1. Affirming that the true power of our program rests in the membership of the meetings and is expressed through our Higher Power and through group conscience.
2. Confirming that our process is one of inclusion and not exclusion; showing special sensitivity to the viewpoint of the minority in the process of formulating the group conscience so that any decision is reflective of the spirit of the group and not merely the vote of the majority.
3. Placing principles before personalities.
4. Keeping myself fit for service by working my recovery as a member of the program.
5. Striving to facilitate the sharing of experience, strength, and hope at all levels: meetings, Intergroups, Regional committees, service boards, and World Services.
6. Accepting the different forms and levels of service and allowing those around me to each function according to their own abilities.
7. Remaining willing to forgive myself and others for not performing perfectly.

8. Being willing to surrender the position in which I serve in the interest of unity and to provide the opportunity for others to serve; to avoid problems of money, property, and prestige; and to avoid losing my own recovery through the use of service to act out my old behavior, especially in taking care of others, controlling, rescuing, being a victim, etc.

9. Remembering I am a trusted servant; I do not govern.

The ACA Twelve Steps with Spiritual Principles

1. We admitted we were powerless over the effects of alcoholism or other family dysfunction, that our lives had become unmanageable.
   SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLES: POWERLESSNESS AND SURRENDER

2. Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
   SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLES: OPEN-MINDEDNESS AND CLARITY

3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understand God.
   SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLES: WILLINGNESS AND ACCEPTING HELP

4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
   SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLES: SELF HONESTY AND COURAGE

5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
   SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLES: HONESTY AND TRUST

6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
   SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLE: WILLINGNESS

7. Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.
   SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLE: HUMILITY

8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.
   SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLES: WILLINGNESS AND SELF-FORGIVENESS

9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
   SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLES: FORGIVENESS AND COURAGE

10. Continued to take personal inventory and, when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.
    SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLES: HONESTY AND DISCERNMENT

11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, as we understand God, praying only for knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry that out.
    SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLES: SEEKING AND LISTENING

12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others who still suffer, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.
    SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLES: LOVE AND SELF-LOVE

The ACA Twelve Traditions with Meditations

Tradition 1: Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on ACA unity.

Tradition 1 Meditation: *Higher Power. I am your trusted servant seeking to support my ACA group and its primary purpose. Please remind me that the life of my program and my own recovery depends upon my willingness to put the group's welfare above my own will. Help me recognize unity.*

Tradition 2: For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority – a loving God as expressed in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.

Tradition 2 Meditation: *Higher Power. I understand that you make your voice heard in a group conscience. I ask you to remind me that the life of my program and, therefore, my own recovery depends upon my willingness to put the group's welfare above my own will. Where I disagree with the common view of my fellows in service, allow me to state my case honestly and respectfully. Allow me to listen to and consider the views of others. May I state my view and support all group decisions, including the ones I might disagree with. Your will, not mine, be done.*

Tradition 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.

Tradition 3 Meditation: *Higher Power. Help me recognize my desire to recover from the effects of growing up in a dysfunctional home. Give me willingness to attend meetings to recover from these effects. I participate in ACA because I want to change and help others. Thank you for leading me to these rooms where I belong. Thank you for giving me the courage to walk into an ACA meeting and stay and find my place. I am finally home. I finally know where I fit.*

Tradition 4: Each group is autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or ACA as a whole. We cooperate with all other Twelve Step programs.

Tradition 4 Meditation: *Higher Power. Help my home group remain focused on the Twelve Step process of recovery while still having its own personality and flavor. When the actions and decisions of my group might affect ACA as a whole, may we find the spirit of cooperation and a willingness to seek help from the ACA service structure. My group is autonomous, but it is not alone.*

Tradition 5: Each group has but one primary purpose – to carry its message to the adult child who still suffers.

