

Chairperson Workshop

Interactive session

Ideally, the workshop facilitator also has a handout for the participants to take home.

Most of the session for this chairperson workshop is interactive, and involves allowing participants to come to their own conclusion while using guidance only when needed.

1. Ask members who show up early to help. Delegate a coffee maker, door greeters, and any other volunteers. This is important because it shows in realtime the importance of doing the same in a meeting.
2. Welcome everyone who shows up, even if there is a door greeter.
3. Start the meeting with a moment of silence and the we version of the Serenity Prayer.
4. Explain briefly the purpose of the workshop - to guide members on how to more effectively maintain an atmosphere of recovery when chairing, and to help orient newer members on what it means to chair a meeting.

Intro

1. Invite members to share experiences that felt like a good meeting, and experiences that felt like a bad meeting.
2. Ask members to share attributes they think a good chairperson has, or things that are important for a chairperson to know, say, or do.

Mock home group - the basics

Explain to the members that you are forming a pretend home group. Invite them all to imagine that they are Trusted Servants, and that each of them rotates being a chairperson as well.

Invite them to discuss in a brief business meeting setting what is important to them about how their chairpeople chair their meetings.

Write ideas down.

Brief explanation

List off these important topics for chairpeople and a home group to consider about chairing their meetings:

- The Traditions and Concepts
- Spiritual principles

- When to interrupt, when to guide a member in private after the meeting, and when to just ignore minor behavior
- Dealing with disruptive behavior
- Dealing with violent behavior
- Dealing with emergencies
- Sticking to the meeting format the home group agreed on
- Not dominating the meeting by sharing too much as the chairperson
- Remaining in a position of service, not performance
- Not getting too informal and joking around too much or disrupting the meeting as a chairperson
- Equal experience for all - not showing preferential treatment to friends
- Dealing with stalking and sexual harassment
- Greeting newcomers in a meaningful way
- Ensure keytags, brochures, and literature are provided per group's guidelines
- Recording required info such as 7th tradition money and number of participants
- Properly storing funds brought in
- Setting up and locking up

Mock home group - challenges

Reform as the pretend home group and issue challenges for the group to discuss and vote on.

For each challenge, ask the group how they want their chairpeople to respond in a meeting, and invite them to discuss any long term guidelines that are general and do not single out a specific member.

1. The dominant personality

A member keeps sharing for very long, sometimes interrupting other members, sometimes getting into crosstalk, sometimes sharing multiple times before other members have had a chance to share.

2. The religious fanatic

A member keeps referencing their specific religion, quoting scripture, sometimes trying to preach at other members in the room.

3. The war stories

A member keeps sharing about specific drugs, often getting graphic about their using days. It almost feels like they are romanticizing using, and there does not appear to be a clear message of hope. It feels like they are bragging, in fact.

4. The graphic shares

A member keeps sharing graphic or intimate details of their sexual exploits in their share, making other members uncomfortable.

5. Private conversations

Two members keep whispering and laughing during the meetings. It has become noticeable and distracts from the meeting.

6. Crosstalk

A member keeps interrupting others, and directly giving unsolicited advice after other members share.

7. The arguers

Two members keep arguing in the meeting while others are sharing, or they use their share to attack the other member.

8. The plug

A member keeps trying to use their share to subtly imply or directly state that they have drugs for sale.

9. The AA'er

A member keeps referencing AA and AA literature in their shares.

10. The violent member

A member becomes threatening or violent in the meeting.

11. The stalker / harasser

A member keeps harassing other members and making them uncomfortable with inappropriate behavior and statements.

12. The phone addict

A member stays on their phone during the meeting, sometimes noisily.

13. Changing the readings

A member keeps rephrasing the readings when reading them while the meeting opens, using their own words instead of the verbatim words printed out.

14. The nodder

A member who may be under the influence keeps nodding out and falling over, disrupting the meeting.

15. The using sharer

A member who may be under the influence keeps trying to share during the meeting.

Questions and answers

Allow the group to ask questions. Invite discussion instead of rushing to give the answer before other members share their view. If needed, guide the group with a more correct answer as the discussion develops but allow time for the group to arrive at more healthy conclusions on their own first.

Wrap-up

Invite the members to discuss what they learned, what they liked about the workshop, whether they feel ready to chair if they are new to chairing, and any other topics the group wants to explore.