

## **“RECOVERING COUPLES ANONYMOUS” MEETING GUIDELINES PHOENIX**

[Pass out How it Works, 12 traditions, Promises, Tools of Recovery and Unity Prayer  
(one per couple)]

[Ask a couple to lead the newcomer meeting and give them a newcomer format]

1. Are there any non-RCA announcements?
2. Welcome to the Thursday night meeting of Recovering Couples Anonymous. This is an open meeting. All couples are welcome. We hope you will find in this fellowship the help and friendship we have been privileged to enjoy. Let's open the meeting with a moment of silence, followed by the Serenity Prayer. In this group, the Serenity Prayer uses the words "we" and "us".

God, grant us the serenity to accept the things we cannot change, the courage to change the things we can and the wisdom to know the difference.

3. In order to show that the program works, would those couples with one year or more please raise your hands?
4. Would everyone please introduce yourself by your first name only and describe how you are feeling tonight. "I am [give your name] and I am recovering with [give your partner's name]. Tonight I am feeling [name your feelings]. Pass.

### **5. PREAMBLE**

Ours is a fellowship of recovering couples. We suffer from many different addictions, and we share our experience, strength and hope with each other so that we may solve our common problems and help other recovering couples restore their relationships. The only requirement for membership is a desire to remain committed to each other and to develop new intimacy. There are no dues or fees for membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions. We are not allied with any organization. We do not wish to engage in any controversy, neither endorse nor oppose any causes. Although there is no organizational affiliation between Alcoholics Anonymous and our fellowship, we are based on the principles of A.A. Our primary purpose is to stay committed in loving and intimate relationships and to help other couples achieve freedom from addicted and destructive relationships.

6. Tonight I've asked \_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_ to read "**HOW IT WORKS**".
7. I have asked \_\_\_\_\_ to read the "**TRADITION OF THE MONTH**".
8. I have asked \_\_\_\_\_ to read the "**TOOL OF THE MONTH**".
9. Are there any newcomers? Welcome. Tonight I've asked \_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_ to lead the newcomer's group. All new couples please join them after we read the Promises for an introduction to RCA.
10. Would anyone like their names added to the phone list?
11. Now we will practice the 7th Tradition, which states that Every RCA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions. If you are here for your first time, please be our guests. Our contributions go for rent and literature and for support of our World Service Organization.
12. Are there any RCA announcements?

### 13. SAFETY GUIDELINES

Anonymity and mutual respect of boundaries are essential to providing a healing experience to each of us. Most of us have had great difficulty establishing our boundaries, assertiveness and personal space. We are sensitive to cross talk, both verbal and non-verbal. Our purpose is not to give advice or to try to fix one another, but rather to create a safe environment where we can experience and share our pain. We have found that:

- It is OK to feel.
- It is OK to make mistakes.
- It is OK to have respectful conflict.
- It is OK to have needs and ask for them to be met.
- It is important to respect others (partners and others in the group).
- It is important to avoid self-righteous statements, baiting or button-pushing statements, case-building statements or the taking or sharing of another person's inventory.
- It is important to respect ourselves and to avoid self put-downs and self-pity. It is helpful to take ownership of our own story and to take credit for our progress and work in recovery.
- Anonymity is our spiritual foundation. Who you see here, what you hear here, when you leave here, let it stay here.

[Pass to your partner]

We have care and concern for ourselves and for our coupleships. We meet to both receive and provide the nurturing our relationships need to grow and endure. For that reason, it is important for us to act and speak respectfully to our partners and others. As we do this, we value the group and the relationships within it.

14. The format of these meetings changes each week during the month. The first meeting of the month is a Speaker/Anniversary meeting, the second meeting of the month is a Step Study, the third meeting of the month is a Reflection Meeting and the fourth meeting of the month is a Share & Feedback meeting. If there is a fifth meeting of the month, it will be a Share & Feedback meeting also. The format of tonight's meeting is:

#### a. SPEAKER/ANNIVERSARY

[If a speaker couple is not available, the group may read a story out of the RCA big book/reflection book].

The speaker's will have about ten minutes each to share. Now, let's welcome our speakers for tonight [state couple's names].

[After couple is done sharing],

Let's thank our speakers. [Clapping]. Do our speakers' have a topic for the group to share on?

We will now take a few moments to acknowledge those celebrating anniversaries and to thank those who have filled the service positions over the last month. Please join us for cake after the meeting. Is anyone celebrating an anniversary of 3 months... 6 months... 1 year or any yearly increments? [Ask the couple to come forward to receive their medallion and a hug if they wish]

We would like to acknowledge \_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_ for being the phone tree couple. [Clapping] [The couple who has had the suitcase will be the phone tree couple for the next month] \_\_\_\_\_ & I will be the phone tree couple for this month and we thank you for letting us be your leaders for the past month. [Clapping]. We would like to acknowledge \_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_ for being the refreshment couple. [Clapping]. Who would like to be the leaders for next month? Who would like to fill this position for next month?

