

## APB Safety Card Update

### Third APB Town Hall on September 21, 2019

The draft submitted to the ABC for review and approval was approved by the APB working group on 3.23.2019 and published to the APB repository page: <https://acawso.org/2019/04/12/addressing-predatory-behavior-safety-card/>. The ABC conditionally approved this project, requesting a fellowship wide group conscience process for review of language used: <https://acawso.org/2019/05/04/2019-aca-annual-business-conference-summary/>.

Over the summer, two fellowship wide Town Hall calls were coordinated by the APB working group to solicit feedback on language used in the safety card draft. A first call on 6.22.2019 focused on language details. Summary and recording of this call are posted to the APB repository page: <https://acawso.org/2019/07/08/apb-town-hall-july-13th/>. A second call on 7.13.2019 identified four broader questions based on feedback received on the first call. These questions were discussed in greater depth, while continuing to keep the focus on specific questions of language. Recording and Notes of this second Town Hall call are presented below.

To incorporate feedback received at these two calls, the APB working group has now formed a “wordsmithing” sub-group. **A third Town Hall call will be scheduled on Saturday, September 21, from 12:30 pm to 2 pm EST, to present the final draft to interested members of the fellowship. As the first two calls, this call will be held via ZOOM. Join URL: <https://zoom.us/j/589205475>**

### APB Town Hall July 13, 2019

#### Meeting Recording and Notes

Audio Recording: [https://www.dropbox.com/s/vpbbtj25fmf45t4/GMT20190713-163116\\_APB-Safety.m4a?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/s/vpbbtj25fmf45t4/GMT20190713-163116_APB-Safety.m4a?dl=0)

#### ***Open Discussion:***

- wording is very soothing; section on anonymity is appropriate, can language be expanded to include discussion of suicide at meetings (“safety of one another”)
  - switching out “relationships” with “connections” – not all interpersonal connections are experienced as relationships and may still be experienced as problematic/dysfunctional
- 1. Working Definition of “Predatory Behavior” (paragraph 1)**
- reads definition predatory behavior, “a manner of behaving or acting that is overbearing or abusive in manner, which entails selfish motives” – softens sexual aspect of the topic;
  - determine scope, commitment to meeting safety vs. predatory behavior, not everything under meeting safety would also be predatory behavior; meeting safety less abrasive; maybe transition by identifying predatory behavior as one aspect of meeting safety
  - typical ACA definition, speaks about both victimizer and victim; definition read from phone search speaks only about victimizer instead; card is positive
  - insert reference to OLL when speaking about victimizer behaviors; address behavior rather than dynamic, call out behavior rather than blaming the person;

- victimizer, term brings up victim; prefers term perpetrator, as it doesn't bring to mind term victim and resulting negativity

***Moderator Question: How do people feel about use of the word "predatory?"***

- term "predator" feels concerning as a label, so does term "perpetrator" – concerned these labels may create backlash or resistance; reviewing other safety cards that may address same behaviors without using such harsh language
- (one of the authors of the initial draft) personally advocated for leaving out term "predatory" to avoid scaring people – language got so watered down that people were wondering "what's the point?"
- strong language is important, even though it feels uncomfortable; likes use of different words, suggests using terms "aggression" or "aggressive"
- terms feel very balanced; has been physically attacked and new to take care of himself; focusing just on predatory is too limited, broader issue of safety needs to be addressed
- predatory is strong, but valid; including other aspects of aggressive behavior seems positive
- stick with "predatory" to avoid manipulation around definitions
- insert footnote to explain use of the term, and necessity to call out behavior, although it is not so frequent that newcomers need to be scared away

***2. What role does a claim to authority within the fellowship play in these behaviors, and how can this be identified and addressed? (paragraph 2)***

- Predatory behavior linked to positions of power, particular issue in our program; next paragraph introduces concept of trust rather than designated authority for the purpose of resolving issues around this
- all members affected, not just newcomers; abuse of authority can happen at all levels of experience in the fellowship
- agree about predatory behavior targeting all members, not just newcomers; romantic relationship – change to "connection: to avoid interpretation "relationship" as only romantic; connections broader, some people manipulate people regarding sponsorship; many people interpret relationship as romantic/sexual, better to use the word connection instead
- shared experience of loss of meeting safety; agrees with romantic connotation of word relationship; use verbatim language about "predatory behavior being linked to position/abuse of power"
- dominating member often experienced as problematic, creating unsafety in situations of disagreement – for example when group conscience is dominated by an unhealthy/predatory member; also links word relationship to romance
- maybe to define predatory behavior more clearly will clarify that relationships affected are not just romantic in nature
- Power is core to any kind of aggression; suggesting stronger focus on solution; people take a risk to come out of isolation, solution is how to do that in a healthier way
- my IG has comments about card, thinks it's a great idea – more examples of what a predator is versus acting out traits, can a checklist be included, am I doing predator behavior, how can I get help if I think I am?

**3. *What actions are we suggesting for someone to take if they feel uncomfortable about a fellow's behavior? (paragraph 3)***

- honesty and openness; how to bring these into discussion
- this paragraph outlines steps to take very effectively
- recounts experience in her meeting with aggressive member; how to have group conscience not including this person; then, 2 people were able to address person, who expressed gratitude; was that approach appropriate?
- refer back to notion of "trust instinct." How about using ACA language – inner child instead of gut instinct; how about including remedies from recovery – call on loving parent to nurture, protect, and guide members in this process
- this paragraph shows safety net and support that is available; any event is unique, needs to be reviewed and assessed by group itself (group autonomy), this needs to be emphasize more clearly
- brought concerns to business meeting, felt like she was blamed for it; encourage business meetings to take input/concerns seriously, not addressing these issues leads to collusion and gossip, this needs to be emphasize; include para. About aggressive ebehaviors with different implications
- include term fellowship/community that we are trying to build, starting at group level and expand beyond that

**4. *How can we avoid blaming the perpetrator and encourage them to change their behavior instead? (all parts of the safety card)***

- two people closer to the individual, with empathy – first step, point out strengths they saw in the person; second step, address things that were said/done, how they affected the group; discuss how it related to Traditions and member safety; this was used in 2 situations successfully
- use dynamic, rather than behavior, look at receiving behaviors as much as at perpetrating behaviors
- naming, rather than blaming/shaming; gentleness, humor, love, and respect to address these behaviors
- card is about meeting safety – who feels more unsafe, the victim or the victimizer? Who are we addressing, victim or victimizer? Suggests more focus on victim and needs of victim
- "Please know that ACA community has compassion for all involved."
- victimizers behaviors as OLL expressions; address behaviors in framework of Solution
- business meeting vs. group conscience

***Burning Desires:***

- "whatever your problems, we have had them to" – keep language inclusive