

The MA Service Manual includes information about many of these positions. Meeting officer positions have suggested term limits. Rotation ensures that *everyone has the chance to serve and prevents the concentration of power among a limited few*. We remember that *humility is the spiritual essence of anonymity*.

Business Meetings, Informed Group Conscience, and Group Inventories

Business Meetings are held on a periodic basis. They are an opportunity to vote on meeting procedures and formats, financial matters, and the election of officers. All meeting officers should attend, and all group members are encouraged to participate.

When a meeting makes decisions, we seek an *informed group conscience*. This is an expression of the members' collective desires rather than a dominant opinion or simple yes/no count. *Informed* means that pertinent information has been studied, and that all points of view have been given equal consideration. We make a special effort to seek unanimity, if possible, before the group takes definitive action.

Group Inventory is the exploration of how well we are fulfilling our primary purpose. We examine our Twelve Traditions, one at a time, and determine how well our group is adhering to these principles.

Our Financial Contributions

Every MA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.

(MA Tradition Seven)

As MA members, we take responsibility for our recovery as well as our financial obligations. There are no dues or fees for membership. Everyone is welcome to attend regardless of their financial status.

Our group may have expenses such as rent; copies of literature, phone, and meeting lists; and refreshments. We "pass the basket" to give everyone a chance to help support our group.

After expenses are covered (it is wise to keep a small prudent reserve), remaining funds are sent to the District for the services it provides. The District, in turn, sends its surplus to MA World Services. Some meetings divide their contributions between the District and MA World Services. MA does not accept outside contributions. This ensures that we remain indebted to no one, and that we remain true to our primary purpose. We are a spiritual, not a financial or political organization.

Fellowship and Socializing

Socializing often takes place before or after a meeting. It helps us develop a support group of clean and sober friends. It is a chance to deepen communication and explore concerns which may not have been discussed thoroughly during our meetings. Deep and lasting friendships often result. We make special efforts to always welcome newcomers into our groups. We avoid getting stuck in cliques and excluding anyone.

Starting an MA Meeting

Starting a meeting is a serious commitment. A few dedicated members must be prepared to "be there" for months as you gain a healthy core of committed members.

To start an MA meeting, all you need are two or more addicts and a place to meet. You can get a Starter Kit, which includes literature, suggested meeting formats, and other supplies, by contacting MA World Services Outreach Trustee. You'll need to get the word out in your community about your meeting. Being mindful of our Traditions, you may wish to circulate flyers, put ads in local papers, contact local hospitals and counseling agencies, or post flyers at local businesses.

If you are in an existing district, send a representative to the monthly District Service Committee meeting for assistance and supplies. Service manuals and copies of our book, *Life with Hope*, can be ordered from *A New Leaf Publications*.

The MA Meeting and the Home Group



MARIJUANA ANONYMOUS

A Twelve Step Program of Recovery
for Marijuana Addicts

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What is MA's Primary Purpose?

Each group has but one primary purpose, to carry its message to the marijuana addict who still suffers.

(MA Tradition Five)

Our message is one of hope and promise that any addict can stop using marijuana, lose the obsession and desire to do so, and can discover a better way of life by following spiritual principles one day at a time.

Who is an MA member?

The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using marijuana.

(MA Tradition Three)

Membership is a personal decision. We do not measure anyone else's desire to stay free of marijuana. We welcome all who are curious and interested in attending open meetings (some meetings are for addicts only). After attending meetings for a period of time, many people choose to identify themselves as **members**.

The Purpose of Our Meetings

The meeting is a safe place where marijuana addicts share their experience, strength, and hope, and learn about recovery. The healing power of one addict helping another is without equal. Only an addict can truly identify with another addict. By attending meetings, we nurture our own recovery from the disease of addiction, and help others recover as well. We experience a valued sense of belonging, security, and stability.

About Groups and Meetings

In Marijuana Anonymous, the terms **Group** and **Meeting** are generally synonymous. (In some other Twelve Step fellowships, there are distinct differences between groups and meetings.) MA does have a few groups in which more than one meeting may share common officers and a representative to the District. In most cases, however, each MA meeting has its own officers and representative(s) to the District and is, in effect, a group.

Choosing a Home Group

Many members choose a specific meeting as their home group, and attend this meeting regularly. Here we are introduced to the idea of sponsorship and the practice of service. We eventually participate in the group's business, and realize the significance of our impact on the group consciousness.

When we choose a meeting as our home group, we make a commitment to support the meeting's long-term success. This practice ensures a core of members are there to participate, guide, and serve. Everyone benefits from our experience and knowledge of the group's history. New members learn from us the skills needed to maintain the group.

Suggested Meeting Procedures

Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or MA as a whole.

(MA Tradition Four)

MA recognizes that *all meetings are free to choose and design their format* to best fit the group's needs. In the spirit of unity, however, we encourage all meetings to start with the MA Preamble, and to include the reading of MA's *How It Works* (Twelve Steps), and our Twelve Traditions. Other suggested readings may include *The Twelve Questions of Marijuana Anonymous*, *Dangers of Cross Addiction*, and *Who is a Marijuana Addict?*

Most groups hand out sobriety chips to acknowledge sobriety milestones and birthdays. Meetings usually include announcements from the group's Secretary and a report about District matters from the Group Service Representative (GSR). Most meetings open and close with a prayer, such as the *Serenity Prayer*.

There are several types of meeting formats. Some meetings may combine them to some extent.

Participation Meetings

Encourage members to share their reflections on the program, their experiences, their problems, and their solutions.

Speaker Meetings

Enlist a specific member to share his or her experience, strength, and hope.

Book and Step Study Meetings

Specifically study various recovery-oriented materials.

Topic Discussion Meetings

Choose to discuss specific recovery-oriented topics, usually chosen by the meeting's leader.

Other possibilities include

Candlelight Meetings, Meditation Meetings, and Online Meetings.

We show consideration and respect for each other by being on time and listening to whatever is being said. We consciously avoid cross-talk (which includes side conversations, disrespectful gestures, comments on other members' shares, and any other interruptions).

It is essential that we respect each other's confidentiality and anonymity. No one should ever find themselves hesitant to go to a meeting because they feel unsafe. We don't go to meetings looking for romance or to promote our business interests.

Group Service and Commitments

Making a commitment to service work helps us stay clean and sober, and to **keep coming back**. It gives us the opportunity to practice loving unselfishness and benefits our own recovery, as well as the recovery of every member in our group.

Each MA meeting has volunteers to perform certain duties for the group. A meeting needs a Secretary. As a meeting grows, you'll need to select a Treasurer, a Literature Person, and—depending on whether an MA District has been established—a Group Service Representative to the District. Other service positions might include a Chip Person, a Refreshments Person, a Greeter, a Timer, and a Clean-Up Coordinator.