



**From: National Capital Area ACA Intergroup**

**To: National Capital Area ACA Members**

**Date: 6/2/18**

**Subject: Addressing Inappropriate Behaviors**

### **What Can Meetings Do?**

Per Tradition 4, individual meetings have the autonomy and authority to address members' behavior at or around meetings. Individual meetings can take appropriate measures to protect their members, especially newcomers, and to empower all members of the fellowship to recognize and resist inappropriate advances, should they occur.

***Meetings can address inappropriate behavior occurring in or around meetings through the group conscience process.*** All members, including newcomers, should be encouraged to bring concerns about this type of behavior to the regularly scheduled business meeting, and/or to call an ad-hoc group conscience in accordance with the guidelines outlined in the Big Red Book (BRB, p.594-5).

If problematic behavior persists, groups may decide via the group conscience process to

- Have *Meeting Safety* and/or *Predatory Behavior* be a topic for the Business Meeting
- Hold a Group Inventory regarding the group's status on prevalence, prevention, and addressing Predatory Behaviors.
- Have 2-3 home group members discuss with the offending member after the meeting.
- Suspend offending individuals from attending (BRB, p.585).
- Speak with the meeting space (clubhouse, church, etc.) about the concerns, as these spaces usually have their own policies
- If deemed warranted, contact Police (BRB p.585, p.611)

For guidelines and suggestions on how to understand and handle Predatory Behavior within the context of an ACA meeting, you may find it helpful to refer to the following:

- a. BRB p.349: "What is the Thirteenth Step?"
- b. BRB p.571: Handbook for Adult Children, "Newcomers and 13<sup>th</sup> Stepping"
- c. BRB p.247: Step Nine. "Sexual Compulsivity"
- d. The "13th Step and Safety in ACA" trifold from the Lone Star Intergroup (see link below)

For guidelines and suggestions on how to maintain safety in meetings in the face of any type of disruptive behavior, you may find it helpful to refer to the following sections in the BRB:

- a. BRB p.584: Safety in Meetings
- b. BRB p.489: Chapter 19. "The Twelve Traditions of ACA"
- c. BRB p.607-11: Issues for Meetings, Anonymity, Autonomy, Accountability

## **What Can Individual Members Do?**

It is the shared responsibility of all home group members to keep your meeting safe. We suggest you be mindful of predatory behaviors, particularly toward newcomers, and outline the following steps you may take to address them:

- Leave any situation that makes you feel uncomfortable. You do not need to apologize or explain.
- Talk to your sponsor and/or network about your concerns.
- If you feel safe to do so, be direct with the person whose behavior you are uncomfortable with: name the behavior and tell them how you want to be treated instead.
- Review the ACA “Bill of Rights” on p.3 of the Toronto Intergroup’s newcomer packet at <http://acatoronto.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Newcomers-Package-Updated.pdf>, especially
  - “I have the right to say NO without feeling guilty”
  - “I do not have to apologize or give reasons when I say NO.”(Note: Similar ACA “Bills of rights” are available online, produced by other ACA Intergroups)
- Bring it to
  - the group conscience of the affected meeting(s)
  - Intergroup (see end of this letter)
  - the meeting space (clubhouse, church)
- Review relevant literature, in particular
  - Sections of the BRB cited elsewhere in this letter
  - A first-hand account of the behavior in question from a local member (Karin S), attached as *#metooACA.pdf*
  - The “13th Step and Safety in ACA” trifold from the Lone Star Intergroup at <https://app.box.com/s/g0lrichyxcl4jwnsgnsgx67fzesnjh9c>
- Confront your friends if they engage in predatory behavior if you feel safe doing so.
- If you feel safe to do so, interrupt a situation that you suspect is making someone else uncomfortable. This maybe be enough to redirect someone’s inappropriate behavior. We acknowledge that this may be somewhat of a judgment call. Be mindful of playing vigilante or rescuer.
- Remember: Anonymity is not a shield from surfacing misconduct. If you want to name names for the benefit of the meeting, we suggest not doing so directly in the meeting sharing time, but rather by talking to your sponsor and/or network, and, if you feel it appropriate, bringing it to the group conscience.