

12 Steps To Starting A Successful New Meeting

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| 0 | Decide on the type of meeting you would like to start: For example: Ready-Set-GO!!, 18 -week Step Study, closed meeting, or an open ongoing ACA meeting. The Study meetings are not registered with WSO, only with our Intergroup. Please read the pros and cons on appendix A for each type. |
| 1 | Locate a suitable meeting site: Assess and determine a short list of acceptable days and times as well as safe, affordable (ideally accessible) locations. Churches are ideal locations to begin your search; insurance may be required at a nominal cost. Remember to stay focussed on yourself and your needs first. |
| 2 | Commit to your weekly meeting for an entire year: It requires determination and work to establish a new meeting group. Don't give up! Keep coming back. It works. Be open to fellowshiping after your meeting: This may be a further learning opportunity to share between fellow travellers. |
| 3 | Obtain meeting materials: Develop and confirm a script, readings, topics, schedule, and initial service roles. The WSO also has a meeting binder that can be purchased through the Intergroup. |
| 4 | Register the new meeting with the WSO & Intergroup: Registering your new meeting at www.adultchildren.org will ensure the information is posted on our website. Intergroup will provide support and mentoring as requested. Please add our Intergroup identification number "IG558" and name "ACA Regional Intergroup-Greater Toronto and Area" to your application. Email acatorontofellowship@gmail.com with the listing info for our meeting list and website. |
| 5 | Inform potential ACA members about the meeting: Get the word out about your new meeting. A simple announcement about the time, place, & focus of the meeting in your local newspaper, a flyer in your community, as well as at the meeting location. Intergroup has a few options of meeting signs or design your own. This is not promotion, it is attraction through meeting notices. Intergroup will announce your new meeting in their meeting groups and will encourage our fellow travellers to come out and support whenever reasonably possible. |
| 6 | Start your ACA meeting: Begin the new meeting with a focus on ACA recovery and literature. Most new groups do best by having a discussion format that focuses on the ACA Laundry List, ACA Twelve Steps, ACA Pamphlets, or chapters from the Big Red Book. Intergroup provides a new meeting group with a gift of a BRB, Daily Affirmations Book, 25 welcome chips, and free pamphlets. A member from the new meeting support service group will attend the meetings once a month for the first year whenever reasonably possible to share their experience, strength and hope. All groups are autonomous. |
| 7 | <p>Offer service at the new meeting: Don't do this alone, most successful start-up groups have a core of 2-3 ACA members involved in starting the new meeting. Once your meeting is up and running ask your members to help out, it's their meeting now too.</p> <p>Service in ACA is suggested as an ACA recovery tool to break us free from isolation. We suggest do something you love to do that makes you feel good, be gentle and ensure you have balance. This will result in helping you understand the ACA program and deepening your own ACA recovery by working with other fellow travellers</p> <p>Service includes setting up the format of the meeting group, registering the meeting, volunteering to be Trusted Servant (for conducting the meeting), setting up the meeting space, participate in reading, cleaning up the space, being the newcomer greeter, service roles, starting the next step study, Intergroup Rep.</p> |

