Bringing ACA to Hospitals, Prisons, and Therapist Offices

ACA ANNUAL WORLD CONVENTION
MAY 21, 2022

Adult Children of Alcoholics/Dysfunctional Families
Welcome and Today’s Agenda

- Thank You for Attending
  - ACA Members who want to learn about spreading the ACA message to hospitals, institutions, and therapist offices
  - Health Care professionals and others interested in learning about ACA
- H & I Trifold
  - Distributing ACA literature to hospitals, prisons, rehabilitation centers, psychiatric facilities
  - Starting a local H&I meetings at hospitals and institutions
- Therapist Trifold
  - Distributing ACA literature to therapists to pass on to clients and other professionals
- Question & Answer Session
Introductions

- Session is being recorded and we will make audio available
- Workshop Hosts
  - Rich (Public Service Committee Member)
  - Kathy (Public Service Committee Member)
  - Denise (Public Service Committee Member)
  - Sachi (Public Service Committee Member)
Public Services Committee

- Primary Purpose
  - Cooperate with meetings, Intergroups, and Regions to help support Public Information of ACA
  - Fellowship Outreach - serves to create and maintain open lines of communication and carrying the ACA message to other 12 Step fellowships worldwide: AA, NA, Al-Anon, etc.
  - Public Outreach - serves to carry the ACA message through outreach to institutions (educational and health) and corporations, including corporate wellness programs and media public service announcements.
Public Services Committee

- Our Mission

The primary purpose of Public Information is to provide information about ACA and its potential to help heal the effects of growing up in a dysfunctional family. The goal is to carry the ACA message to the general public, medical and mental health facilities and 12 step fellowships. These include doctor's offices, community centers, educational and professional communities, libraries, and corporations including wellness programs.

This is done through distribution of conference approved literature, public service announcements and participating in public events. Public Information cooperates with ACA meetings, intergroups and regions to share Public Information's experience, strength and hope globally.
Hospitals & Institutions

Primary Purpose
- To carry a clear message on the ACA steps, meeting attendance, sponsorship, and emotional sobriety
- To provide ACA literature to meeting attendees and H&I staff
- To make meeting information available and accessible

Role of WSO
- Sends free ACA literature directly to hospitals and institutions upon request
- H&I Committee assists with information and strategy to establish local H&I meetings (WSO does not set up meetings. They only provide literature when requested)
AN EMPHASIS ON SAFETY

- Be aware and adhere to the facilities’ rules and regulations as they relate to your interaction with prospective members.
- Some facilities will require that a facility staff person be present at each meeting. You may also require an adult sponsor or chaperone.
- For your safety, do not attend H&I facility meetings alone.
- All H&I facility meetings should be attended by a minimum of two ACA service members.
- Do not bring messages, correspondence or letters in or out of the facility.
- Avoid wearing flashy jewelry or bringing excessive cash into a facility.
- Never give money or gifts to any facility members, and refrain from accepting gifts from members—express your thanks in words.
- Do not give anyone within the facility your address or telephone number.
- Do not talk about employment or living arrangements.
- Take special care in understanding and adhering to any regulations and restrictions the facility may have regarding adolescent members of the facility.
- Do not provide transportation, jobs, housing, letters of reference, or other forms of assistance to members within H&I facilities.
- Women should work with women, and men should work with men. Deep work or other ACA recovery work.

WHY A HOSPITAL OR INSTITUTION MAKES A REQUEST

Someday, an institution will contact ACA asking for help to start a meeting there. This is a perfect opportunity for service, and an area intergroup, ACA members, or its H&I subcommittee can be instrumental in making this happen. The initial approach to starting a meeting in that facility should be made to your area intergroup or H&I subcommittee lead. Do not act alone; it is important for issues of both safety and unity to be coordinated before making an approach to ACA meetings inside H&I.

Before an ACA meeting takes place, ACA intergroup or area representatives interested in H&I service work should discuss with facility administration to determine proper procedures and expectations, and agree on any approval in writing. When you meet with H&I staff, bring ACA literature and discuss with your contact how ACA can benefit Adult Children within their population. Have the literature order form on hand and encourage the purchase of a supply of literature before the first meeting begins. If a facility is unable to purchase literature, contact your area intergroup or WSO for assistance.

