

196	Yes	81%	Proposal 2021 – 8	Submitted by WEB0524, WEB0642, WEB0541, WEB0554, GBR0017	8
47	No	19%			
9	No Opinion				

Issue: We propose that That all “only” meetings catering for underrepresented or disadvantaged groups (i.e., LGBTQ+, PoC) as well as single sex spaces (women only, men only) be listed on the WSO meetings web site. In line with Tradition 4, we request that the autonomy of such “only” meetings in determining how they wish to be listed be respected. In keeping with Tradition 9, we also ask that the principle of non-organisation in ACA be observed.

Background: ACA Board of Trustees facilitated a series of Town Halls to develop traditions-based guidance to define language that would qualify a meeting to be registered with WSO and listed on the AdultChildren.org meeting list directory, as well as defining criteria for which meetings are removed. In the Town Hall notice, it is said that ACA acknowledges “there is value and a need for specialty/similar community meetings”. Indeed, the ACA Diversity Statement states that ACA “fully supports people experiencing additional identity-based trauma to explore common experiences and recover together the freedom to be their full authentic selves.” We are concerned that the right of such ‘only’ groups to self-organise is undermined by such debates. ‘Only’ exclusionary spaces have a long history in the 12-step community. In addition, the need for safe spaces in ACA is accentuated by the nature of the work undertaken as part of ACA recovery namely the sharing of deep trauma and the identification that facilitates this healing within such a space. Many ACAs experiencing additional identity-based trauma need protected ‘only’ spaces in which to share safely with those who readily identify with their experience. Protecting ‘only’ spaces honours Traditions 4 and 9 and enables us to carry the message (Tradition 5) most effectively to those experiencing additional identity-based issues.

Resources/Implementation: We believe that the implementation of this proposal is straightforward. Meetings that approach WSO to be listed as ‘only’ spaces on the AdultChildren.org website and register with WSO should be able to do so provided that such meetings are not unlawful. We believe that such an approach embraces the diversity that is the ACA community, while protecting vulnerable groups.

WSO Analysis: All meetings covered in this motion are listed in the ACA online meeting directory. In 2021, ACA World Service conducted a series of open “town hall” meetings after de-listing several meetings that might violate discrimination laws or create an impression that ACA supports intentional exclusion of underrepresented or disadvantaged groups. Given the legal complexities and wide range of fellowship opinion, a session is planned at the 2022 ABC to permit delegate discussion of all issues related to “only” meetings.

Comments: (Those greater than 50 words, per Ballot instructions, were truncated. Comments only referring to the group’s voting results were removed.)

- a) We support "only" spaces for oppressed groups (and men), to provide safety that serves the 5th Tradition, but we fear this proposal as worded might allow, say, a Women Only group that excludes trans women, which would conflict with the 5th tradition by alienating some ACAs.
- b) .. oppose .. reasons: 1. By allowing individual ACA groups to have autonomy over a matter that affects ACA as a whole (website listings), violates Tradition 4; 2. already on ABC agenda; 3. By

restricting which "only" groups are allowed, ... might violate anti-discrimination laws .. protecting freedom of speech.

- c) This isn't already this way?
- d) Outside issues
- e) Our group believes that it's very important that we as a group have a broad based inclusive space. Would like to see more indigenous input. It's so important for there to be a space to share openly without prejudice.
- f) Continue listing "only" meetings if focus is not derogatory or unlawful
- g) can't even discuss it yet. I am against discrimination. It is an honest personal opinion. Compared to the general public, I think the ACA is discriminatory. Please do not use "JAP" (a racist term) in your official registration number. Discussions can finally be had after it has been remedied.
- h) WSO is already handling this. THANK YOU!
- i) ...need for safe spaces, as that is what ACA is about - a safe space. These groups should be allowed to post their meetings, however, the classification of "ONLY" is non-inclusive and promotes segregation and allows group members to have judgment over others they view as being different ...
- j) This proposal has merit, but it sounds like WSO is already working on it. Thanks!
- k) This issue was already discussed last year. Our group feels strongly that these meetings should continue to be listed on the website and no change needs to be made at this time.
- l) The WSO is already looking into "only" meetings, to make sure no discriminatory practices are taking place. If some people need to be in an "only" meeting to feel safe, they should be able to do so, as long as they are not practicing discrimination.
- m) A direct question posed at a town hall was are the supporters of only groups stating that white, heterosexual men cannot have an only meeting. The answer was that "this would not be supported". There was further talk of white supremacy. This is against Tradition 10.
- n) each group is autonomous and as such can establish an "only" space is the higher power/ group conscience decides
- o) Our group feels this issue is very important and should be prioritized by the ABC