

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 see 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:

In-Person Meetings:

- 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) being displayed?
- Are ...** members, newcomers, visitors, and guests greeted with a smile when they enter the meeting space?
 a *WELCOME! Folder* (#6002) and some members’ phone numbers provided to newcomers?

Virtual Meetings:

- Is ...** contact information for the meeting posted on the FA website?
 the virtual meeting room open 5 to 10 minutes before the start of the meeting?
- Are ...** members, newcomers, visitors, and guests greeted with a smile upon entering the virtual space?

All Meetings:

- 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 and, optionally, the day’s reading from *Today A Better Way* (#1015)?
 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 space, 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*, and encourage sponsorship relationships within our group?
 encourage newcomers to return for at least six weeks?

2. PLAN AND LEAD MEANINGFUL MEETINGS:

- Do we ...** rotate our meeting leaders, readers, greeters, secretaries, treasurers, set-up people, etc. so as to avoid dominance by any member(s)?
- volunteer *personally* to lead meetings and to take on other responsibilities on a rotating basis?
 - keep FA's Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions uppermost in mind throughout our meetings?
 - plan and lead various types of meetings (topic meetings, Step meetings, Tradition meetings) that inspire people to share their thoughts and feelings about particular challenges and to work on real solutions to their problems?
 - encourage the use of FA literature during our meetings?
 - know and share information about the different opportunities available for attending FA meetings?
 - in-person meetings? online meetings? email meetings? phone 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 ...** include a variety of FA literature in our group discussions?
- encourage members and newcomers to utilize the literature resources on the FA website, where we can:
 - order FA literature? download selected FA literature for free?
 - sign up to receive the *Serenity Messenger* newsletter and World Service Office updates electronically?

4. AVOID DESTRUCTIVE GROUP BEHAVIORS:

- Do we understand ...** why dominance by any member is unhealthy?
- why we use only FA literature?
 - why we do not counsel each other?
 - why we give up dwelling on the past?
 - why gossip is inappropriate during or between meetings?
 - why we wait to be recognized by the leader before speaking?
 - why we do not discuss religion?
 - why group funds can be used in only specific ways?

5. SPREAD THE WORD:

- Do we ...** post our meetings on the FA website, free local websites, and community bulletin boards?
- reach out to treatment centers, police, probation officers, lawyers, judges, health care providers, educators, clergy, community leaders, and other potential sources of referrals?
 - download free public-information brochures 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.]



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