

Part IV - Meeting Formats and Readings
C.A. Hospitals and Institutions
Suggested Meeting Format

Welcome to the _____ H&I Meeting of Cocaine Anonymous. My name is _____, I am an addict. Are there any other addicts present?

Would you please help me open this meeting with the Serenity Prayer.

Cocaine Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength, and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem, and help others to recover from their addiction. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using Cocaine and all other mind-altering substances. There are no dues or fees for membership, we are fully self-supporting through our own contributions. We are not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization or Institution. We do not wish to engage in any controversy, and we neither endorse nor oppose any causes. Our primary purpose is to stay free from cocaine and all other mind-altering substances, and to help others to achieve the same freedom.

We use the 12 steps of recovery because it has already been proven that the 12-step recovery program works.

It is a custom in Cocaine Anonymous to read a portion of the C.A. Storybook *Hope, Faith & Courage*, entitled "We Can Recover." I have asked _____ to read this for us.

(optional) It is a custom In Cocaine Anonymous to read a portion of the newcomer pamphlet entitled "Who is a Cocaine Addict?" or "Who is a C.A. Member". I have asked _ to read this for us.

This is an H&I panel speaker meeting of Cocaine Anonymous. We ask that you relate to the feelings being shared so that you can better identify with our stories. This will be followed by a question and answer period.

(Speaker(s) share for 10-20 minutes)

(Question and answer period at this point. If time permits, or no questions are forthcoming, you may distribute the "25 questions.")

(Five minutes before the meeting ends...) Our time is up. If anyone has any questions that went unanswered, please share them with our speakers after the meeting. (if this is an open H&I meeting, remind the people that free literature is available for patients or clients of the facility only.)

I would like to close by having _____ read the Promises, A Vision For You or Reaching Out.

After a moment of silence for the addict who still suffers, would _____ lead us in the prayer of their choice?

WE CAN RECOVER

Welcome to Cocaine Anonymous. We are all here for the same reason – our inability to stop using cocaine and all other mind-altering substances. The first step towards solving any problem is admitting that there *is* a problem.

The problem, as we see it, consists of an obsession of the mind and an allergy of the body. The obsession is a continued and irresistible thought of cocaine and the next high. The allergy creates an absolute inability to stop using once we begin.

We wish to assure you that there *is* a solution and that recovery *is* possible. It begins with abstinence and continues with practicing the Twelve Steps of recovery, one day at a time. Our program, the twelve steps of Cocaine Anonymous, is the means by which we move from the problem of drug addiction to the solution of recovery.

1. We admitted that we were powerless over cocaine and all other mind-altering substances-that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God, as we understood Him.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all people we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for the knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to addicts and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

Cocaine Anonymous is a spiritual program, not a religious one. In C.A. we believe each individual can choose a Higher Power of his or her own. In short, a God of his or her own understanding.

No one comes to Cocaine Anonymous to find God. We came into these rooms to get rid of a terrifying drug habit. Look around this room. You are surrounded by people who came as a last resort. We came into these rooms emotionally, financially, and spiritually bankrupt. We have experienced all sorts of tragedies as a result of cocaine, drugs, and/or alcohol. We have lived many of the same horrors you have, yet today we are free from the misery, terror, and pain of addiction.

Maybe some of us were worse off than you; maybe some of us didn't hit as low a bottom as you. Still the fact remains that, those of us who are recovering have come to believe that a Higher Power of our own understanding can restore us to sanity.

There is a solution; we can recover from addiction. One day at a time, it is possible to live a life filled with hope, faith and courage.



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The 12 Steps are reprinted with permission of Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. Permission to reprint and adapt the Twelve Steps does not mean that A.A. is affiliated with this program. A.A. is a program of recovery from alcoholism. Use of the Steps and Traditions in connection with programs and activities which are patterned after A.A. but which address other problems does not imply otherwise. The Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous: 1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol-that our lives had become unmanageable. 2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity. 3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him. 4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves. 5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs. 6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character. 7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings. 8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all. 9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others. 10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it. 11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for the knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out. 12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

Who is a Cocaine Addict?

Some of us can answer without hesitation, “I am.” Others aren’t so sure. Cocaine Anonymous believes that no one can decide for another whether he or she is addicted. One thing is sure, though: every single one of us has denied being an addict. For months, for years, we who now freely admit that we are cocaine addicts thought that we could control cocaine when in fact it was controlling us.

“I only use on weekends,” or
“It hardly ever interferes with work,” or
“I can quit, it’s only psychologically addicting, right?” or
“I only snort, I don’t base or shoot,” or
“It’s this relationship that’s messing me up.”

Many of us are still perplexed to realize how long we went on, never getting the same high we got at the beginning, yet still insisting, and believing — so distorted was our reality — that we were getting from cocaine what actually always eluded us.

