

Preparing for a Group Inventory

What is a group inventory?

Twelve Step groups take an inventory of themselves from time-to-time. This tool can give the group perspective on how the meeting is doing. It helps to show both strengths and weaknesses. This process can keep us on the road toward being an ever-safer group. It helps us to carry the ACA message of recovery.

Why have a Group Inventory?

Maybe only a few members are doing service in our group. Maybe newcomers attend one meeting, but never return. Possibly there are members who do not respect the meeting's boundaries, making the meeting feel unsafe. These problems may be easy to spot, but may be difficult to solve during the meeting or in a regular business meeting. Just as a Fourth Step inventory enhances recovery in our personal lives, a group inventory can enhance the health of our group.

Introduce the Inventory Idea to the Group

Bring copies of this document to your business meeting and suggest the group consider doing an inventory. If your group does not have regular business meetings, suggest scheduling one to discuss doing an inventory.

Like business meetings, inventory meetings are made safer by having a trusted servant facilitate in a fair and inclusive manner. Announce the inventory in advance—so that all interested members can make plans to participate.

It is important that all members feel welcome and respected. In accordance with our Second and Third Traditions, all members should have an equal opportunity to speak.

Setting Boundaries for the Process

It is important to set boundaries; healthy boundaries create safety.

Here is a list of boundaries to consider:

When will we meet? Will we meet before or after the meeting or at a separate time?

What will the length of each session be? How long will we meet? How many questions will we cover each time we meet?

Will there be a time limit on individual sharing? What will that time limit be?

How will we determine the speaking order? Will it be round-robin style, will the facilitator call on those with raised hands, or some other method?

Will we rotate the responsibility of facilitating?

Discuss crosstalk guidelines? Read ACA's guides to Sharing/ Crosstalk.

How often will we revisit this process of setting boundaries?

ACA has created many resources which are helpful to meetings:

Printed literature:

- *The Fellowship Text: Chapter 19, The 12 Traditions*
- *The Fellowship Text: "Handbook for Adult Children"*
- *"Crosstalk" booklet*
- *"The Newcomer" booklet*

On the Website, www.adultchildren.org:

- The Twelve Traditions
- The Twelve Service Concepts
- <http://www.adultchildren.org/member-BusinessMeetings>

Meeting Inventory Format

Please Note: Each meeting is autonomous and may adapt the format to meet its own needs.

Welcome everyone! My name is _____ and I will be leading our meeting inventory.

Please take a copy of the questions.

Please help me open this meeting with the ACA Serenity Prayer or The Serenity Prayer:

The ACA Opening Prayer

God grant me the serenity
to accept the people I cannot change,
courage to change the one I can,
and wisdom to know that one is me.

The 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.*

This group inventory is like a Fourth Step for our meeting. The intention is to gather information about how well we are fulfilling our primary purpose as stated in our Fifth Tradition: *Each group has but one primary purpose - to carry its message to other codependents who still suffer.*

We will use the list of questions to guide the discussion as we evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of our meeting. The secretary will take notes during the inventory for review.

In the interest of safety, please use “I” statements.

I will restate boundaries the group has decided to use relative to share times, etc. (see above “Setting Boundaries” section)

I will now read the first question and open the discussion.

Suggested Inventory Questions

1. How do we treat newcomers?
 - a) Are we welcoming?
 - b) Do we talk with newcomers before and after the meeting?
 - c) Are newcomers acknowledged during the meeting?
 - d) Do we give newcomers an overview of ACA? How?
 - e) Are phone/email lists available?
 - f) Do we practice safety in meetings with newcomers?
2. Are ACA's foundational documents read, as written, at each meeting? The Laundry List, The Solution, The ACA Twelve Steps, and The Twelve Traditions.
3. Does the meeting start and end on time?
4. If the meeting goes for fellowship (coffee, food) do we announce that everyone is welcome to attend?
5. Is sponsorship encouraged and modeled among our membership?
6. Are service positions such as Secretary, Treasurer and Literature, filled and regularly rotated?
7. Do we give chips/medallions?
8. Do we use, stock and sell ACA conference endorsed literature in our meetings? Do we respect ACA copyrights by refraining from photocopying literature? (Some information from the adultchildren.org website may be downloaded and copied, for use by meetings).
9. Do we elect a Group Service Rep (GSR) to represent our meeting in the wider ACA world, such as intergroup, our Western Region or WSO?
10. Does the privilege of leading the meeting rotate among all regular attendees?
11. Seventh Tradition
 - a) Are donations sufficient to cover the needs of our group?
 - Rent, or donation for use of meeting space

