

2020 ABC Ballot Results for Adult Children of Alcoholics

Proposals 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10 and 13 will be on the 2020 ABC Agenda

154 Completed Ballots were submitted within the March 31st timeframe

116	Yes	89%	Proposal 2020 – 3
15	No	11%	
23	No Opinion		Submitted on November 5, 2019 by the WSO Service Network Committee

Issue: The Service Network Committee is asking the ACA Fellowship to adopt the following preamble and have the WSO Literature Committee use it when they feel it is appropriate when updating current literature.

Adult Children of Alcoholics/Dysfunctional Families (ACA) Preamble

ACA is a spiritual program supporting people who grew up with family dysfunction. That experience infected us then and it affects us today. While our members may be from homes where alcohol or drugs were present, it is not a requirement. People who suffered abuse, neglect or unhealthy behavior are also members.

The purpose of ACA is:

- 1) to shelter and support members in confronting denial
- 2) to comfort those mourning their early loss of security, trust and love and
- 3) to teach the skills for reparenting ourselves with gentleness, humor, love and respect. *

ACA provides a safe, nonjudgmental environment that allows us to grieve our childhoods and to conduct an honest inventory of ourselves and our families. Identifying with the Laundry List Traits (The Problem), we learn to live in The Solution, one day at a time.

* This paragraph is adapted from the Identity Papers

History/Reasoning:

- A preamble is a brief introduction and description of our program
- ACA currently does not have a preamble
- Numerous pieces of our literature have various preamble type statements. (ACA Is, Meeting Opening Format, Homepage, etc.)
- We believe that adopting one preamble would have all of our literature be consistent
- Meeting groups would have a consistent preamble available to use in their meeting scripts if they choose
- The 12 Steps and 12 Traditions are not mentioned in the Preamble, because they are already part of most meeting formats.
- The Service Network Committee asks that you put this proposal on the 2020 ballot and participate in Town Hall meetings prior to the 2020 ABC to address any issues. If needed, we can then make a one-time friendly amendment to accept a fellowship wide approved ACA Preamble.

Argument in Favor:

- The ACA preamble will be inclusive and respectful of our diversity statement
- This preamble was developed with fellowship wide input via the Service Network Committee and Town Hall Meetings
- We used the following goals to guide us in its creation:
 - ACA is a spiritual program, not a religious program
 - ACA is inclusive of people from homes where alcohol and drugs were not present
 - We kept the language simple so that it will be easy to translate
 - We kept it brief, clear, and concise (limited word count, avoided redundancy)
 - A preamble is by definition a brief introductory summary

WSO Analysis: The proposal causes no major difficulties for WSO or the fellowship. At the 2019 ABC a proposed mission statement to be read at meetings was referred back to WSO for additional refinement. If this proposal receives enough votes to be on the ABC Agenda, and a motion is passed to approve it, the proposed Preamble would be available online and could be included in future literature updates. Under the Fourth Tradition, its use by meetings would be voluntary.

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Comments:

