

The 'Guidelines' of the After-meeting

As Proposed by the SMR Meeting Members, Sept. 2026

To begin, what will we call the 'guidelines' by which the After-meeting comports its program?

The Naming of the 'Guidelines'

Here is the categorization of the suggestions for naming the governance of the SMR After-meeting. This would be a change from the Morning Meeting which lists, 'Rules and Guidelines'.

- **Guidelines & Structure**
 - Guidelines (including "Guidelines", "guidelines", "Shared respect guidelines", and "Comfort Guidelines") – 7 mentions¹
 - *We practice these guidelines.* – 1 mention¹
 - Guidelines is a good word creating a boundary/structure – 1 mention¹
- **Expectations, Norms & Protocols**
 - Group protocols, policies, expectations – 2 mentions¹
 - Group norms – 1 mention¹
 - "Expectations" might be useful in describing our practices as in "Our expectation is that kindness and courtesy are observed in the after meeting." – 1 mention¹
- **Practices & Customs**
 - Custom or practice / agreed-upon practices – 2 mentions¹
 - "Smart practices" – 1 mention¹
- **Informal Flow & Recommendations**
 - No rules and regulations, refer to as guidelines, recommendations - in some cases suggestions – 1 mention¹
 - Id say easy flow feels true. – 1 mention¹
- **Traditions & Group Conscience**
 - Traditions – 1 mention¹
 - We create group conscience, not rules or guidelines. – 1 mention

NEXT STEPS:

Polling the members to find agreed upon language to title our 'guidelines' will follow.

Here are the submitted responses to the survey Question - *"Various words have been used to describe the agreed upon boundaries for the meeting, such as 'rules', 'guidelines', 'customs' and 'practices' as well as combinations of these words. As we attempt to identify our preferred description, would you like to make any suggestions to consider?"* :

Suggested Wording

- We practice these guidelines.
- custom or practice
- Guidelines
- Guidelines
- group protocols, policies, expectations
- Shared respect guidelines
- no rules and regulations, refer to as guidelines, recommendations - in some cases suggestions
- Guidelines
- group norms
- guidelines works well for me.
- Guidelines
- This Question has been asked several times in this questionnaire. WHY ? As a group we create group consciences not rules or guide lines.
- guidelines is a good word creating a boundary/structure
- guidelines
- Guidelines; agreed-upon practices
- I like the image conveyed by the term "parking lot". The word "expectations" might be useful in describing our practices as in "Our expectation is that kindness and courtesy are observed in this after meeting parking lot type setting.
- I'd say easy flow feels true.
- Traditions
- Comfort Guidelines
- "smart practices"

The Suggested Guidelines for Self-Governance

And what could those 'guidelines' be? These compilations of suggestions from our members, were distilled from the answers to the 2 questions about 'rules and guidelines':

- **No Crosstalk / Feedback Boundaries:** Restrictions on unsolicited advice, crosstalk, or commenting without permission, ensuring shares remain focused on personal experience

rather than fixing or cross-sharing. We suggest a participant either ask for feedback from the group, or stating clearly that they do not wish to have any personal feedback.

- **Newcomer Priority & Initial Timeframe:** Reserving the first 10 to 30 minutes of the meeting specifically for newcomers to ask questions, share, and receive priority attention.
- **Share Time Limits (5-Minute Rule):** Implementing and enforcing time limits (such as 5 minutes per share) to prevent individuals from monopolizing time and to allow more participants to speak.
- **Raised Hands & Speaking Order:** Calling on participants in the order their digital hands are raised to maintain fairness and organization.
- **Host Role & Boundaries:** Limiting host comments and small talk so hosts do not dominate the space, answer every question, or feel pressured to orchestrate everything.
- **Spiritual Principles & Behavioral Guidelines:** Cultivating an atmosphere of gentleness, tolerance, anonymity, and kindness, while explicitly discouraging gossip, politics, heavy criticism, or inappropriate labeling.
- **Chat Usage:** Using the chat appropriately during the aftermeeting or for sharing resources and links.
- **Sharing Experience, Strength, and Hope:** Centering discussions around personal experience ("I" statements) rather than debating external topics or pushing worldviews.