Hospitals and Institutions

ADULT CHILDREN IN HOSPITALS AND INSTITUTIONS (H&I)

The theme of family disconnection is a progressive disease that forces some adult children to seek help in a treatment setting or psychiatric hospital. Other adult children are usually too afraid of the problems they have committed while acting out with addiction or codependency. These adult children often form an ACA meeting in their facility and ask for outside support.

Hospitals and Institutions are meeting venues. ACA meetings held in a treatment center, jail, prison or other facility that houses adult children. While there is a ACA involvement, there is no affiliation between ACA and the facility. Many members carry the ACA message into these facilities as part of their service work and personal program of recovery. As a result, many members of the ACA community deploy the message to the adult child wherever and whenever they are needed. Adult children in these facilities are grateful for the outside support. Many attend ACA meetings, in turn, they are reborn.

HOW TO START AN H&I MEETING

Hospitals and Institutions are usually sponsored by an ACA group or Intergroup. Upon occasion Intergroups and groups also supply information about ACA to hospitals and prisons. At the group level, ACA members ask new volunteers to attend or help form an H&I meeting. ACA members attending an H&I meeting should be working an ACA program by attending meetings, maintaining sobriety, and showing moral compactness.

WHAT QUALIFIES AS AN H&I MEETING?

The following meeting guidelines are shared by all ACA H&I Meetings.
- The meeting is not an ACA group but a service provided by an area H&I subcommittee or Intergroup.
- The meeting takes place in facilities where adult children do not have access to other ACA meetings.
- The meeting is one of the ACA meetings held in a facility.

WHAT AN H&I MEETING IS NOT

- An H&I meeting is NOT an open meeting.
- If you are confused about whether or not a meeting qualifies as an H&I meeting, please contact your H&I subcommittee, Intergroup or WSO.
- Provision of ACA literature to meeting attendees and H&I staff.
- Acceptance of meeting information and accessibility.

H&I MEETING RECOMMENDATIONS

- This is considered an H&I meeting and is to be carried out according to the guidelines above. Meetings may be sponsored by an ACA group or Intergroup.
- Do not forget to provide the message in the meeting to encourage and support the recovery of all in attendance.
- Provide contact information to members for further information and support.
- Ask the H&I group to contribute in some way to the message.

Trifolds available for purchase in sets of 10 for $2.00 from WSO website
  - 25 Questions: Am I an Adult Child?
  - The Laundry List
    - https://shop.adultchildren.org/collections/booklets-trifolds

Big Red Book
  - Prisons, jails, other secure facilities have strict guidelines
  - WSO will send BRB directly to these institutions

Workbooks
  - Pros/cons of sending workbooks without setting up an associated meeting
  - Principle of not working program alone
What Is an H&I Meeting?

- Not an ACA group, but a service provided by an H&I subcommittee or Intergroup
- Meeting takes place in facilities where adult children do not have access to other ACA meetings
- Meeting is closed to outside participation other than the ACA meeting leaders or chairpersons
- Not fully self-supporting or free of restrictions
- Not registered with WSO and does not collect 7th tradition
- Does not include sponsorship
How to Start an H&I Meeting

1. Contact local facilities
   - Are they willing to allow an ACA meeting?
   - What kind of credentials or training are volunteers required to complete?
     - Background check
     - Training/orientation
   - In-person versus zoom meetings

2. Ask for volunteers to chair meeting
   - Minimum of 2 volunteers per meeting
   - Core group of 2-4 volunteers is ideal (alternate weeks)
   - Consider 6 month or year-long commitment
3. Select an Institution
   - Consider gender restrictions in prisons, jails, etc. and gender of available volunteers
   - Long-Term Institutions
     - Prisons
     - Psychiatric facilities
   - Short-Term Institutions
     - Jails (months/less than a year)
     - Rehabilitation centers (30-90 days)
How to Start an H&I Meeting
Continued

