

SUGGESTED PARTICIPATION MEETING FORMAT

Welcome to the (_____) meeting of Cocaine Anonymous. My name is (_____) and I am an addict. Are there any other addicts present? Welcome! Not to embarrass you, but so that we could get to know you better, will those of you in your first 30 days of sobriety please let us know who you are? Would you please stand and state your name and your disease?

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 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 achieve the same freedom.

We use the Twelve Steps of recovery because it has already been proven that the Twelve-Step recovery program works.

It is a custom in Cocaine Anonymous to read either a portion of Chapter Five from the "Big Book" of Alcoholics Anonymous, entitled *How It Works*, or *We Can Recover*, taken from the C.A. "Storybook." I've asked (_____) to read for us.

The Twelve Traditions are to the group what the Twelve Steps are to the individual. I've asked (_____) to read for us.

(OPTIONAL: It is also a custom to read *Who is a Cocaine Addict?* or *Alcohol*. I have asked (_____) to read for us.)

(OPTIONAL: LEADER QUALIFIES FOR 5-10 MINUTES) This is a 1½ hour participation meeting. We encourage newcomers to ask any questions they may have regarding the program and recovery. Please do not share if you have had any drugs or alcohol in the last 24 hours. There is no cross-talk at this meeting, and all questions should be directed at the speaker. Please limit your sharing to 3-5 minutes. Who would like to start?

(FIVE MINUTES BEFORE COFFEE BREAK) We are fully self-supporting through our own contributions. At this time we will observe the 7th Tradition. Newcomers need not feel obligated to contribute. Please remain quietly seated while the baskets are being passed.

(AFTER BASKETS ARE COLLECTED) We will now have a 5 minute coffee break.

(AFTER COFFEE BREAK)

(OPTIONAL) We give chips at this meeting for 30, 60 and 90 days, 6 and 9 months, 1 year, 18 months, and 2 or more years of continuous sobriety – free from all mind-altering substances. Please keep your sharing brief so that we may have time for participation afterward. Is there anyone here in their first 30 days of sobriety who wishes to take a newcomer chip? 30 days? 60 days? 90 days? 6 months? 9 months? 1 year? 18 months? 2 or more years?

We give a cake for every 365 days of continuous sobriety. We have (_____) birthdays.

Now we will continue with participation.

(TEN MINUTES BEFORE THE MEETING ENDS) Our time is up. If you have any questions that went unanswered, or if you feel the need to share, please introduce yourself to someone after the meeting and exchange phone numbers. We are all here to help. Are there any secretary's announcements?

(AFTER SECRETARY'S ANNOUNCEMENTS) I would like to close by having (_____) read *The Promises*, *A Vision for You* or *Reaching Out*.

After a moment of silent meditation for the addict who still suffers, would (_____) lead us in the prayer of his/her choice?



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SUGGESTED STEP STUDY MEETING FORMAT

Welcome to the (_____) meeting of Cocaine Anonymous. My name is (_____) and I am an addict. Are there any other addicts present? Welcome! Not to embarrass you, but so that we could get to know you better, will those of you in your first 30 days of sobriety please let us know who you are? Would you please stand and state your name and your disease?

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We use the Twelve Steps of recovery because it has already been proven that the Twelve-Step recovery program works.

It is a custom in Cocaine Anonymous to read either a portion of Chapter Five from the "Big Book" of Alcoholics Anonymous, entitled *How It Works*, or *We Can Recover*, taken from the C.A. "Storybook." I've asked (_____) to read for us.

The Twelve Traditions are to the group what the Twelve Steps are to the individual. I've asked (_____) to read for us.

(OPTIONAL: It is also a custom to read *Who is a Cocaine Addict?* or *Alcohol*. I have asked (_____) to read for us.)

It is the format of this meeting to read from the *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* of Alcoholics Anonymous. This is followed by a discussion of the reading. Tonight we are on Step _____.

(LEADER READS STEP) We will now go around the room and each read a paragraph.

(AFTER READING OF THE STEP) We are fully self-supporting through our own contributions. At this time we will observe the 7th Tradition. Newcomers need not feel obligated to contribute. Please remain quietly seated while the baskets are being passed.

