

LEADER'S GUIDE: ARA MEETING.

Please feel free to be creative and make the meeting “yours.” However, years of tradition on the basic format of the meeting should be followed. We have a very firm tradition of beginning the meeting precisely at 5:30 and not closing before 6:30. Only in exceptional situations should the meeting last longer than 6:30. If, at 6:30, only 2 or 3 people have not spoken, then they probably should be allowed to speak. If it has moved around the circle before 6:30, give people the opportunity for “2nd”s. But adhere to standard format, i.e., **do not let it turn into an unstructured discussion group.** Come early enough to check chair set-up, secure materials, and assign readers to start “How It Works”, Traditions, and Meditation. The group has made a decision to always use the actual exact dated meditation in The Language of Letting Go.

1. Let's begin this meeting with a few moments of silence followed by the Serenity Prayer
2. “My name is ___ and I am ___.” Read the Preamble.
3. Others complete “How it Works” (3 readers) & “Traditions.”
4. Do we have anyone here for the first time at **this** meeting? Explain this is an “Open Meeting.” Have them introduce themselves by first name and, briefly, why they are there.
5. Any other announcements?
6. Meditation. (As stated above, use the actual “today's date” meditation. You do not need to have a lengthy comment on the meditation, but should identify a “suggested” thought or sentence(s) to pursue. Ask for volunteer to begin. Someone will begin. But if not, pick someone.)
7. Explain how things will progress around group. Use your judgment.
8. Make any closing comments you choose.
9. Circle up. Hug. Lord's Prayer.
10. Gather up materials; put back in table drawer.

HOW IT WORKS

ADDICTIONS RECOVERY ANONYMOUS (ARA) ©

SERENITY PRAYER

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

PREAMBLE

Addictions Recovery Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength, and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem, which is their own addiction or the addiction of someone they love. It is our desire to help others who have the same struggle. The only requirement for membership is a desire to find recovery and serenity. There are no dues or fees for ARA membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions. ARA is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy; neither endorses nor opposes any causes. Our primary purpose is to find serenity through recovery and to help others who are searching for recovery.

Next Reader

HOW IT WORKS

Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path. Those who do not recover are people who cannot, or will not, completely give themselves to this simple program, usually men and women who are constitutionally incapable of being honest with themselves. There are such unfortunates. They are not at fault; they seem to have been born that way. They are naturally incapable of grasping and developing a manner of living which demands rigorous honesty. Their chances are less than average. There are those, too, who suffer from grave emotional and mental disorders, but many of them do recover if they have the capacity to be honest.

Our stories disclose, in a general way, what we used to be like, what happened, and what we are like now. If you have decided you want what we have and are willing to go to any length to get it - then you are ready to take certain steps.

At some of these we balked. We thought we could find an easier, softer way. But we could not. With all the earnestness at our command, we beg of you to be fearless and thorough from the very start. Some of us have tried to hold on to our old ideas and the result was nil until we let go absolutely.

Remember that we deal with addiction – **cunning, baffling, and powerful!** Without help it is too much for us. But there is One who has all power – that One is God. May you find Him now!

Next Reader

Half measures availed us nothing. We stood at the turning point. We asked His protection and care with complete abandon. Here are the steps we took, which are suggested as a program of recovery:

1. We admitted we were powerless over addiction – that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God, *as we understood him*.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became **willing** to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, **as we understood Him**, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others who suffer from the ravages of addiction and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

Next Reader

Many of us exclaimed, “What an order! I can’t go through with it.” Do not be discouraged. No one among us has been able to maintain anything like perfect adherence to these principles. We are not saints! The point is that we are willing to grow along spiritual lines. The principles we have set down are guides to progress. We claim spiritual progress rather than spiritual perfection.

Our understanding of addiction, and our personal experience before and after recovery, makes clear three pertinent ideas:

- a) That we were powerless over addiction and could not manage our own lives, or the lives of other addicted persons.
- b) That probably no human power could have relieved these addictions.
- c) That God could and would if He were sought. ©

ARA TRADITIONS

1. Our common welfare should come first: personal recovery depends upon group unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one authority: a loving God as He may express Himself through our group conscience.
3. Our group has but one primary purpose: to help those who want serenity and are seeking to find it through 12 Step recovery.
4. You are requested to not compare addictions, preach, or give advice but to share your personal experience, strength and hope about recovery. Keep comments short and to the point. This will provide an opportunity for all to share within the hour.
5. Our foundation is based on spiritual principles and is open to all persons, regardless of religious affiliation. It is inappropriate to give a religious testimonial, but your spiritual experience with a 12 step program is encouraged.
6. People in recovery normally do not dwell on "the problem." However experience has shown that you will not feel bonded with the group until you share "the secret" that has brought you here. Periodically along the way it is very healthy to share some details of either "advances" or "setbacks" in your recovery or the recovery of those you love. Please refrain from sharing anything that does not relate to recovery.
7. We are fully self-supporting through our own contributions. A basket will be passed. Contributions are strictly voluntary.
8. ARA has no opinion on outside issues. Views on such issues should never be expressed in a meeting.
9. Couples and family members may attend together, but are requested not to sit next to each other. They **must** refrain from making remarks to each other.
10. ARA is an open meeting. You are asked to use discretion. It is more appropriate to discuss some things with a sponsor or a counselor. Respecting boundaries is important to the health of the meeting.
11. **The** meeting starts promptly at 5:30 and will normally end at 6:30. Please make every effort to be seated for the opening Serenity Prayer and remain until the closing circle and Lord's Prayer. The "Meeting Before the Meeting" and the "Meeting After the Meeting" are very important parts of the total recovery process. Come early (not before 5) and stay late (no later than 7) whenever possible.
12. **This is a safe place!** Remember, who you see here, what you hear here, when you leave here, let it stay here. (Group response: Hear! Hear!)