

1. List the goals of the group meeting they are attending

The main goal of an Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) meeting is to help people who want to quit drinking alcohol. Another focus or purpose is opening the discussion on alcoholism and issues related to addiction. This may be achieved through sharing experiences with the other group members. Another goal for AA meetings is learning how to live a happy, sober, and peaceful life.

2. Identify membership eligibility. (What does one have to do to become a “member”?)

There are no membership fees or dues required. "A desire to stop drinking" is the main eligibility requirement for AA. The primary purpose, as stated on their website is “to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety”

There are no official rules to become a member. However, there are some basic guidelines to follow. Anything discussed in the meeting should be kept confidential.

To minimize disruption, turn off all cell phones before meeting starts.

-Do not talk over people, respect a person’s time who is speaker.

-Everyone will get time to share their thoughts so now proper time to speak

3. Identify any referral process for joining the group

The format of AA meetings is rooted in spirituality, many church or spiritual leaders know of these meetings and may refer an individual to them and word of mouth through talking with others, bulletin board announcements, social media announcements, etc. may be mediums for a referral. AA meetings are also a type of group therapy, so mental health advocates such as counselors and therapist may refer their patients.

4. Describe the meeting’s events from direct observation. What happened at the meeting you attended?

The video presented by Jerry about AA meeting; he explained the process of how the meetings typically run. Meetings usually start with an opening prayer or preamble to set the tone for the meeting. Whoever is new in that meeting they give introduction and share what brings them here. The bulk of the meeting revolves around sharing stories, experiences, and transformations of personal stories with alcohol. There is a concluding prayer, which is usually the Lord's prayer, 3rd step prayer, or serenity prayer.

The video presented by Jixi about NA meeting; she explains that there are differences in NA meetings from AA meetings. She states that the focus is on the addiction problem, not the actual drug. She also explains there are door greeters that welcome and hug members as they walk through the door. The environments of each NA meeting can vary, and it is crucial to find one that works for the individual.

- 5. Identify task, maintenance, and/or self-serving roles evident at this meeting and give rationale/examples to support the identified roles. (This does NOT mean chores that one might do ~ e.g., making coffee. See lecture notes for details of the different types of group roles that members may take or exhibit during various points throughout the meeting. This section is worth the most points, assure that you review the content and discuss/answer accordingly.)**

There are different ways of sharing their thoughts among the group members. Some meetings require raising their hand to speak, some allow expressing whenever a thought comes to mind, and other sessions follow a "round-robin" approach where every group member in the circle will get turns to share their thoughts. There are also different formats of the meetings, including step meetings, book meetings, and discussion or speaker meetings. Step meetings work on specific steps with the group members, involving listening to someone's story. They can include a "table leader role," which is the individual who will lead the discussion. The "chairperson role" or members of the AA group can also influence the discussion. Book meetings involve reading a passage in a book and then discussing what was read and what can be learned from the passage. Jerry mentioned a couple of book examples in the video, including the AA Book, which provides tips on how to quit drinking and The Power of Now, which is a book to help with one's spirituality. The discussion or speaker meetings promote conversation. Sometimes there will be only one speaker who will talk the entire time while no one else shares. Other times, someone will speak at the beginning, and then there will be an open discussion.

The aim of these meetings is to promote discussion and have the members share their thoughts and help one another, which in turn helps the individual. Many learning chances can arise from meeting and discussing, including attaining greater self-awareness and improved communication. Other roles of the meetings may include door greeters (welcoming members with hugs at the door), group chairperson (coordinates activities and scheduling), group treasurer (dealing with financial matters), group secretary (maintaining information and announcements), and the Program Chairperson (booking incoming or outgoing meetings for the group).

- 5. How do members or those in attendance utilize the group topics or discussions within their everyday life? (For example: If you attend AA, how does the attendance to the meeting help keep the person from drinking and follow the 12 steps?)**

The first step of the 12 steps deals with stating that life has become uncontrollable because of alcohol. This beginning step is taking possession of the issue and to deal with one's alcoholism. The 12 steps are a commitment to their decision with the help of a higher power. Members utilize these focus points as a guide for their path to treatment. Attending the meetings provides an outlet for alcoholics to share their experiences and struggles. Another focus of discussion is being accountable for

one's actions and their impacts they may pose on themselves and others. Having the support of other group members can be enabling to the individual while allowing them to achieve sobriety or their personal goals for combating alcoholism.

5. What role does have an issue such as addiction, overeating, or grief play on individual's mental health?

Addiction can be extremely harmful to one's emotional health. The mind is potent and can cause depression and other serious mental health issues. Feeling powerless to change can also interfere with one's family and relationships. This can be very difficult for both parties to suffer. Many addictions and numbing behaviors stem from the individual not feeling content with oneself, which can create severe emotional distress.

5. Describe the insight gained through this learning experience, and how this insight may be useful with future clients. Would you recommend this support group for individuals who are faced with similar struggles? Worth 20% of the grade, it is expected that critical reflection of the learning experience is evident within the description provided.

I have assembled some helpful insight from learning about AA meetings. According to me, the most useful aspect of these meetings is the support that the members can gain from each an every individual and able to know other people stories. Knowing that others are also struggling and going through the same issues, is very encouraging. Some valuable resources and insights can be shared at the meetings that can be of value to another. Sincerity with oneself and others is a valuable skill that can be built from the meetings. Sharing experiences and struggles allow for human connection. Expectation is also gained from audience, witnessing people who have overcome their struggle with addiction.

I would advise others to try out these group meetings. It is not for everyone, but it is meaning the try to explore. We all struggle with certain things, whether it is a drug, disordered eating (binging, restricting), or compulsions, that can destroy our natural life. Having a support system to power through these issues helps us to understand that we are not alone and can overcome with the difficulty or challenges at hand. The enjoyment of being sober and not being controlled by a substance or behavior is very freedom for people.

Reference:

Alcoholics Anonymous. (2020). *The A.A. Group..where it all begins*. Retrieved from https://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/p-16_theaagroup.pdf

American Addiction Centers. (2017, April 3). *12 Questions About the 12-Steps: AA Membership*. Retrieved from <https://americanaddictioncenters.org/blog/aa-membership>

Inter-Group Association of A.A. of New York. (2020). *Trusted Servant Suggested Duties*. Retrieved from <https://www.nyintergroup.org/group-resources/officer-suggested-duties/>

Jerry Banfield. (2019, August 25). *AA for Beginners! What to Expect During an Alcoholics Anonymous Meeting?* [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EY5DJeYC18Q&feature=youtu.be>

Jexi. (2019, June 11). *Narcotics Anonymous Meetings: What to Expect* [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RnllenRksU8&feature=youtu.be>