

Section: Safety

Policy Title: Predatory Behavior Safety Protocol

Purpose: To establish policies and procedures that address predatory behavior when it happens. To promote the safety and comfort of all members of the community by having clear language and boundaries describing this disruptive behavior. To have our agreed upon procedures visible and easily accessible. To develop safeguards that prevent inaction.

Policy: To enable and to enforce the guidelines provided by the ACA WSO with regard to predation, as defined, *“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/>]

The purpose is create a “safe enough” space around the ACA SMR zoom meetings (before, during and after) where members are encouraged and supported to address their own boundary issues directly and where processes are in place to address trusted servant or recurrent/egregious member problematic behaviors in a manner that promotes healing, strives to maintain the privacy of all individuals involved, and that shows compassion for the individuals while focusing on the behaviors that need to change.

Process

1. Notification
 - a. Any fellow that experiences predation should email any elected trusted servant with any pertinent information. All email addresses are publicly available on the website www.acamorning.org.
2. Processing of Complaint
 - a. The trusted servant will bring your complaint to a small group that has been assigned by group conscience to handle such issues. This could be:
 - i. A volunteer meeting-wellness group,
 - ii. A group of elected trusted servants, or
 - iii. A group elected by the membership specifically to handle issues of predation any other safety issues. This to be determined by the group conscience.
 - b. At least two people from the small group will set a time to speak to the complainant directly. Our first steps are to record your complaint which will be kept on file, and to encourage you to handle the matter directly if appropriate (it does not involve a trusted servant and it does not reflect recurrent predation behavior by a group member).
 - i. We will have a policy about how to keep yourself safe as well as some resource material on setting boundaries and Nonviolent Communication to help.

- c. The alleged perpetrator will be notified there has been a complaint of predatory behavior, and that some action will be forthcoming, either from the complainant directly or from the small group entrusted with dealing with the issue. The person will be offered an opportunity to speak with at least 2 small group members to process the complaint.
 - i. Compassionately following ACA WSO guidelines and BRB p 595-6 guidelines, the person will be encouraged to speak with supportive people to help them navigate the issue.
 - ii. The individual will be encouraged to seek additional help from therapy, a sponsor, or an additional type of recovery meeting.
- d. If the person does not agree their behavior was out of line, the small group may request additional information from either either party. Our goal is not punishment, but clarity. If appropriate and if there is agreement by the complainant and the alleged perpetrator, the issue can be taken to a group conscience for consideration and action.

3. Complaint Resolution

- a. When individual action has been taken, we ask that the complainant report back about actions taken and their outcomes. If direct action satisfies the complainant, the process is complete, but the complaint stays on the record.
 - i. These actions will be noted in the log and the report described in #4.
- b. If the issue involves egregious or repetitive issues by a member, or if it involves a trusted servant, further steps may be taken such as asking a member to take a break from the meeting, or asking a trusted servant to step out of their position for a length of time:
 - i. Trusted Servant: Step down from providing service for six months. Ask for a commitment to seek assistance from a sponsor, therapist or engaged participation in another 12-step program.
 - ii. Member: Do not step up to provide service for six months from incident resolution date. If it is a repeated offense, ask for a commitment to seek assistance from a sponsor, therapist or engaged participation in another 12-step program.
 - 1. Repeated behavior. Includes multiple instances toward a single person or single instances to different people. We consider repeated behavior to be three instances within six months.
- c. Guidelines for returning to the meeting or to service
 - i. The member or trusted servant is welcome to return to the group when they can refrain from any predatory behavior that interferes with the recovery of other meeting members.
 - ii. Recidivism. Goes to a CG vote of the entire group to decide whether to block the person from attending the meeting.

- d. To avoid authority figure issues, these procedures need to be well understood by the SMR membership. The membership should be apprised of the complaint, but not the individuals involved.
- e. If the complaint cannot be handled privately, the complainant and/or the alleged perpetrator may call for a group conscience as described in the BRB, pages 595-596.

4. Reporting

- a. ACA SMR will maintain a log of dates, first names & last initials, small group participants in discussions and resolutions. This log is only available to the body elected to handle these issues and the elected GC.
 - i. Log entries will be purged after 3 years.
- b. There will also be a brief report (redacted so no names and no details that break anonymity are in the report) after the incident of how it was handled. These reports will be publicly available in the safety section of the website so fellows can be educated about how these safety issues are resolved and to educate for self-care and boundary suggestions.