

ACA PUBLIC INFORMATION

In this Public Information effort, Intergroups and groups have a number of options, including, but not limited to, assembling packets of information for mailing or personal distribution, preparing flyers, open meetings, events, and free public information forums (media such as TV, radio, websites, newspapers, phone directories, etc.).

PACKETS OF INFORMATION

ACA Information Packets can be assembled from ACA WSO Conference Approved literature, which has been written and reviewed by the fellowship. An ACA Information Packet may include one or several items, as the group can afford, such as a Fellowship Text, an ACA Twelve Step Workbook, tri-folds such as “Am I An Adult Child,” “ACA Essentials,” “ACA Is…” and/or booklets such as the “Identity Papers” and “Newcomer’s Booklet”. ACA Conference Approved Literature is available from the ACA WSO website: www.adultchildren.org

Note: So that packets are not discarded, it may be a good idea in some cases to first send a letter or an email to the prospective recipient to confirm that they are interested in receiving ACA complementary information.

If mailing an ACA Information packet, a cover letter should accompany it that introduces the sender, gives the reason for the correspondence, and asks the recipient to please consider distributing the enclosed items to their network of colleagues or posting them in their places of business. Depending on the group’s resources, they can offer to send more packets upon request, or direct the recipient to contact ACA WSO to purchase additional items. A sample cover letter is provided in this tri-fold.

If presenting an ACA Information Packet in person, an introductory conversation might start with the fact that ACA is an independent Twelve Step and Twelve Tradition program for those raised in an alcoholic or an otherwise dysfunctional family. This, followed by your offer of the packet of information, may be sufficient. If you are asked questions about how the Program works, please remember that you are speaking only for yourself and not ACA as a whole. Sharing your personal experience, strength and hope will likely be the safer course.

FLYERS

Intergroups and groups may create flyers that contain information about a specific meeting or all meetings in their local area. The flyer might also include some

information describing the type of meeting(s) listed, whether closed or open, and what that means.

OPEN MEETINGS OR EVENTS

Some groups may decide to host a special open meeting or event as a way of sharing ACA information with the public. These gatherings are usually coordinated by a selected team of trusted servants from a single group, several groups, an Intergroup or a regional service group. There is no standard way of hosting such an event. However, it is important to note that these events are open to the public and that the usual understanding of anonymity and confidentiality do not apply. Thus all participants at open ACA events must be advised that what they share at the event will not be treated as confidential. People from the media may be invited to attend open ACA events and be asked not to take pictures or ascribe any quotes to specific individuals. Since this is an ACA event, typically only ACA speakers are allowed to give their experience, strength and hope. Some events have sold and/or offered free ACA Conference Approved Literature as a way of sharing information with the public.

MEDIA

Some may find it suitable to use public service time on their local television or radio stations to provide general information about the ACA Program. So long as no person’s anonymity is broken at the level of press, radio, TV or film and only general information is posted, this might be a way of informing the public. In this digital age, any of the assorted electronic means can be used to share our message provided that no one person is identified as an ACA member. As stated in Tradition Twelve, anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all of our traditions ever reminding us to place principles before personalities. Anonymity has its place in the digital era, too.

Some groups have listed their meetings under ‘Support Groups’ in their local telephone directories, including local meeting dates and times.

As we reach out to the general public, we are always very respectful of the wishes of those we are making contact with. If they do not want to distribute or post ACA information, we humbly thank them for their time and respectfully honor their requests.

SAMPLE COVER LETTER

(Date)

To Whom It May Concern:

RE: Adult Children of Alcoholics®/Dysfunctional Families

We are writing on behalf of a (local meeting or Intergroup) of Adult Children of Alcoholics®/Dysfunctional Families (ACA, aka ACoA) because of your program’s focus and the possible aid that ACA may give the people you work with and serve.

Founded in 1978, ACA is an independent Twelve Step, Twelve Tradition program of recovery for adults raised in alcoholic or otherwise dysfunctional families. For more than 40 years, ACA has helped adults raised in dysfunctional families heal from their past and live responsibly as adults.

