

## CONDUCTING THE MEETING

1. Good evening. This is the regular Monday evening discussion meeting of the 'INNER PEACE GROUP' of Adult Children Anonymous.

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am an Adult Child and your chairperson for tonight.

2. Will you join me in a moment of silence to reflect on the reasons we are here followed by the Serenity Prayer. May we have that moment now.

*( Chairperson Note: Please pause for reflection ) ...*

Serenity Prayer *(Chairperson Note: Very brief pause to prepare group to say prayer) ...*

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

3. A person qualifies for the ACA program if their family of origin is dysfunctional for reasons such as :
  - alcoholism,
  - drug addiction,
  - mental illness,
  - workaholism,
  - overeating,
  - sexaholism,
  - extreme religious positions
  - and / or gambling.

A person also qualifies if he or she identifies with the characteristics of the child of the addict or dysfunctional parent that are discussed in the meetings. It is therefore suggested that you attend a few meetings before deciding whether or not you qualify.

4. When everyone introduces themselves a little later in the meeting, those of you who have decided you qualify may indicate so by saying "I qualify".
5. \_\_\_\_\_ has offered to read the ACA Preamble tonight.
6. Many of us coming to these meetings were distressed and in some stage of unresolved grief. We felt that we had lost or given up so much in our lives, we had nothing more to give. We needed to understand what had happened to us as children. We needed our reality validated ... that how we felt was not just our imagination ! We really were finding life difficult to cope with.

7. In ACA we do not give up something. We go through a process of self-discovery and realize that we don't have to keep doing what we did as children in order to survive. To free ourselves from the pain of our past we need to go through an identification process and come out of our dream-like state, dropping layers of denial and our extreme need for control at whatever level is comfortable for us.
8. Some of us need to put some order to the many years of seeking answers in books, psychotherapy sessions, self-reliance experiences, conversations with friends and professionals who did not understand.
9. Today, we realize that it was all valuable and part of a growth experience that brought us to this new beginning. We now enter into the process of self-discovery. The Twelve Steps of ACA contain a solution for dealing with the dysfunction of our family of origin and its effect on our character.
10. In ACA we work through our own stages of grief and feel the feelings and emotions that we never allowed ourselves to express in our families. We do this by sharing "what happened" and "what's happening now" in a safe and loving family environment.
11. By recreating in the present, what happened to us as children, we can break the bondage of survival patterns which are holdovers from our traumatic childhoods, deal with unresolved problems in our past and learn to live full lives.
12. At this meeting you can expect to get in touch with emotions you have denied yourself until now. It may be fear, it may be anger, it may be unexpressed love, it may be all of these emotions and more.
13. If you have a simple, heartfelt desire for happy and effective living, then we hope you will join us as we give freely of what we have found. Adopt us as your family, we will support you as your brothers and sisters... and we won't let you down.
14. The ACA program is based on the Twelve Steps of AA with minor changes.  
\_\_\_\_\_ has offered to read the Twelve Steps.
15. \_\_\_\_\_ has offered to read the Twelve Traditions.
16. There are no dues or fees, the group is self supporting through our own voluntary contributions. (Chairperson Note: Pass around the envelope marked "Seventh Tradition")
17. It is suggested that newcomers who are recovering addicts or presently living with an active addiction problem in their home should first attend AA or Al-Anon meetings before starting an ACA program. Other newcomers might wish to do the same in order to become familiar with other Twelve Step programs. The ACA program is not meant to replace these programs, but rather to complement them.

18. \_\_\_\_\_ has offered to read the Problem as it pertains to ACA's.
19. \_\_\_\_\_ has offered to read the Solution.
20. To begin, we ask you to introduce yourselves by first name only as we go around the table. I'll start ...Hi, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I qualify. *(Indicate next person to continue)*
21. In the **sharing period** we avoid cross-talk. By cross-talk we mean any reply to an individual while he or she is contributing. This includes touching, giving advice, commenting, etc. We do this for a variety of reasons.

When we were growing up we felt that our opinions were not respected. No one listened to us. We were told that our feelings were wrong.

22. When we are sharing, we are allowing ourselves to get in touch with memories that are difficult for us to recall. These may concern issues that we have avoided for years and it is best to allow us to feel these experiences as they are presenting themselves to us. It is with a sense of love and respect that we accept the sharing that is offered.

As adults, we have become co-dependants. In other words we have become people who are accustomed to "taking care of" others. By acting this way we have avoided taking responsibility for our own lives.

23. \_\_\_\_\_ has offered to read the Daily Affirmation.
24. \_\_\_\_\_ has offered to read the Adult Child Characteristics
25. Before we start the sharing period it is important to be reminded that if the group runs out of things to say, it is not acceptable in this program to "throw the **sharing period** open for discussion". **The fellowship period after the meeting is intended for discussion.** When we come here we are given one hour for sharing and that is what we come to expect. If, after experiencing silence for a few minutes, the leader suggests that the step or characteristic be read again this will be in keeping with the purpose of the sharing groups.
26. Our program reading tonight is from either characteristic \_\_\_ (read the characteristic on whiteboard) or step \_\_\_ (read the step on whiteboard)  
I'll give you a minute to decide which one you'd prefer to read ...*(brief pause)*  
By a show of hands who would prefer to read the Characteristic ?  
By a show of hands who would prefer to read the Step ?  
I counted \_\_\_ for the Characteristic and \_\_\_ for the Step so we'll read the \_\_\_\_\_

27. We have the room until 9 o'clock so we should start to close the meeting at 8:45  
This gives us about \_\_\_ minutes for the reading and the subsequent sharing  
There are \_\_\_ members and if they each share for 5 minutes we'd need \_\_\_ minutes  
This would leave about \_\_\_ minutes for the reading  
(Chairperson note: repeat calculation for other than 5 minutes if required)  
By a show of hands do we stay as one sharing group ? \_\_\_  
By a show of hands who would prefer two sharing groups ? \_\_\_

Are there any volunteer(s) to chair the sharing group(s) ? \_\_\_\_\_  
( Chairperson Note: Please give volunteer(s) "Conducting Subgroup Meeting" info page) and  
indicate volunteer(s) should now take over and return by 8:45 pm)

## **Closing The Meeting**

28. Are there any announcements ?
29. ( Chairperson Note: if time allows you can read a spiritual message - Chairperson's choice )
30. In closing I would like to say that the opinions expressed here were strictly those of the person who gave them. Take what you liked and leave the rest. The things you heard were spoken in confidence and should be treated as confidential. Keep them within the walls of this room and the confines of your mind.
31. A few special words to those of you who have not been with us long. Whatever your problems, there are those among us who have had them too. If you try to keep an open mind, you will find help. You will come to realize that there is no situation too difficult to be bettered and no unhappiness too great to be lessened.
32. We are not perfect. The welcome we give you may not show the warmth we have in our hearts for you but after a while, you will discover that, though you may not like all of us, you will like us in a very special way - the same way we already like you.
33. Talk to each other, reason things out with someone else, but let there be no gossip or criticism of one another. Instead, let the understanding, love and peace of the program grow in you - one day at a time.
34. Will all who care to, join me in the closing prayer.