- Purchase of ACA literature
- Other expenses

- b) Do we send a portion of our Seventh Tradition donations to help support our Intergroup, Region and ACA World Service? Note: the amount of the donation does not matter. Supporting the fellowship regularly, no matter the amount, is a spiritual practice that benefits our group. If every group sent even \$5 each year to ACA, it would help immensely!
 - c) Do we announce service and support opportunities in committees, etc., throughout ACA's service structure?
12. Is crosstalk, giving advice, interrupting one another avoided? How do we deal with crosstalk if it happens?
 13. Are group conscience meetings (business meetings) held monthly to make decisions about treasury, rotation of service, literature inventory, meeting issues, etc?
 14. Is the group registered with ACA on the fellowship website, www.adultchildren.org? Is the listing updated yearly, or each time there is a change throughout a year's time?
 15. What is the group doing to carry the message of ACA recovery?
 16. Does the group practice anonymity by reminding members not to repeat who is seen or what personal sharing is heard at a meeting, and by omitting last names and professional titles?

Concluding the Meeting

That is all the time we have for this inventory today. Thank you for your participation in this process. Is there a volunteer to lead the inventory meeting next time?

Announce next inventory meeting time here.

Please help me close this meeting with the ACA Closing Prayer or Serenity Prayer.

The ACA Closing Prayer:

I put my hand in yours,
and together we can do what we could never do alone.
No longer is there a sense of hopelessness.
No longer must we each depend upon our own unsteady will power.
We are all together now, reaching out our hands
for power and strength greater than ours.
And as we join hands,
we find love and understanding
beyond our wildest dreams.

Keep Coming Back!

The Serenity Prayer:

*God grant me the serenity
to accept the people I cannot change,
courage to change the one I can,
and wisdom to know that one is me.*

ACA Benicia Group Inventory Worksheet

The following questions, compiled from 12 Step shared experience, may be useful in arriving at an informed group conscience as to how well the Group is fulfilling its Primary Purpose.

1. What is the basic purpose of the group?

2. What more can the group do to carry the message?

3. Is the group attracting ACA's from different backgrounds? Are we seeking a good cross-section of our community, including those with special needs?

4. Do new members stick with us, or does the turnover seem excessive? If so, Why? What can we as a group do?

5. Do we emphasize the importance of sponsorship How effectively? How can we do better?

6. Are we careful to preserve the anonymity of our group members and other ACA's outside meeting rooms? Do we also leave the confidences they share at meetings behind?

7. Do we take the time to explain to all members the value to the group of keeping up with the kitchen/housekeeping chores and other essential services that are part-and-parcel of our Twelfth-step efforts?

8. Are all members given the opportunity to speak at meetings and to participate in other group activities?

9. Mindful that holding office is a great responsibility not to be viewed as the outcome of a popularity contest, are we choosing our officers with care?

10. Are we doing all we can to provide an attractive and accessible meeting place?

11. Does the group do its fair share toward participating in the purpose of ACA's—as it relates to our three Legacies of Recovery, Unity, and Service?

12. What has the group done lately to bring ACA's message to the attention of professionals in the community—the physicians, clergy, court officials, educators, and others who are often the first to see ACA's in need of help?

13. How is the group fulfilling its responsibility to the Seventh Tradition? Intergroup? WSO?

14. Are there any changes we should consider to the meeting format, readings, secretary's script, trusted servant roles or the physical chair/table set up?