To familiarize you with the ACA program, allow us to highlight a few core ACA concepts and beliefs:

- ACA believes that children are infected with the disease of alcoholism or family dysfunction during their childhoods, and they recreate the effects in their adult lives. Children in these kinds of families acquire a model for external and internal addiction which they act out in their adult lives.
- The impact of alcoholism or family dysfunction is multi-generational. A child who is exposed to traumatic childhood experiences presents a false self to the world to feel safe and buries the True Self to survive the terrorizing onslaught.
- As adults, when confronted with adult situations, they unconsciously regress to a stage in their childhoods. Thus, the ACA literature discusses such topics as alcoholism, external and internal addiction, generational dysfunction, PTSD, dissociation, dependency, codependency, grieving, depression, obsessive compulsion, behavioral addiction, incest, molestation, and regression as some of the consequences of being raised in an alcoholic or otherwise dysfunctional family.

ACA members take responsibility for their lives and do not blame their circumstances on their caregivers or childhood experiences. The only requirement for ACA membership is the individual’s desire to recover from the effects of being raised in an alcoholic or otherwise dysfunctional family. ACA suggests to its members that they read ACA literature, attend ACA meetings, and practice ACA’s Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. ACA members learn to reparent themselves with gentleness, humor, love and respect. ACA members aim to achieve wholeness and have an awakening of their spirit. ACA does not align itself with any religions, programs, or philosophies, and does not accept any outside donations.

Please find enclosed complementary samples of ACA literature that you are invited to copy and disseminate to your colleagues and clients as you deem appropriate. If you would like more information or to purchase additional materials, please visit www.adultchildren.org. We hope this information is useful to you, your colleagues, and those you serve. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

A service by (a local ACA meeting or Intergroup)

Encl.: Complementary ACA Literature.

ACA PUBLIC INFORMATION SERVICE

This tri-fold is intended to give ACA Intergroups and ACA groups guidance on providing information about ACA to the general public. This brief overview is not meant to be exhaustive. There are as many ways of disseminating information publicly as there are ways of carrying the ACA message individually. We hope that the information given here will provide some general ideas and guidelines that will allow our Intergroups and groups to carry out this important ACA service. If you happen upon a unique set of circumstances, please remember that your group's autonomy is limited by any actions that may affect other ACA groups or ACA as a whole. Let your informed group's conscience be your guide.

ACA's Eleventh Tradition states:

“Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, TV, films, and other public media.” Our Fifth Tradition tells us “Each group has but one primary purpose – to carry its message to the adult child who still suffers.”

As our fellowship reemerges, Intergroups and groups want to share our life-giving message with other Adult Children in their communities. While there is probably no greater way of carrying the message than to personify our program in our personal actions, reaching out to other Adult Children through public information is a very important aspect of ACA service that we can provide so that others may recover from the effects of growing up in an alcoholic or otherwise dysfunctional family. We would recommend, therefore, that before undertaking this activity, the individuals doing this service work assure themselves that they have taken the Twelve Steps and have a firm understanding of the Twelve Traditions. A list of the Traditions follows for easy reference.

THE TWELVE TRADITIONS OF ACA

TRADITION ONE: Our common welfare should come first, personal recovery depends on ACA unity.

TRADITION TWO: For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority – a loving God as expressed in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern.

TRADITION THREE: The only requirement for membership in ACA is a desire to recover from the effects of growing up in an alcoholic or otherwise dysfunctional family.

TRADITION FOUR: Each group is autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or ACA as a whole. We cooperate with all other Twelve Step programs.

TRADITION FIVE: Each group has but one primary purpose – to carry its message to the Adult Child who still suffers.

TRADITION SIX: An ACA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the ACA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.

TRADITION SEVEN: Every ACA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.

TRADITION EIGHT: Adult Children of Alcoholics should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.

TRADITION NINE: ACA, as such, ought never be organized, but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.

TRADITION TEN: Adult Children of Alcoholics has no opinion on outside issues; hence the ACA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.

TRADITION ELEVEN: Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, TV, films, and other public media.

TRADITION TWELVE: Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

The Twelve Traditions are reprinted and adapted with permission of Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc.

Public Information



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Dysfunctional Families
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