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| 8 | <p>First group business meeting: Hold your first group business meeting as soon as possible to elect Trusted Servants and determine the meeting format. It is suggested to have short monthly meetings (20-30 mins) thereafter. Consider having a reading topic on the Traditions or from the “Good Enough Group” Booklet before your business meeting. Trusted Servant roles include: Key Holders (to open and close the meeting location), Treasurer (to collect and secure the 7th Tradition collection and manage the finances of the meeting), and Secretary. Once the group is established, Literature & Intergroup Reps may be elected. Some of these positions will be held by the founders of the meeting for the first several months. They should be rotated when it is reasonable. They should be reimbursed for the start- up expenses as soon as reasonably possible. The secretary role can be broken down to several different roles. Check with Intergroup for additional business resources.</p> <p>Intergroup offers an ACA bank account under the Intergroup umbrella with BMO. We did this as meeting groups were reporting they could not establish an ACA bank account, only a personal account for their group. An authorization letter to the bank will be required with the treasurer full legal names(s) and the meeting group address for bank mailing purposes. All bank accounts are autonomous and private. There is no obligation to take this option. Email the Intergroup treasurer when you are ready and if interested: acatorontofellowship@gmail.com</p> |
| 9 | <p>Consider having literature and recovery chips available: The group may consider purchasing ACA literature, chips, & medallions for the meeting group and to sell. Intergroup makes these resources available to all meeting groups. There are welcome chips for newcomers, month and year medallions to celebrate your time in ACA.</p> |
| 10 | <p>Have regular business meetings: A healthy group conducts regular business meetings. These meetings serve to address the needs of the group as well as the opportunity to discuss any challenges the meeting may be experiencing. Intergroup has developed a business template to conduct the meeting and record the minutes. In the first year, whenever reasonable possible Intergroup will have a member from the new meeting support team come out and support you and your group. Consider having a business meeting trusted servant (chair) for the first 6-12 months and rotate afterwards.</p> |
| 11 | <p>Reach out and ask for help from Intergroup: Remember you are not alone. Intergroup is here to share our experience, strength, and hope to support the new ACA meetings establish healthy dynamics. Our groups are autonomous and we are here to support one another.</p> |
| 12 | <p>Be prepared for potential meeting issues: Each ACA meeting is autonomous in keeping with the Traditions. We use the Traditions to provide guidance to the group in the same way the Steps provide guidance to the individual. Some issues that may arise in a meeting include: crosstalk, lack of service, poor accounting of the 7th Tradition, rescuing others, feeling resentful, and a desire to change the ACA format, among others. There is a gentle and loving approach to addressing such issues and sooner rather than later. Sometimes they may be approached and resolved after a meeting or at a business meeting. The booklet “Good Enough Group” is a great booklet when talking about traditions and keeping the group healthy.</p> |
| <p>After your 1st year: the group may decide to celebrate their first anniversary with a gratitude session, cake, medallions etc. They may also begin participating in the WSO Annual Business Conference process; where all meeting groups can suggest changes to improve our program through a ballot and voting system. Let Intergroup know and we will provide more support as required and post your groups news on our website and announce in our meetings.</p> | |

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Appendix A:

Before a new ACA meeting is established you need to decide the type of meeting you wish to start...

Is your passion or need as the founder of starting a meeting going to be met with an 18 -week Step Study meeting or an open weekly meeting?

Do what feels right for you first. Our new groups have started both ways:

- i) First having a “Ready-Set-GO!!” or “Step Study” 18 week study then transitioning into an open weekly meeting
- ii) Starting an open weekly meeting and then later adding a study on a second night of the week

| | ACA Ready-Set-GO!! Meetings | ACA Step Study Meetings | ACA Open Discussion Meetings |
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| PROS | Introduces Newcomers and reconnects Old Timers to the ACA 12 Steps. The 12 Steps can be introduced in a 1 day workshop or over 5 – 6 weeks. | Builds healthy ACA recovery & experience. Step Study Meetings run weekly for 2 hours over an 18 week periods. | Immediate access to everyone to attend ACA meeting. There is no waiting list for newcomers. |
| | | Next step: Start a regular ACA meeting with core members after the Step Study is completed. | |
| CONS | | A “waiting list” for new members often happens after the 4 th week because the Step Study meeting closes after the 3 rd meeting to maintain group safety with sharing. | A potential delay to a Step Study in your local area. Little ACA recovery in the rooms initially. |

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The ACA Twelve Traditions

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on ACA unity.
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.
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.
4. Each group is autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or ACA as a whole. We cooperate with all other Twelve Step programs.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose – to carry its message to the adult child who still suffers.
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.
7. Every ACA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Adult Children of Alcoholics should remain forever non-professional, but our service centres may employ special workers.
9. ACA, as such, ought never be organized, but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. Adult Children of Alcoholics has no opinion on outside issues; hence the ACA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, TV, and films.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.