

ACA MORNING

SAFETY COMMITTEE REPORT

April 14, 2023

MANDATE:

This group was formed at the request of the GC Secretary and announced at the February Business Meeting on 02.20.23. The mandate was to take input from the two special Safety Meetings held on 02.09.23 and 02.16.23 and put together some Safety Policies and Procedures to bring to the membership of SMR for review and approval. Lisa M was asked to facilitate the committee by GC Secretary, Jean, who also announced its formation during several subsequent morning meetings. The committee began meeting in mid-March and meets every other week.

The Safety Committee is comprised of two elected Trusted Servants, Jim R and Vivienne C, as well as two previously elected Trusted Servants who completed terms in good standing, Wendy and Lisa M, and two fellows that have been attending the morning meetings for at least six months, Christine T and Maria. In addition, two committee members, Lisa and Vivienne, serve on the ACA WSO Safety Resources Committee.

APRIL SAFETY COMMITTEE UPDATE

- The committee is using for reference ACA WSO documents that include sections on Safety:
 - WSO OPPM (Operating Policy and Procedures Manual), esp. Appendix XII Complaint Process: <https://acawso.org/category/oppm/>
 - Examples of Group Safety Statements: <https://acawso.org/2018/11/12/examples-of-group-safety-statements/>
 - Group Safety Folio: <https://acawso.org/2019/02/24/group-safety-folio-from-costa-mesa-group-ca-837/>
 - Guidelines for Handling Inappropriate Behaviors: <https://acawso.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Addressing-Inappropriate-Behaviors.pdf>
- The committee is collaboratively developing a working document that will address all elements of group and individual safety. Upon completion, this document will be presented at a series of roundtable discussions, open to all, for edits, additions and deletions. A finished report will be developed for presentation at the monthly Business Meeting for Group Conscience approval.

SAFETY ISSUE: A Report of Predatory Behavior was forwarded to the Safety Committee March 23, 2023

- This report had been sitting for a week unread in the unmonitored GC mailbox. An initial phone meeting was held with the Complainant and the outgoing GC Secretary, Jean. The outgoing GC Secretary referred this issue for urgent handling in an email to the Safety Committee and the Service Co-Secretaries. Vivienne and Lisa offered to take on the investigation, and this was agreed upon by The Service Team co-secretaries Boaz and Krista.
- Vivienne and Lisa, along with the SC, first considered whether this issue was within the responsibility of the SMR group and provisionally determined “yes”. A meeting was scheduled with the Complainant to hear the specifics of the allegation. All committee members were notified and links to source documents were provided, which included the following description from ACA WSO that was used as guidance:
 - “Predatory behavior, as we understand it, encompasses a variety of behavior patterns that share the theme of exploiting someone’s vulnerabilities for the purpose of gratifying one’s own, often

unacknowledged, romantic/sexual, financial, emotional, and/or psychological needs. This includes approaching other members, particularly newcomers at or around meetings, often under the guise of “offering” or “requesting” support to establish a connection, which then is taken advantage of for self-serving purposes.” [<https://acawso.org/2018/06/19/addressing-predatory-behavior-in-the-fellowship/>]

- Lisa and Vivienne met with the Complainant and determined that the above definition of predation was met. The accused held a prominent role as a Trusted Servant and had invited a newcomer (the complainant) to private and offsite meetings, led by him, in order to obtain further connection and support. These approaches occurred at or around the SMR meeting and after-meeting. These offsite support groups were also announced by chat and/or advertised as recommended meetings at SMR. Ultimately, the newcomer experienced unwanted graphic sexual conversations.
- The committee studied additional source materials, including:
 - Predatory Behavior Resources: <https://acawso.org/category/apb/>
 - Predatory Behavior Tent Card: <https://acawso.org/2020/01/25/addressing-predatory-behavior-tent-card/>
 - Special Edition ComLine: https://adultchildren.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Predatory_Behavior_ComLine_Final.pdf
 - BRB: esp. Traditions (p 489-554), Safety in Meetings (p 584-5)
- Initially, the accused agreed to speak with a member of the Safety Committee and two neutral parties. After several days, he made contact to inform us that the issue had been resolved by the service co-secretaries. He invited us to speak with Krista and Boaz for confirmation and details. We were unable to find out any information about the resolution of this matter. We are not aware of any further conversations with the complainant, nor any agreements being reached between complainant and accused. When we requested information from the service team the response was a series of emails questioning the authority of the safety committee and its grounding in ACA Traditions and WSO protocols.
- This entire experience illustrates the urgent need for policies around the issues of Safety and Predatory Behavior. The Safety Committee recommends that our meeting explores these needs and puts procedures in place. We see the recent incident as unresolved. Our recommended actions would have been to ask the accused to step back from service roles for a period of time, to stop announcing outside meetings and activities, and to seek help from a sponsor or other caregiver.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa M, Jim R, Wendy, Vivienne C, Christine T, Maria

SAFETY COMMITTEE MEMBERS