(AFTER BASKETS ARE COLLECTED) We will now have a 5 minute coffee break.

(AFTER COFFEE BREAK)

(OPTIONAL) We give chips at this meeting for 30, 60 and 90 days, 6 and 9 months, 1 year, 18 months, and 2 or more years of continuous sobriety – free from all mind-altering substances. Please keep your sharing brief so that we may have time for participation afterward. Is there anyone here in their first 30 days of sobriety who wishes to take a newcomer chip? 30 days? 60 days? 90 days? 6 months? 9 months? 1 year? 18 months? 2 or more years?

We give a cake for every 365 days of continuous sobriety. We have (_____) birthdays.

We now have time for participation. We ask that you limit your sharing to your experience, strength and hope as it relates to the Step that was read. If you have not taken the Step, we welcome you to ask any questions regarding this Step. We also ask that you not share if you have had any drugs or alcohol in the last 24 hours. There is no cross-talk at this meeting, and please limit your sharing to 3-5 minutes. Who would like to start?

(TEN MINUTES BEFORE THE MEETING ENDS) Our time is up. If you have any questions that went unanswered, or if you feel the need to share, please introduce yourself to someone after the meeting and exchange phone numbers. We are all here to help. Are there any secretary's announcements?

(AFTER SECRETARY'S ANNOUNCEMENTS) I would like to close by having (_____) read *The Promises*, *A Vision for You* or *Reaching Out*.

After a moment of silent meditation for the addict who still suffers, would (_____) lead us in the prayer of his/her choice?



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HOW IT WORKS

Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path. Those who do not recover are people who cannot or will not completely give themselves to this simple program, usually men and women who are constitutionally incapable of being honest with themselves. There are such unfortunates. They are not at fault; they seem to have been born that way. They are naturally incapable of grasping and developing a manner of living which demands rigorous honesty. Their chances are less than average. There are those, too, who suffer from grave emotional and mental disorders, but many of them do recover if they have the capacity to be honest.

Our stories disclose in a general way what we used to be like, what happened, and what we are like now. If you have decided you want what we have and are willing to go to any length to get it—then you are ready to take certain steps.

At some of these we balked. We thought we could find an easier, softer way. But we could not. With all the earnestness at our command, we beg of you to be fearless and thorough from the very start. Some of us have tried to hold on to our old ideas and the result was nil until we let go absolutely.

Remember that we deal with cocaine—cunning, baffling, powerful! Without help it is too much for us. But there is One who has all power—that One is God. May you find Him now! Half measures availed us nothing. We stood at the turning point. We asked His protection and care with complete abandon.

Here are the Steps we took, which are suggested as a program 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 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 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.

Many of us exclaimed, "What an order! I can't go through with it." Do not be discouraged. No one among us has been able to maintain anything like perfect adherence to these principles. We are not saints. The point is, that we are willing to grow along spiritual lines. The principles we have set down are guides to progress. We claim spiritual progress rather than spiritual perfection.

Our description of the addict, the chapter to the agnostic, and our personal adventures before and after make clear three pertinent ideas:

- (a) That we were addicts and could not manage our own lives.
- (b) That probably no human power could have relieved our addiction.
- (c) That God could and would if He were sought.

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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.
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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 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 into 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 TWELVE TRADITIONS

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon C.A. unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for C.A. membership is a desire to stop using cocaine and all other mind-altering substances.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or C.A. as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the addict who still suffers.
6. A C.A. group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the C.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every C.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Cocaine Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. C.A., as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. Cocaine Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the C.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, television and films.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

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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 other drugs, 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.

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ALCOHOL

Alcohol is a mind-altering substance in liquid form. Many people don't realize it is no different from cocaine or other drugs in its ability to lead to addiction. One drink is never enough, just as one hit, fix, pill or snort is never enough. We are masters at combining and substituting one drug for another to get high. Many of us never felt that alcohol was part of our problem.



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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 of 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 out there using and suffering, I wouldn't be here today. My gratitude begins with that fact. It is with that 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.



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