[GO TO 15]

#### b. STEP STUDY

The step of the month is [for example, January would be step one]\_\_\_\_\_. Please take one pamphlet per couple. We will each read a portion of the step and pass it on. The step brochures are available for purchase after the meeting.

[When completed, GO TO 15]

**c. REFLECTION MEETING**

[The leaders' select a reflection out of the large silver/blue book, pages 93-122. One person reads the reflection, then partner reads "Our commitment today" and "My commitment today".]

[When completed, GO TO 15]

**d. SHARE & FEEDBACK**

After each couple shares, they must ask for feedback if they want it. Feedback is not about advice, recommendations, or therapy! When giving feedback we ask that you limit your comments to support and encouragement with a focus on feelings expressed or not expressed by the couple sharing. If you do not wish to give feedback simply state that you would like to pass. We use a timer in order to limit the sharing & feedback. There will be no more than 3 couples per group. Each couple will have a total of 20 minutes to share & have feedback. If there are 2 couples in a group, each couple will have 30 minutes to share & have feedback.

GO TO 15].

15. This is the time for sharing our experience, strength and hope. We face each other and share as a couple. The couple chooses who will go first. When he or she finishes, the other partner then shares. The primary purpose of this meeting is to create a safe atmosphere and environment to share our feelings as they relate to our issues as a couple. In sharing, we ask that you share your OWN feelings as opposed to placing blame on your part. Finally, this group will meet every Thursday night at this location from 7:30-9pm. Please do your part to make sure your meeting ends promptly. Crossroads requires us to be off the main floor by 9:15 pm. Please move to the patio area or to the stage if you stay past 9:15. Also, please keep your voices down to respect other groups in the room. Business meetings will take place immediately following the first Thursday of each month.
16. [If breaking up into groups, have Promises read first]. I've asked \_\_\_\_\_ to read the Promises.
17. [Skip this if staying in 1 group] We will now count off into groups of \_\_\_\_\_ [i.e., 5 couples stay in 1 group; 6-8 couples, 2 groups, etc. with the exception of share & feedback night-no more than 3 couples per group] Newcomers, please pass. Please close your group with the Unity Prayer.

### **THURSDAY NIGHT RCA MEETING RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CHAIRING COUPLES**

1. Arrive at meeting room at least 15 minutes early.
2. Set out the contents of the suitcase for people to look over (in the large manila folder plus books and tapes).
3. Post a meeting sign on the building's outside door and on the meeting room door.
4. Set up chairs in a circle-set up at least 20.
5. Distribute literature (see meeting guidelines).
6. Begin the meeting promptly at 7:30pm.
7. Check for any overdue library check-outs and ask at meeting or after meeting.

8. At the end of the meeting, if the treasurer is not present, count the money and place 50% in an envelope and then in the safe. Place the remaining money in the suitcase.
9. Place all chairs back in the rows.
10. Remove all signs and place them in suitcase.
11. Place all literature back in the suitcase.
12. Place any money collected from literature in the "literature money" envelope.
13. Find a couple to speak at the speaker meeting.

### **12th STEP NEWCOMERS MEETING FORMAT**

1. Leading couple gives all newcomers a phone list and a Newcomer's Brochure.
2. Couple who is leading the group shares their story. IE, What it was like, what happened and what it's like now. Talk about how RCA has helped your coupleship.
2. Ask the newcomers if they have any questions.
3. If time allows, do a model of sharing with each other--face each other and share as a couple [For example, Now we are going to share with each other so you can get an idea of how our meeting operates]. And then ask any of the newcomers if they would like to share.
4. Close with the Unity Prayer.

### **PHONE TREE CHAIR COUPLE RESPONSIBILITIES**

As a couple, call each couple on the list and ask how they are doing. If they haven't been to the meeting in awhile let them know that they have been missed and we look forward to seeing them again.

### **REFRESHMENT CHAIR COUPLE RESPONSIBILITIES**

Bring cake, coffee, plates and silverware to the first meeting of the month. Give receipt to the treasurer of the group for reimbursement.

### **RCA TREASURER/LITERATURE RESPONSIBILITIES**

Collect 50% of the 7th tradition donations each Thursday for treasury. 50% of each 7th tradition goes into the safe at Crossroads for rent.

Record the donations each week on the ledger (excluding the rent). Put the money in the manila envelope and keep it in a safe place--not the suitcase. If necessary, open a bank account.

Each month, determine if any literature (including medallions) needs to be ordered and order as necessary from the RCA WSO (World Service Office). Use the money from the treasury to purchase literature. Buy a money order and use the literature order forms which can be found in the suitcase.

Each quarter, assess how much money we have and contribute 60% of our balance to the RCA WSO. This needs to be done 4 times per year. You will receive a letter back from WSO thanking you for your donation. Share this letter with the group and place it in the manila envelope for safe-keeping. Reimburse the refreshments couple each month for their expenditures on refreshments and place the receipt in the manila envelope and record on the ledger.

\*\*Do not allow the treasury balance to go below \$35.