Tradition 5 Meditation: *Higher Power. Help me remember that ACA has one primary purpose, which centers the fellowship and which simplifies most discussions. Help me remember to ask myself a simple question when I am doing the business of ACA. 'Does what we are about to do support the primary purpose of carrying the ACA message to another adult child needing help?*

Tradition 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.

Tradition 6 Meditation: *Higher Power. Grant me the wisdom to know when a group project will carry the message of recovery to those who still suffer, or will direct group energy away from carrying the message. Guide us away from discussions about property, prestige, or endorsing causes that are not ACA. Give me the courage to speak clearly and thoughtfully for what I believe honors Tradition Six.*

Tradition 7: Every ACA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.

Tradition 7 Meditation: *Higher Power. I am here to do your will. Help me give for the right reason with the right amount. Help me remember that I have a different life today because of ACA. May I be willing to give back what was freely given to me. May I claim spiritual ownership in this fellowship.*

Tradition 8: Adult Children of Alcoholics should remain forever non- professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.

Tradition 8 Meditation: *Higher Power. Remind me that the direction of our program comes from the ACA members and the groups. Remind me that we must make our own decisions. Guide us when we discuss the need to hire special workers that will help us fulfill ACA's primary purpose. Grant us the wisdom to make the best decisions for our groups, service structure, and our fellowship as a whole.*

Tradition 9: ACA, as such, ought never be organized, but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.

Tradition 9 Meditation: *Higher Power. May I remember that ACA and its meeting and service structure are different than my family of origin. May I be patient and avoid reaching for the easiest way out when I am confronted with a difficult situation. Help me and my ACA group ask for help in keeping our meetings safe and recovery-oriented. Also help us celebrate the things that we do right.*

Tradition 10: Adult Children of Alcoholics has no opinion on outside issues; hence the ACA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.

Tradition 10 Meditation: *Higher Power. Help me to honor ACA's primary purpose, and focus my sharing in meetings on topics of recovery. Help me remember that ACA is a spiritual program and not a political, religious, or other type of program.*

Tradition 11: Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, TV, films, and other public media.

Tradition 11 Meditation: *Higher Power. I ask you to guide me in maintaining my anonymity at the level of all media because no one speaks for ACA or gives the appearance of speaking for ACA. We attract others to ACA by our good works and the good word of others. Help me discern when I might break my anonymity for a suffering adult child looking for a way out of confusion. This person might be a co-worker or a family member. Help me know when to share some of my story, or when to remain quiet and maintain my anonymity. May I avoid speaking out of turn, or using my ego to share with people who may not be interested in ACA. At the same time, give me courage to share this program when the moment is right.*

Tradition 12: Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

Tradition 12 Meditation: *Higher Power. Help me see the connecting thread that anonymity brings to the ACA program. Give me the willingness that I need to practice ACA principles instead of a false self personality.*

Twelve Concepts for ACA World Service

(BRB Handbook For Adult Children Section III)

Concept I: The final responsibility and the ultimate authority for ACA World Services should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole fellowship.

Concept II: Authority for the active maintenance of our world services is hereby delegated to the actual voice, the effective conscience for our whole fellowship.

Concept III: As a means of creating and maintaining a clearly defined working relationship between the ACA meetings, the ACA WSO Board of Trustees, and its staff and committees, and thus ensuring their effective leadership, it is herein suggested that we endow each of these elements of service with the traditional Right of Decision.*

The right of decision as defined herein refers to: 1) the right and responsibility of each trusted servant to speak and vote his/her own conscience, in the absence of any contrary mandate, on any issue regardless of the level of service; 2) the 12 Steps, 12 Traditions, and the Commitment to Service will be followed by trusted servants in decision making; 3) delegates to the Annual Business Conference are trusted servants and therefore equally guided by the 12 Steps, 12 Traditions, 12 Concepts, and the Commitment to Service; 4) standard practice that decisions made by subcommittees are subject to the authority of the service body which creates its mission and defines its parameters. (Footnote p616)

Concept IV: Throughout our structure, we maintain at all responsible levels a traditional Right of Participation.