4. Determine a Meeting Format

- H&I Panel – have 2-3 volunteer ACA members share their experience, strength, and hope; with or without Q&A session afterwards
  - Biweekly, monthly, quarterly, or at other intervals
- Typical ACA format – ACA readings, resident shares, etc.
  - Weekly or biweekly
  - With or without outside ACA volunteers present
How to Start an H&I Meeting
Continued

- 5. Start a local H+I committee at Intergroup level or group level
- 6. Volunteers get credentialed through the institution/facility
- 7. Order literature from WSO
  - hichair@adultchildren.com
  - 2-3 Big Red Books
  - Trifolds to hand out to attendees
  - 25 Questions: Am I an ACA?
  - The Laundry List
- Literature must be sent directly from WSO to prisons and other secure facilities
Safety Guidelines

- Work in pairs; do not attend meetings alone
- Comply with the facility’s rules and regulations
- Do not provide transportation, jobs, housing, letters of reference, or other forms of assistance
- Have a designated facility contact, to be present at meeting or available/on-call during meeting if any issues arise
- Avoid wearing flashy jewelry or bringing cash
- Do not give or receive money or gifts
- Do not provide your address, phone, or other personal information
- Do not bring letters or messages in or out of the facility
- Never fraternize or become romantically involved with a resident
- Do not sponsor a resident
Member Share – Rich
ACA: 14 TRAITS OF AN ADULT CHILD

1. We became isolated and afraid of people and authority figures.
2. We became approval seekers and lost our identity in the process.
3. We are frightened by angry people and any personal criticism.
4. We either become alcoholics, marry them or both, or find another compulsive personality such as a workaholic to fulfill our sick abandonment needs.
5. We lie from the viewpoint of victims and we are attracted by that weakness in our love and friendship relationships.
6. We have an unanswered sense of responsibility and it is easier for us to be concerned with other people’s problems than to look too closely at our own faults, etc.
7. We get guilt feelings when we stand up for ourselves instead of giving in to others.
8. We became addicted to excitation.
9. We confuse love and pity and tend to “save” people we can “fix” and “rescue.”
10. We are made up of “fob” feelings from our traumatic childhoods and have lost the ability to feel or express our feelings because it hurts too much (Denial).
11. We judge ourselves harshly and have a very low sense of self-esteem.
12. We are dependent personalities who are terrified of abandonment and will do anything to hold on to a relationship in order not to experience painful abandonment feelings, which we received from living with sick people who were never there emotionally for us.
13. Alcoholism is a family disease, and we became paranoics and look in the characteristics of that disease even when we did not pick up the area.
14. Panic alcoholics are reactors rather than actors.

**TESTIMONIALS**

“W’e used ACA personally and my life-long symptoms of anxiety and depression are now reduced.”

Gary S., M.D.

“I wish I had found this program 10 years ago.”

Krista K., ACA Member

“I prescribe ACA to all my patients with anxiety and depression.”

Judith M., M.D.

**ACA AND THERAPY (ACA Big Red Book)**

- Therapy with an ACA informed counselor can be a gateway to unparalleled levels of recovery.
- “Informed counseling is a must for clarity and progress.”
- “We encourage informed counseling to help the adult child accomplish the greatest level of emotional healing.”

**Source:** Adult Children of Alcoholics, 2006.

**TO GET STARTED...**

To find a meeting go to “Find a Meeting” on our website at: [https://adultchildren.org/meetings/search/](https://adultchildren.org/meetings/search/)

To order the Big Red Book of ACA email your request to: [reimands@adultchildren.org](mailto:reimands@adultchildren.org)

For More Information: [www.adultchildren.org](http://www.adultchildren.org)

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**Information for Health Professionals**

**Adult Children of Alcoholics/Dysfunctional Families**

**Help for your patient with Anxiety, Depression, PTSD and Other Effects of Childhood Trauma**

This ACA WSO publication is under fellowship review, with a goal of eventual Conference approval. Fellowship comments are invited. To submit feedback, please visit: [http://fellowship.adultchildren.org](http://fellowship.adultchildren.org)

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**ISN’T ACA JUST ANOTHER 12 STEP PROGRAM?**

ACA can be an adjunctive treatment and support system for many medical and mental health issues. ACA is unlike other 12 Step programs in that members are encouraged to look at dysfunction and trauma from childhood.

