

# Back to Basics A.A. Groups

## Suggested Guidelines

Even with more than 500,000 members of A.A. sober today as the direct result of taking all Twelve Steps in the Back to Basics A.A. Beginners' Meetings and with more than 6,000 A.A. meetings held each week throughout the United States, Canada and around the world, there are still some in the recovery community who are not familiar with or who are misinformed about our life-saving work. Therefore, we will attempt to put in writing some guiding principles so that, if you are approached by someone who doesn't understand what Back to Basic is, you can easily answer their questions and hopefully alleviate any apprehension they may have about this time-tested and highly successful A.A. meeting format.

### **WE BELIEVE IN THE SOLE PURPOSE OF AN A.A. GROUP**

At Back to Basics A.A. Beginners' Meetings we implement, to the best of our ability, the "sole purpose" statement made by Bill W., our New York City co-founder, and approved three times by the A.A. General Service Conference. We acknowledge and affirm that taking people through the Twelve Steps is "the sole purpose of an A.A. group."

*"Sobriety—freedom from alcohol— through the teaching and practice of the Twelve Steps is the SOLE PURPOSE of an A.A. group. Groups have repeatedly tried other activities, and they have ALWAYS failed. . . . If we don't stick to these principles, we shall almost surely collapse. And if we collapse, we cannot help anyone."*

Bill W., *The A.A. Grapevine*, February 1958  
(Affirmed as a guiding principle of A.A. and approved by the A.A. General Service Conference in 1969, 1970 and 1972.)

## **WE PRACTICE ALL TWELVE TRADITIONS**

At Back to Basics A.A. Beginners' Meetings we practice all Twelve Traditions while taking attendees through the Twelve Steps using the "Big Book" of Alcoholics Anonymous. The long form of the Twelve Traditions was published in *The A.A. Grapevine* in April 1946, so the Traditions were in place at the time the A.A. Beginners' Meetings became an integral part in our 50-75% recovery rate.

## **THE BACK TO BASICS A.A. MEETING FORMAT HAS THE SAME "CONFERENCE APPROVAL" AS EVERY OTHER A.A. MEETING FORMAT**

Back to Basics is nothing more than an A.A. meeting format from the mid 1940's. It was used by many of the A.A. pioneers to take newcomers through all Twelve Steps in four, one-hour sessions. It is a format that was approved by many thousands of A.A. Groups in the 1940's and 1950's and has been approved by more than 5,000 A.A. meetings and groups today.

The General Service Conference does not approve A.A. meeting formats. Each A.A. group decides upon its meeting format based upon the group conscience of its members. There are many A.A. meeting formats—none of them are "conference approved" or conference disapproved.

## **REGISTER YOUR BACK TO BASICS A.A. GROUP WITH THE GENERAL SERVICE OFFICE**

Many Back to Basics A.A. Beginners Meetings are hosted by A.A. groups that use their existing group name and number. Others operate as "stand-alone" groups.

If you are a "stand-alone" group, we suggest you register as an A.A. Group with the General Service Office in New York City. You can download the registration form from the website, [www.alcoholics-anonymous.org](http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org). At the main page, click on, "Services to Members." At that page, click on, "AA New Group Form." It only takes a few minutes to fill in and return the form to the General Service Office at Grand Central Station, P.O. Box 459, New York, NY

10163. You will be issued an A.A. Group Service Number in about thirty days.

Some Back to Basics A.A. Beginners' Meetings have registered with GSO using something other than "Back to Basics" in their group name. This is understandable because there are already thousands of groups registered as "Back to Basics" that are NOT A.A. Beginners' meetings. The name of the Group isn't important—what is important is saving lives.

Some of the Back to Basics A.A. Beginners' group names that have been registered with GSO are "Back to the Big Book Group," "Back to the 1940's Group," "Take Twelve Group," "Big Book Step Group," "Here Are The Steps We Took Group," "Old Fashioned A.A. Group," etc. Whatever name you choose, please send your General Service Representative to the District Meetings and Area Service Assemblies so your group conscience can be heard within the General Service Structure.

## **REGISTER YOUR GROUP WITH THE LOCAL INTERGROUP OR CENTRAL OFFICE**

Local Central or Intergroup Offices provide many valuable services to the A.A. meetings and groups in the area. One of the services they perform is to publish a local A.A. meeting list. The *A.A. Guidelines for Central or Intergroup Offices* state that they are to list "all groups in the community that want to participate."

To help insure that your group is listed, add your A.A. Group Service Number to your Central Office or Intergroup registration form. Send your Intergroup or Central Office Service Representative to the monthly meetings so your group conscience can be heard at the local level.

## **URGE NEWCOMERS TO TAKE THE STEPS "QUICKLY AND OFTEN."**

Many Back to Basics A.A. meeting leaders have found it beneficial to explain to everyone attending the four, one-hour sessions that recovery is an ongoing process, and that the phenomenal

success of the “original” Beginners’ meetings was predicated on remaining involved for a minimum of three months. During this ninety day period, A.A.’s took the Steps again and again, guided others through the Steps, and helped lead the meetings.

## **USE A BACK TO BASICS MEETING LEADER GUIDE TO CONDUCT THE A.A. BEGINNERS’ MEETINGS.**

The Back to Basics Meeting Leader Guide is designed to be used to conduct the A.A. Beginners’ meetings. It contains the format for the four one-hour sessions and handouts that can be distributed to all attendees. By removing the yellow insert from the cover of the three-ringed binder, or by turning it over so the writing is hidden from view, the binder becomes completely anonymous.

In addition to the Back to Basics Meeting Leader Guide or Guides, please display a copy of the Fourth Edition of the “Big Book” at the presenters table. Announce that the “Big Book,” is the only book you will be quoting from during the four, one-hour sessions. We respectfully ask that you NOT use the Back to Basics book to lead the Beginners’ meetings.

To make copies of the handouts, remove the masters from the plastic sleeves. Run the masters through a copy machine and return them to the sleeves. If the masters become worn, damaged or lost, call or e-mail us and we will gladly send you replacement copies.