

## **Guidelines for Chairpersons of Back Porch Meetings**

Thank-you for your service. We appreciate your time and effort on behalf of Back Porch Meetings and AA. The following are some guidelines that we ask that you follow. Our collective experience has shown that these “tips” and guidelines will help to ensure a positive, group-conscience approved meeting please read and follow the guidance provided.

**Prior to the start of the meeting:** (this is usually done about 10 minutes before the meeting starts with whoever is regular and shows up)

- *Chairpersons are asked to be prepared with a topic prior to the meeting; using AA source materials such as a page or step from the big book AA or other AA Conference Approved literature. If you are uncertain about topic and literature, please talk to your sponsor for guidance. Please also prepare yourself with any Group or AA related announcements.*
- Ask or arrange for someone to Co-Host with you to help keep out Zoom bombers and to help mute people who forget to mute and lower hands (virtual).
- Have two other members who can read for you: “How it Works” from p58 in the book *Alcoholics Anonymous* and the 12 Traditions that can be found in the back of the 4th edition or online.
- Ask someone to close out with a prayer like the Serenity or 3rd step prayer too.
- Select your topic and reading from AA literature. Be prepared to share it in the chat in the meeting, page number, source, topic. For example, “Freedom from the Bondage of Self. p63. *Alcoholics Anonymous* book” If you can copy and paste the whole paragraph you use that’s great too and list the source.

### **A few Tips for chairpersons:**

During the meeting:

- It is the Chairperson’s role to use the format and the principles of AA to help make a meeting run smoothly. But sometimes things happen, if someone starts talking about outside issues, you must gently remind them that this is an AA meeting and we don’t bring in outside issues. Also, if someone is going far over

time give a gentle reminder to please wrap up. Its advisable to use discretion and consider the size of the group.

- We refrain from commentary on 'shares" or crosstalk. Experience has shown that as chairpersons we remain neutral and respectful of all. A simple 'thank you for sharing" is sufficient then call on the next person to keep the meeting moving along.
- Look to your newcomers. Try to make sure they feel welcome and that phone numbers are offered to them. Sometimes the most scared and confused we were was walking into our first few AA meetings.
- Some of the Things that we You or your co-host may place these links in the chat for members:

<https://backporchmeetings.com/>

<https://form.jotform.com/202275218376153> for Attendance Certificate

The primary texts used in AA can be found online for free here:

[https://www.aa.org/pages/en\\_US/read-the-big-book-and-twelve-steps-and-twelve-traditions](https://www.aa.org/pages/en_US/read-the-big-book-and-twelve-steps-and-twelve-traditions)

#### MEETING CHAIRING Instructions and Tips for chairpersons (In blue/*italicized*)

- We ask that our chairpersons stick to the format approved by group conscience.
- We ask that the chairperson be in the virtual room about 10-15 minutes prior and to stay for 10 – 15 minutes after for fellowship and to answer any questions newcomers might have.
- A chairperson should refrain from giving advice and focus instead on recovery through AA, a higher power and the solution found in AA.
- Be mindful of using "WE" unless stated in the format. Its best to speak from the "I" perspective and this will encourage others to do the same.
- This meeting believes strongly in our singleness of purpose and as such requests that the chairperson will use AA conference approved literature for their

Commented [JD1]:

Commented [JD2]: Is this an instruction to a chairperson for the format of the meeting or is it a suggestion. Where does this come from? Why is it here? Is this from conference approved literature?

Commented [JD3]: I am not going to disagree with what is a good practice...however...IS it an instruction

topic. "This is AA General Service Conference-approved literature" and it is most often found on the copyright page of the literature.

Lastly, Thank You for your service in chairing a meeting of the back porch. We look to the responsibility statement that says I am responsible, when anyone anywhere reaches out for the hand of AA for that I am responsible. Our experience over time has shown that following a few simple steps is key but to retain our humility in remembering that we are but a servant of the group and that the meeting will always be guided by the loving hand of a power greater than ourselves.

If you have ANY questions about how to chair effectively and in keeping with AA traditions, please reach out to your sponsor, or trusted servants of this group such as Sprout, Andrea, John, please feel to call or text prior to your .service commitment.