

Courthouse Orientation Script

Hello everyone, my name is _____ and I am a member of Alcoholics Anonymous. The court system has required you to attend AA meetings as part of your probation, and I am here to tell you a little about what AA is and what it is not...and to answer any questions you may have. At the end of this orientation, I will sign your papers so you get credit for attending this evening, and I will give you all a few pieces of literature as well as a meeting schedule so you know where local AA meetings are.

First of all, AA is not a part of the court system, and does not affiliate with any other organization. We are not here to determine if anyone here is or is not an alcoholic. That will be up to you to decide.

The Preamble of Alcoholics Anonymous

Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of men & women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. There are no dues or fees for AA membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions. AA is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy, neither endorses nor opposes any causes. Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety.

There are 3 main types of meetings in AA, an Open Meeting, a Closed Meeting and a Speaker Meeting and most meetings generally last one hour.

An **Open Meeting** is available to anyone interested in Alcoholics Anonymous' program of recovery from alcoholism. Nonalcoholics may attend open meetings as observers. These meetings are generally open discussions around the table or in a circle. We take turns speaking, and we do not speak over other people, nor do we directly talk at other people. We confine our talks to our problems and solutions related to alcohol & alcoholism.

A **Closed Meeting** is for AA members only, or for those who have a drinking problem and "have desire to stop drinking". We ask that you attend closed meetings only if you think you have a problem with alcohol. The same format applies if this is a discussion meeting. Individuals will share one at a time and you are welcome to speak up at any time provided no one else is talking.

Courthouse Orientation Script

Whether open or closed, AA group meetings are conducted by AA members who determine the format of their meetings. If you do not want to talk, no one is going to make you. You may simply say “I pass” if someone does happen to ask you if you would like to share.

A **Speaker Meeting** is just what it implies. After all the initial “readings” are over, a speaker will be introduced and he or she will speak for the rest of the meeting. They will talk about their experiences while drinking; what they were like, what happened and what they are like now.

Whether in a discussion or a speaker meeting, when an alcoholic is sharing, newcomers to the program are encouraged to listen for any similarities in the way they think and feel and not to look for the differences. If you can relate to what is being said, and you like what you hear, we encourage you to attend meetings even after your court appointed requirements have been met.

We also have **Big Book Meetings**. The Big Book is our “text book” that outlines and describes the program of recovery. If you have a Big Book, please feel free to bring it to any meeting you attend. If you do not have one and want one, please speak to the chairperson at the end of the meeting about getting one.

Alcoholics Anonymous is self supporting through our own contributions. At every meeting, a basket will be passed ~ but you do not have to feel obligated to contribute. The money we gather in the basket goes to pay the bills for our meeting space and to support AA as a whole. Some groups require that you place your court ordered paperwork in this basket, and others may require you give it directly to the meeting chairperson. The chairperson or other authorized member will sign each one and you may pick up your signed paper at the end of the meeting. Court mandated papers will only be signed if you have attended the whole hour long meeting.

People of all ages, races and social backgrounds attend AA meetings. Many young people ~ people under 30 ~ regularly attend AA meetings. You will see folks who look just like you in any meeting you go to. We are not affiliated with any religion or any other organization. No one will ask you to state your last name or declare you are an alcoholic or ask what you believe in. We are simply

Courthouse Orientation Script

glad you are here. People may, however, come up to speak with you before or after a meeting if they notice you are new to the group. That is just us being helpful and friendly. Please feel free to ask or tell us anything. The AA program is based on the spiritual foundation of anonymity. We do not tell people outside the meetings who we saw or what was said.

The AA program is based on a program of total abstinence ~ we will not be teaching you how to drink successfully. We simply stay away from a drink one day at a time, and we have a suggested 12 step program that shows us how to do just that and to recover from alcoholism. We do not keep any records of attendance nor do we follow up on you. We are not counselors or medical / legal professionals. We are simply people who have found a solution to our problem with alcohol, and we want to share that solution with anyone who wants it!

The meeting schedule I will be giving you this evening is a list of Open Meetings only. There are AA meetings everywhere and any meeting you attend should have a complete list of AA meetings in the area. You can find a complete list of meetings by going to www.gwinnettaa.org and clicking the "Find A Meeting" navigation button on the side navigation bar.

***** Share a bit about your personal story (10 minutes or so) *** Then Q & A**
***** Sign and place stickers on papers *****