We went to any lengths to get away from being just ourselves. The lines got fatter; the grams went faster — the week’s stash was all used up today. We found ourselves scraping envelopes and baggies with razor blades, scratching the last flakes from the corners of brown bottles, snorting or smoking any white speck from the floor when we ran out. We who prided ourselves on our fine-tuned state of mind! Nothing mattered more to us than the straw, the pipe, the needle. Even if it made us feel miserable we had to have it.

Some of us mixed cocaine with alcohol or pills, and found temporary relief in the change, but in the end it only compounded our problems. We tried quitting by ourselves, finally, and managed to do so for periods of time. After a month we imagined we were in control. We thought our system was cleaned out and we could get the old high again using half as much. This time, we’d be careful not to go overboard. But we only found ourselves back where we were before, and worse.

We never left the house without using first. We didn’t make love without using. We didn’t talk on the phone without coke. We couldn’t fall asleep, sometimes it seemed we couldn’t even breathe without cocaine. We tried changing jobs, apartments, cities, lovers-believing that our lives were being screwed up by circumstances, places, people. Perhaps we saw a cocaine friend die of respiratory arrest, and still we went on using! But eventually we had to face facts. We had to admit that cocaine was a serious problem in our lives, that we were addicts.

Cocaine Anonymous Hospitals and Institutions Committee



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WHO IS A C.A. MEMBER?

While the name “Cocaine Anonymous” may sound drug-specific, we wish to assure you that our program is not. Many of our members did a lot of cocaine; others used only a little, and some never even tried coke. We have members who drank only on occasion, those who casually referred to themselves as drunks, and others who were full-blown alcoholics. Lots of us used a wide variety of mind-altering substances. Whether we focused on a specific substance or used whatever we could get our hands on, we had one thing in common: eventually we all reached a point where we could not stop.

According to C.A.’s Third Tradition, the only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using cocaine and all other mind-altering substances. *Whatever you may have been using, if it led you to this meeting, you’re probably in the right place.* Over time, virtually every single one of us has realized that our real problem is not cocaine or any specific drug; it is the disease of addiction.

It can be tempting to focus on our differences rather than our similarities, but this can blind us to potential sources of support in our recovery. As we hear other members’ stories, the most important question to ask ourselves is not, “Would I have partied with these people?” but rather, “Do these people have a solution that can help me stay sober?” We encourage you to stick around and listen with an open mind.

With its all-inclusive Third Tradition and First Step, Cocaine Anonymous welcomes anyone with a drug or alcohol problem and offers a solution. C.A.’s Twelve Steps are not drug-specific, and Cocaine Anonymous is not a drug-specific Fellowship. It doesn’t matter to us if you drank or what type of drugs you used; if you have a desire to stop, you are welcome here!

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“We’re Here and We’re Free”™

C.A. World Service Conference-Approved Literature

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The Promises

If we are painstaking about this phase of our development we will be amazed before we are half way through.

We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness.

We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it.

We will comprehend the word serenity and we will know peace.

No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others.

That feeling of uselessness and self-pity will disappear.

We will lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows.

Self-seeking will slip away.

Our whole attitude and outlook upon life will change.

Fear of people and economic insecurity will leave us.

We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us.

We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.

Are these extravagant Promises? We think not. They are being fulfilled among us - sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly. They will always materialize if we work for them.

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A Vision for You

Our book is meant to be suggestive only. We realize we know only a little. God will constantly disclose more to you and to us. Ask Him in your morning meditation what you can do each day for the man who is still sick. The answers will come, if your own house is in order. But obviously you cannot transmit something you haven't got. See to it that your relationship with Him is right, and great events will come to pass for you and countless others. This is the Great Fact for us.

Abandon yourself to God as you understand God. Admit your faults to Him and to your fellows. Clear away the wreckage of your past. Give freely of what you find and join us. We shall be with you in the fellowship of the Spirit, and you will surely meet some of us as you trudge the Road of Happy Destiny.

May God bless you and keep you—until then.

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Reaching Out

I made it into this Program because someone else worked their Twelfth Step on me. Someone passed it on to me. Someone was out there after they got clean and sober, caring about others. I need to never, ever forget that. Had they simply gone on with their lives and forgotten about people like me who were still using and suffering, I wouldn't be here today. My gratitude begins with that fact. It is with gratitude in mind that I reach out to others, especially the newcomers. I need to have them in my life. That is where my spirituality begins.

For me, spirituality comes from caring about others. I have found that the more I focus on improving the quality of the lives of others, the less I am into myself and my will. I feel a freedom and peace from within. The gifts I am beginning to receive in my life are greater than I could have ever imagined.

Something else I have done is that I have forgiven myself. I have forgiven myself for being an addict. I have forgiven myself for all the damage I did to my life, to my physical health, and to my career and finances. But most of all, I have forgiven myself for all of the: horrible, negative and unloving things I have felt about myself. It was not until I offered and accepted my own forgiveness; that I was truly able to grow in my sobriety.

Excerpted from Page 127 of Hope, Faith & Courage, Stories from the Fellowship of Cocaine Anonymous.



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