Here are several unique and thoughtful suggestions from the survey responses that offer constructive ways to support the group's integrity and well-being:

- **Distinguishing Meeting Phases:** Clearly separating the structured newcomer period from the relaxed, unstructured aftermeeting (or "campfire") space to help participants transition smoothly between formal guidelines and open socializing.
- **Support for Extreme Emotional Reactions:** Creating a thoughtful approach or awareness for handling participants who experience intense emotional distress during the meeting, ensuring the space remains safe and supportive without triggering a domino effect.
- **Dedicated Timekeeper Role:** Appointing a separate timekeeper in addition to the facilitator or host to help enforce time limits on sharing (such as the 5-minute rule) more easily and keep the host free to focus on group management.
- **Emphasis on "I" Statements:** Encouraging the use of personal "I" statements during shares to foster accountability, maintain healthy boundaries, and protect participants from gossip or generalized criticism.
- **Re-framing the Aftermeeting:** Viewing the aftermeeting as a spiritual gathering place to practice principles in a flexible, organic social setting rather than treating it like a rigid meeting.

NEXT STEPS:

This is complex. Beginning with a simple poll could provide agreement on some of the broader points, like raising hands and initial time limits. Most likely, the topics raised here might benefit from a Town Hall discussion where members could collaborate through discussion to find the best practices for the group.

Here are the complete responses to the survey questions about current and future practices and guidelines:

Please LIST a few of the rules and guidelines that seem to be in place during the Newcomer and Fellowship parts of the After-meeting.

- Raise your hand to speak
- Be mindful of others who may want to speak
- Newcomers share for the first 10 to 15 minutes, then anyone can come in.
- 5 minute shares for the first ____.
- No crosstalk unless you get an okay from the speaker.
- Go by raised digital hands in the order raised.
- Using chat is okay in the aftermeeting.
- Host comments should be kept to a minimum without expectations that they have to fix, comment, or orchestrate things.
- Newcomers get priority to ask questions during the first 15 minutes
- No crosstalk unless the person asking the questions says they would welcome ESR. That said, no giving specific advice ("You should do this.")
- People are called on in the order their digital hands are raised
- Focus on the newcomer first. I'd like to see that be the first 30 minutes rather than 15. Opportunity for feedback.
- crosstalk/allowing feedback, sharing, times shares, group dynamics, less structured than the meeting
- No Crosstalk, sharing experiences, resources
- No:
 - Politics
 - Racism
 - Sexism (both ways, not just misogyny)
 - Unpermitted cross-talk
 - Antagonism toward one another
 - Pushing a world-view (the patriarchy, the matriarchy, government attitudes)
 - Abuse
 - Bullying

- Yes:
 - Gentleness
 - Consideration
 - Tolerance for others' struggles
 - Anonymity
 - Kindness without overt fixing
 - Cross-talk where permitted
- Attention to the time one takes to share
- Attention to the Twelve Steps and Traditions, including them in shares
- Starting and finishing with the Serenity Prayer
- Love, love, love
- I think all of it is in place, but it's really a discretionary task. We're all relearning boundaries. Things will happen.
- not sure
- Sharing that becomes conversational
- First, NO RULES only spiritual guide lines the group is a spiritual entity not a club.
 - 1, Call participants in order of hands raised. Why is this even a question.
 - 2, Host Comments if asked.
 - 3, Host training same as room Host training.
 - 4, Triggers are going happen. What should we do somehow control it. No. Trigger responses ? stupid question.
 - 5, the chat is open as it always is. Stupid question.
 - 6, Resources on the website. Why is this even a question.
 - 7, Advice only if asked. this is already being practiced.
 - 8, Giving experience strength and hope? that's what we do here. What's the question ?
 - 9, Shearing becomes conversation again what's the question.
 - 10, Leeway for newcomers ? yeah that's called loving you where your at.
 - 11, Close the meeting when its over, Host decision last person to leave the meeting.
 - 12, others points, Ridiculous Questions some people thing to fix something that's not broken.
- ask if its ok to comment - respond to a question or answer
- It might be helpful to distinguish between the Newcomer Section (or however this part will be called) on one hand, and the AfterMeeting/ Campfire/ on the other hand. - Maybe including the Serenity Prayer at the beginning.
- No cross-sharing, consciousness of time when it gets busy

