

Sponsorship/Step Guidelines Aimed at Groups

Groups will have more people working in sponsorship relationships if they frequently address the steps. Groups can have Step Meetings for the first meeting of each month. The Twelve Step Book can be put in the Newcomer's Welcome Packet, and the workbooks can be available for purchase at the meetings. The Twelve Step Book, pages on individual steps in TABW, and selections from the Twelve Step Workbook provide plenty of material. It is very convenient that there are twelve months in the year. With this in mind, groups may start with Step One every January. Each month the subsequent Step is studied, and this would be an appropriate time to emphasize the value of Sponsorship as well. During the meeting, the group leader may, for example, ask people who had worked the Fifth Step with a sponsor to read certain items and respond to them. This may promote more discussion relating to what had been said, and emphasize the value of Step Five.

One way for a group to approach sponsorship would be to have a special sponsorship meeting. The meeting leader could divide up the members into smaller groups of 4-6 members. Then each group would listen to readings from the Red book and the sponsorship literature and answer a question. What is a sponsor, who can be a sponsor, how do you choose a sponsor, & how to be a sponsor. Members can be encouraged to share how their sponsor has aided in their recovery.

An additional way to both encourage continued attendance and foster sponsorship would be to have greeters that take a new visitor under their wing. The position of greeter could rotate by month. By helping people form a personal connection quickly (through a greeter as described above) it might be easier for them to come back, and finally to choose a sponsor.

The FA Tools of Recovery lists the telephone as one of the tools. New members should always be called after their first meeting. The caller might ask if they would like to be called again or ask if there was a person, or a person with certain characteristics they'd like to get to know better. The caller could inquire as to the new members overall impression of the group-as minor procedural changes may be indicated to make the group appear more welcoming. Perhaps the caller could ask a named person to call the newcomer. It is recommended to always leave your phone number with the person you call. Everyone should have a phone list and be encouraged to use it. Each group should have their phone list in the newcomer's welcome folder. It is a good idea to suggest that he/she choose two or three people to call. The new member may find they are calling one person more than others and then decide to use that person as a sponsor.

As many groups have entertained prior discussions on the topic of Sponsorship, it goes without saying that we attend the meetings to support one another, yet try to avoid concentrating too much on the concerns of one person. Should a seasoned member have meaningful experience to share with a newer member after the meeting that would also be a means of support and further encourage the new member to return. Sponsorship eventually fits this need for individual attention when the member is ready. The sponsor can help the individual find the answers to their problems relating to their life and relationship issues.

One's relationship with his or her sponsor is all about the sponsee's problems; it is all about his or her growth. As an added bonus, the sponsor will derive benefit from the interaction as well. In comparison, our group meetings cannot be about one person, and they do not provide the needed intimacy that is often necessary for an individual to open his or her heart. If a sponsor and sponsee, or co-sponsors, meet weekly then both of them receive, perhaps, an hour of feedback on issues of concern.

The wonderful thing is that not only do sponsorship relationships encourage the growth of two individuals, but their growth adds to the value of groups' discussions. Sponsorship magnifies the constructive potential of Families Anonymous.