

## MEETING FORMAT

Hi! My name is \_\_\_\_\_. Welcome to the (day)\_\_\_\_\_ meeting of Adult Children of Alcoholics.

In this meeting we read “The Problem” or the “Laundry List.” You belong here even if your parents were not alcoholic if you identify with these common characteristics of adult children.

We meet here to share the experiences we had as children growing up in alcoholic or dysfunctional homes, how it infected us then, and the effect it has on our lives today. By practicing the 12 Steps, by focusing on “The Solution,” and by accepting a Higher Power of our own understanding, we find freedom from the effects of our childhood environment of alcoholism and family dysfunction. We identify with “The Problem” and learn to live in “The Solution,” one day at a time.

Please, let us have a moment of silence for all ACAs who have not yet found recovery, after which we will recite the ACA Serenity Prayer:

**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.**

Will someone please read:

- The Problem or The Laundry List
- The Solution
- The 12 Steps
- The 12 Traditions

Let’s go around the room and introduce ourselves by first name only, please.

We do not break for refreshments at this meeting, but you may help yourself quietly during the meeting to whatever refreshments are available. This meeting ends at \_\_\_\_\_ a.m./p.m.

If this is the first ACA meeting for you, please raise your hand and tell us your first name. We ask you to do this because we want to get to know you.

***Read only if Newcomer is present:***

This program is not easy, but if you keep coming back to these meetings, you will start to come out of denial. This will give you freedom from the past. You and your life will change.

Many of us could not recognize or accept that some of our current attitudes or behaviors result from our childhood experiences related to alcoholism or family dysfunction. Having not yet solved the mystery of our own selves, we often behave as adult children without realizing it.

By attending 6 meetings in a row at the beginning, and attending regularly thereafter, we come to know our real selves and learn to behave responsibly. We do this by identifying with the characteristics that we read in “The Problem” and “The Laundry List.”

In ACA, we learn to live in The Solution and choose to become our own Loving Parents. We come out of denial and share the pain of our childhood memories. We experience love and acceptance from members of our ACA group. We become aware that feelings of the past and present form a pattern; and we learn that the pattern can change. Newcomers get Recovery and Service Sponsors to assist them on a faster track of recovery.

So, please, keep coming back. Listen, learn, and, most of all, share your feelings.

It is now time for our 7<sup>th</sup> Tradition. Our 7<sup>th</sup> Tradition states, “Every ACA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.” Your contributions are used to pay the rent for this room as well as program literature, chips and medallions, refreshments, and fund ACA projects and activities.

Does the meeting Secretary have any ACA announcements? Does anyone else have other ACA-related announcements?

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***SHARING IN ACA read only if newcomers are in attendance.***

In ACA, if we do not share, we cannot heal.

It is important for newcomers to share no matter how haltingly, incoherently, or disorganized. Telling our stories out loud allows us to hear our problem, recognize it, and validate that truth.

What we share about depends on where we are in our recovery process. As time goes along, our sharing evolves. The first topic is generally what brought us to an ACA meeting. Following that our sharing takes on various functions.

1. In the beginning, we often wail, complain, cry, rant, rave, blame, and whine; this is a necessary stage that brings us out of denial. When we speak our thoughts aloud, we actually see we have a problem and what it is. Until we make our discomfort real by voicing it, we cannot recognize our problem so we cannot solve it.
2. When we start sharing our problems, feelings start to rise within us, and we begin to learn how to express them.
3. We describe how we overreacted to a situation and our feelings about it.
4. We describe our current problem and our feelings about it.
5. We trace our feelings about a current situation back to a similar problem we experienced as children, recognizing that neither have been resolved.
6. We talk about possible solutions to resolve the childhood problem and the current problem.
7. We commit ourselves to a plan of action to solve the past and present problems.
8. We share our healing as we progress.
9. Finally, we share on topics introduced by others; we describe our own problem, how it was rooted in the past, and how we resolved the past and present problems. In this way we affirm our own recovery and display for our fellows that recovery happens in ACA.

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***When it is time for Open Sharing, please read this CROSS-TALK statement.***

Everyone is encouraged to share. So that as many people as possible can share, please limit your sharing to 3 to 5 minutes, and, as a courtesy, we ask that everyone be given a turn during each part of our meeting. If you do not want to share, please say, "Pass", so we don't keep waiting for you to speak. Please, do not cross talk, distract from the speaker, or otherwise interrupt.

***OPEN SHARING:*** The meeting is now open for sharing.

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***CLOSING (Five minutes before the meeting is to close, ask for a volunteer to read "The Promises.")***

Will someone please read "The Promises?"

We sometimes have fellowship directly after this meeting. You are invited.

This is a fellowship of recovering adults intended to complement, not replace, other 12-Step programs. You are encouraged to attend your other 12-Step groups during the week to support your recovery journey.

Please respect the confidentiality and anonymity of each person here. We have trust and confidence that what we share with you at this meeting will remain here at this meeting. Who you see here, what is said here, when you leave here, let it stay here.

Will all who care to, join me in the ACA Serenity Prayer?