

GROWING YOUR FA GROUP:

A Tip List for New and Established Groups

Newly formed Families Anonymous™ (FA™) groups often find their first three to six months to be the most critical, while established groups can sometimes find their membership numbers dwindling and newcomers not returning.

This “tip list” is intended to provide basic guidance to help new groups get started and succeed and to help established groups revive and rejuvenate. Regardless of whether your group is new or old, you are certain to find this “tip list” helpful. Start using it at your very next meeting!

THE IMMEDIATE GOALS OF ANY GROUP ARE TO:

- 1. Fulfill members' needs*
- 2. Plan and lead meaningful meetings*
- 3. Use FA literature effectively*
- 4. Avoid destructive group behaviors*
- 5. Spread the word*
- 6. Seek help and resources*



1. FULFILL MEMBERS' NEEDS:

Are there ... posted signs leading to the meeting room?
 enough chairs?
 coffee and refreshments [optional]?

Is ... the room open 10 to 15 minutes before meeting time?
 FA literature (only) displayed?

Are ... members, newcomers, visitors, and guests greeted with a smile at the door?
 newcomers given a *WELCOME! Folder* (#6002) and some members' phone numbers?

Do we ... start and end our meetings on time?
 follow one of FA's suggested meeting formats?
 include all five of FA's Basic Readings?

Do we ... share our recovery stories of personal growth and change?
 convey a positive message of hope so that people feel encouraged to return?
 provide a safe place, free of shame or blame, where everyone is welcome to share their stories?
 let go of the past and focus on living today?
 refrain from giving advice of any kind?
 make time for *everyone* to speak if they wish to do so?
 refrain from crosstalk?
 respect and keep anonymity?
 explain *sponsorship*?
 encourage newcomers to return for at least six weeks?

2. PLAN AND LEAD MEANINGFUL MEETINGS:

- Do we ...**
- take turns leading meetings?
 - volunteer to lead meetings?
 - choose and prepare a topic when we do lead?
 - know about the several types of meetings?

[Note: For help in planning and leading meaningful meetings, refer to “Service: The Sixth Tool” in *The FA Tools of Recovery* (#5001) and “Tradition Four: Meeting Types” in *The Twelve Traditions in Action* (#5010).]

3. USE FA LITERATURE EFFECTIVELY:

- Do we ...**
- study and stay focused on FA’s Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions?
 - include a variety of FA literature in our group discussions?
 - have “topic meetings,” “Step meetings,” and “Tradition meetings” so that people can share their thoughts and feelings about particular challenges and can work on real solutions to their problems?

4. AVOID DESTRUCTIVE GROUP BEHAVIORS:

- Do we understand ...**
- why dominance by any member is unhealthy?
 - why we do not use outside literature?
 - why we do not counsel one another?
 - why we do not dwell on the past?
 - why gossip is inappropriate during or between meetings?
 - why we must be recognized by the leader before speaking?
 - why we do not discuss religion?
 - why group funds can be used in only limited ways?

5. SPREAD THE WORD:

- Do we ...**
- post our meetings on free local websites and community bulletin boards?
 - reach out to treatment centers, police, probation officers, lawyers, judges, and other potential sources of referrals?
 - download free public-information flyers and other materials from the FA website and distribute them in our community?

6. SEEK HELP AND RESOURCES:

- Have we ...**
- called or emailed the World Service Office for assistance?
 - sought guidance from FA’s Group Outreach Committee at go@familiesanonymous.org?
 - read FA’s *Group Secretaries Handbook* (WSOF-14)?
 - referred to *FA’s Twelve Traditions in Action* (#5010)?
 - used ideas in *The FA Tools of Recovery* (#5001)?
 - been in contact with nearby FA groups, our local intergroup (if one exists), or our national service board (NSB) (if we meet in a country outside the USA and an NSB exists in our country)? [See meeting directories on FA’s website.]



Families Anonymous, Inc. • 701 Lee Street, Suite 670, Des Plaines, IL 60016
(847) 294-5877 • fax (847) 294-5837 • (800) 736-9805 [USA only]
www.Familiesanonymous.org • Email: famanon@Familiesanonymous.org



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