Concept V: Throughout our structure, a Right of Petition prevails, thus assuring us that minority opinion will be heard and that petitions for the redress of grievances will be carefully considered.

Concept VI: On behalf of ACA as a whole, our Annual Business Conference has the principal responsibility for the maintenance of our world services, and it traditionally has the final decision respecting large matters of general policy and finance. But the Annual Business Conference also recognizes that the chief initiative and the active responsibility in most of these matters would be exercised primarily by the Trustee members of the World Service Organization when they act among themselves as the World Service Organization of Adult Children of Alcoholics.

Concept VII: The Annual Business Conference recognizes that the Articles of Incorporation and the Bylaws of the Adult Children of Alcoholics World Service Organization are legal instruments: that the Trustees are thereby fully empowered to manage and conduct all of the world service affairs of Adult Children of Alcoholics. It is further understood that our World Service Organization relies upon the force of tradition and the power of the ACA purse for its final effectiveness.

Concept VIII: The Trustees of the World Service Organization act in this primary capacity: with respect to the larger matters of over-all policy and finance, they are the principal planners and administrators. They and their primary committees directly manage these affairs.

Concept IX: Good service leaders, together with sound and appropriate methods of choosing them, are, at all levels, indispensable for our future functioning and safety. The primary world service leadership must necessarily be assumed by the Trustees of the Adult Children of Alcoholics World Service Organization.

Concept X: Every service responsibility should be matched by an equal service authority to be always well defined whether by tradition, by resolution, by specific job description, or by the Operating Policy and Procedures Manual and bylaws.

Concept XI: While the Trustees hold final responsibility for ACAs World Service administration, they should always have the assistance of the best possible standing committees, corporate

trustees, executives, staffs, and consultants. Therefore the composition of these underlying committees and service boards, the personal qualifications of their members, the manner of their induction into service, the systems of their rotation, the way in which they are related to each other, the special rights and duties of our executives, staffs and consultants, together with a proper basis for the financial compensation of these special workers, will always be matters for serious care and concern.

Concept XII: In all its proceedings, Adult Children of Alcoholics World Service Organization shall observe the spirit of the ACA Twelve Traditions, taking great care that the conference never becomes the seat of perilous wealth or power; that sufficient operating funds, plus an ample reserve, be its prudent financial principle; that none of the Conference members shall ever be placed in a position of unqualified authority over any of the others; that all important decisions be reached by discussion vote and whenever possible, by substantial unanimity; that no WSO action ever be personally punitive or an incitement to public controversy; that though the WSO may act for the service of Adult Children of Alcoholics, it shall never perform any acts of government; and that, like the fellowship of Adult Children of Alcoholics which it serves, the WSO itself will always remain democratic in thought and action. (More information about substantial unanimity is available on page 596 of the BRB.)

Serenity Prayer(s)

Traditional Serenity Prayer

God grant me the serenity
to accept the things I cannot change,
the courage to change the things I can,
and the wisdom to know the difference.

ACA Serenity Prayer (BRB Chapter 14)

God grant me the serenity
to accept the people I cannot change,
the courage to change the one I can,
and the wisdom to know that one is me.

ACA Secular Serenity Affirmation

Today I seek the serenity
to accept the people I cannot change,
the courage to change the one I can,
and the wisdom to know that one is me.

ABC Mantras That Work

As you contemplate your role as a Delegate, consider the following mantras to help you maintain your serenity... after all, the ABC is a business meeting, not a recovery meeting!

- ★ By taking care of my Inner Child, my adult will be more present
- ★ I will trust the process
- ★ I will listen to the opinion of others
- ★ I have the right to my own opinion
- ★ I will treat others with dignity and respect

- ★ I will be prepared
- ★ I will be honest
- ★ I will keep an open mind
- ★ I will be mindful of my tone when speaking