ACA has a premise that we were born whole and became fragmented due to family dysfunction and trauma. This dysfunction (abuse, neglect, addiction) is encoded into our bodies and mind as the false self—traumatic memories and flawed thinking.

**ABOUT ACA**

- **Primary Purpose:** Carry the message of recovery to all who suffer from being raised in an alcoholic or dysfunctional environment.
- **Primary Benefit:** ACA Recovery work helps your patients address the effects of family dysfunction and reclaim their Wholeness and True Self.
- Requirements for Membership: A desire to recover from the effects of family dysfunction.
- 3,000 meeting locations worldwide.

**WHAT WE DO IN ACA MEETINGS**

- We share what is happening in our lives, and how we are dealing with these issues in our recovery program. (i.e., share our experience, strength, and hope).
- We build a personal support network.
- We practice our recovery by supporting each other and being of service.

**ACA OFFERS PARTICIPANTS...**

1. Group meetings available worldwide, in person, by telephone and online.
2. The only requirement is a desire to heal from family dysfunction.
3. Supplementary to and not a replacement for professional counseling.
4. Members help each other heal in body, mind and spirit.
5. ACA has no dues or fees.
6. Meetings provide a welcome environment to participants from diverse backgrounds.
7. Maintenance of anonymity.

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**YOUR ROLE AS A PRACTITIONER...**

1. Encourage your patients to join a supportive environment to supplement your ongoing clinical care.
2. Support patients try the program for at least six visits.
3. **PROMISES OF THE PROGRAM**

1. We will discover our real identities by loving and accepting ourselves.
2. Our self-esteem will increase as we give ourselves approval on a daily basis.
3. Fear of authority figures and the need to “people please” will leave us.
4. Our ability to share intimacy will grow inside us.
5. As we face our abandonment issues, we will be attracted by strengths and become more tolerant of weaknesses.
6. We will enjoy feeling stable, peaceful, and financially secure.
7. We will learn how to play and have fun in our lives.
8. We will choose to love people who can love and be responsible for themselves.
9. Healthy boundaries and limits will become easier for us to set.
10. Fears of failure and success will leave us, as we intuitively make healthier choices.
11. With help from our ACA support group, we will slowly release our dysfunctional behaviors.
12. Gradually, with our Higher Power’s help, we will learn to expect the best and get it.

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[https://adultchildren.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/WSO_HandI_trifold_s_2color_LTR.pdf](https://adultchildren.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/WSO_HandI_trifold_s_2color_LTR.pdf)
Public Services – Health Professional Trifold

- Methods for Carrying the Message
  - ACA members providing the trifold to their therapist(s) and healthcare providers
  - Asking therapists to provide a copy to their peers (other therapists)
  - ACA members or Intergroups providing trifold copies to Hospitals and Institutions
  - Intergroups writing a letter and performing a mass mailing to local therapist and healthcare providers
Resources

- **H&I Guidelines**

- **WSO website to purchase literature**
  - [https://shop.adultchildren.org/collections/booklets-trifolds](https://shop.adultchildren.org/collections/booklets-trifolds)

- **Therapist Trifold**
  - [https://adultchildren.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/WSO_HandI_trifold_s_2color_LTR.pdf](https://adultchildren.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/WSO_HandI_trifold_s_2color_LTR.pdf)

- **Free Literature**
  - [https://adultchildren.org/free-literature-english-translated/](https://adultchildren.org/free-literature-english-translated/)
Resources Continued

- Public Service/H&I Committee Meeting
  - 2nd & 4th Mondays of the month @ 10 a.m. PST
  - Please send us your contact information in chat or send an email to psc@acawso.org or Hichair@adultchildren.org
Your Questions