- There seems to be a natural organic flow in the after meeting of calm shares some in depth I find healing. I hear respectful requests for people to refer to my shares sometimes which gives me the agency and autonomy to decide. I appreciate the unique space. Its sometimes similar to a parking lot group of people chatting and or around a campfire.
- Resources and links to materials and meetings/workshops
- Giving experience, strength and hope
- Using the chat
- The opportunity to allow comments and reference to a share if the newcomer gives permission.
- The rules and guidelines currently being followed seem adequate and clear regarding most of the above list.
- Sharing with No Crosstalk- or as we have been doing it, ask if they would like any "feedback" as stated ...Allowing comments and reference to a share)
 - Timing of shares= yes, the new 5 min rule seems perfect!
 - Raised hands= yes raised hands please!
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- You just listed a bunch.
 - Be cognizant of other raised hands and wrap up your share
 - I think all those are either briefly mentioned or hinted at in the Freeform introduction already, but would benefit from formalizing into a statement to be read by any after meeting hosts that would like the benefit of such a thing.
 - One thing for hosts to know might be that often they seem to think it is up to them to answer all the newcomer questions. I don't think it is and sometimes doesn't leave room for other people to speak. Same with the five minute time limit which I am glad to see being given a chance. I understand some people are chafed at that idea, but I for one am chafed at the opposite idea: people monopolizing the time with 10 minutes or longer shares to the exclusion of others that don't have all day to wait for a chance to comment.
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Please LIST any rules or guidelines that either need clarification or would be a welcomed addition.

- The host doesn't need to comment on everyone's share
- How can you tell what order the digital hands were raised?
- The group conscious is responsible for any changes
- Timing of shares- if coming back in it would be nice if someone hadn't shared yet to let them go first

- Ending the meeting after an hour or at 10 am est or even after the regular meeting if there is no one to take the room
- This is an ACA meeting and part of SMR?
- Length of shares - some people go on for a very long time
- Direction to not raise hand for other topics until the newcomer period is over. I've often experienced the session getting hijacked by someone being called on to respond to newcomer question only to have them instead take a long and unrelated share.
- an emphasis on using "I" statements to protect from predatory behavior of those who cannot maintain the safety guidelines for crosstalk. Accountability for those whom repeatedly abuse the space and others in it
- I think we need to have explicit 5m shares... and I think a timekeeper in addition to a facilitator would make that easier to stick to and make the host job easier
- 5-minute timed shares with everyone entitled to share as often as they want
- Keeping it all simple
- The host stating at the start how long they can host
- I think the discussion of outside interests, or talking about others, should be clarified.
- triggers, triggered responses and safety--I'd appreciate some language around "let there be no gossip or criticism of one another" or some such. I appreciate it when people talk about difficult triggers honestly, but keeping the focus on themselves instead of intense criticism of others in the meeting.
- Inappropriate topics- labeling people as narcissists (checking to see if the person is there and when they are not, calling them narcissists and talking about them)
- WHERE is the work that the ad hoc committee Has done ?
- Why hasn't that work been included in this survey ?
- Why has this survey been created by one person ? Looks like an authority figure to me.
- For Clarification there is no real problem with the after meeting . This is people that mostly don't even come to the meeting creating what if questions.
- timed shares if there are a lot of hands raised - someone can be removed or muted, if they are being inappropriate
- compassion and tolerance for others

- This is no longer a meeting, it is a gathering place where we can practice our principles in an unstructured social setting.
- This is a place where we gather after the meeting and where the first 15 minutes are reserved for newcomers and anyone who feels like a newcomer to ask questions or clarify observations about the program and our meeting.
- We have a facilitator or zoom host who keeps the zoom channel open, admits new participants, and also calls on hands when more than one person wants to talk at the same time.
- The facilitator or zoom host stays for a half hour and if he or she needs to leave, passes the host position on to another volunteer. When no one can function as host, the meeting ends.
- Permission should be requested and granted before another participant reflects on, responds to, or makes suggestions about another person's share.
- Anyone may leave at any time. If someone has a gripe about someone else's behavior, we expect that to be resolved between the two parties involved.
- The host has leeway to police the group however he or she sees fit. If we don't like their style we can attend on another day when they are not hosting. We can also sign up or volunteer to be the after meeting host ourself on another day.
- I get to practice being my own loving parent with agency and autonomy so I cant think of any.
- Crosstalk, sharing, requesting feedback or not
- I wonder how the aftermeeting handles participants who are in the midst of an extreme emotional reaction and unable to self-soothe. What is the process for dealing with triggered people on the meeting so that it doesn't become a domino reaction and create a sense of discomfort/unsafety for others?
- Hosts are doing service. They do a disservice by commenting on every share, talking about themselves, making silly comments to be funny or clever and performing small talk.
- The repetitive remarks reduce the quality and intelligence of the meeting.
- sorry- I gave comments on all the points in the previous question.
- I don't think there is much "new" with our rules as many of the 12 step programs have similar rules.
- I hope this is helpful
- I cannot think of any additional guidelines. I do think it would help the hosts to understand, in the host training sessions perhaps, that they have the authority to shut down a hostile participant on the rare occasion that happens. So they know they have our support to either mute them or eject them however they see fit in that rare heated moment.

