

# Safety in Meetings

(Pgs 584-585 of ACA Big Book)

Our experience shows that ACA meetings are safe, affirming, and orderly. In rare instances, however, ACA groups have had to address the problematic behavior of a group member. This is not uncommon among the various Twelve Step programs. ACA wisdom offers a wealth of common sense actions, so that a group can maintain its safety while also not over reaching with exclusionary rules.

In addition to these suggestions below, please review Chapter Nineteen Twelve Traditions- to learn more about how ACA groups handle disruptive or bothersome situations. It is important to remember that all group members are responsible for group safety and order. Actions that address disruptive behavior should be taken by the group and with group support. Do not act alone in these situations. Ideas to address disruptive behavior in your group are:

1. Keep Tradition One in mind in all decisions your group would make about a disruptive person. The Tradition states: “Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon ACA unity”.
2. Two or more group members can ask the disruptive person to leave the meeting and return when he or she is willing to work on recovery. Ask the person to talk to a sponsor or consider getting a sponsor.
3. If the problematic behavior persists, ask the person to take a week or two break from the meeting.
4. If the person is disruptive and will not leave the meeting, escort him or her from the meeting if the person is not violent. Escorting is done by a group of meeting members instead of one member acting alone.
5. If the disruptive person becomes violent or threatening, shut down the meeting immediately and have all members depart for the common welfare.
6. Call the police if there is clear and present danger to lives, health, or property.