- intro and discussion of program is important
- As long as the pre-amble is all inclusive, representative of the challenges one may face in our program ie principles being upheld? Then this is good to discuss.
- "We are a program of inclusion. Let's review the Identity Papers and stay true to their intended purpose."
- Maybe replace ACA Is... trifold with this?
- If this becomes a motion, we will ask for an amendment stating that "striving to support" and "striving to provide". To make people experiencing predatory behaviour feel included. Making sure we talk about that it isn't always supportive and safe, but striving to be. Progress not perfection <3
- Our group doesn't like the word "Infected" in the second line. We would like to find a less abrupt and strong word.
- The group doesn't like the word infected in line two. Is there a more appropriate replacement word that sounds better?
- Concern was expressed about how much reading is already done at the meetings, and about adding more to it, even though it's short.
- 1st paragraph ok, 2nd paragraph- This NOT OUR PURPOSE/ Is in conflict with traditions. 3rd NO NO NO. We can't declare it is "safe and nonjudgemental!" We can strive or hope for it. Or newcomer gaslighting/cog dissonance. UGH
- Appreciate the work done on this, and the process used. It is not perfect, but can be amended if desired down the road.
- It's best not to adopt a preamble that needs so much improvement. We suggest adopting what is on the WSO home page: "Adult Children of Alcoholics (ACA)/Dysfunctional Families is a Twelve Step, Twelve Tradition program of men and women who grew up in dysfunctional homes. We meet to share our experience of growing up in an environment where abuse, neglect and trauma infected us. This affects us today and influences how we deal with all aspects of our lives. ACA provides a safe, nonjudgmental environment that allows us to grieve our childhoods and conduct an honest inventory of ourselves and our family—so we may (i) identify and heal core trauma, (ii) experience freedom from shame and abandonment, and (iii) become our own loving parents."
- We would like the Literature Committee to work on a preamble rather than adopting this one. We would like it to be mentioned in the preamble that ACA is a 12-step program and we find this suggested preamble promotes codependent in terms of the focus on sheltering and comforting others. Our meeting strongly supports using the clear and inspiring language on the home page of the WSO website: Adult Children of Alcoholics (ACA)/Dysfunctional Families is a Twelve Step, Twelve Tradition program of men and women who grew up in dysfunctional homes. We meet to share our experience of growing up in an environment where abuse, neglect and trauma infected us. This affects us today and influences how we deal with all aspects of our lives. ACA provides a safe, nonjudgmental environment that allows us to grieve our childhoods and conduct an honest inventory of ourselves and our family—so we may (i) identify and heal core trauma, (ii) experience freedom from shame and abandonment, and (iii) become our own loving parents.

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90	Yes	70%	Proposal 2020 – 4
39	No	30%	
25	No Opinion		
Submitted on November 6, 2019 by CA1312 from Cottonwood, CA			

Issue: We propose that . . . the ACA Copyright Release Form be revised to include a second option, so ACA WSO can be granted permission by anonymous authors or groups to reuse or excerpt their already copyrighted or published materials.

History/Reasoning: Currently, ACA’s Copyright Release requires that all submissions be an “unrestricted gift to ACA WSO” from it author(s) or creator(s) of all rights, including the right of the submitters to reuse the materials themselves. ACA WSO can edit, alter or not use the submission as it sees fit, but retains, nonetheless, permanent ownership of submitted materials. Anonymous authors and creators of ACA posters, charts, coloring books, etc. thus can’t share their copyrighted or published materials within ACA as a whole, even free, without losing all rights to it. Intergroups, Regions and Groups in the fellowship that produce books, calendars, charts, coloring books to raise 7th Tradition funds are also confused by this policy.

Argument in Favor: We can free up and encourage creativity within ACA as a whole without putting the fellowship at risk of being flooded by unvetted material. A simple way for this is to add a second choice to ACA Copyright Release, revising the form to a pair of boxes (still on one single page.) ACA WSO will still be under no obligation to publish or circulate any submissions, but local fellowships and creative ACA members will be empowered to share even the creative work they or their group want to retain. Authors will select either, 1. present option, or 2. “I/we hereby grant ACA WSO irrevocable permission to use my/our copyrighted or previously published above named material in whole or in part, free or for sale without any remuneration or compensation to me/us, or to my/our heirs or assignees. ACA WSO, Inc. may edit or excerpt this submission for publishing said article, chart, poem, share and or artwork in any ACA WSO, Inc. publication in any form whatsoever, including, but not limited to, ACA ComLine, ACA WSO website, or other hard copy or electronic publication, citing attribution to the author(s) by first name & last initial only, or, if from a group, by group name and city. I/we understand that ACA WSO reserves discretion whether or not to publish the above submission.”

WSO Analysis: WSO supports a revised Copyright Release and is already working with copyright attorneys to create such a document.

Comments:

- we didn't understand it completely due to being no native speakers...
- We voted NO because the proposal seemed redundant knowing that WSO has already put this in motion.
- "Freedom is the gift of our recovery."
- Violation of Traditions - no outside affiliation...
- Wait until attorneys propose a copyright release form, then use that. The fellowship is not qualified to act as its own attorney.
- We agree there should be a vetting process for submitted material. We do not agree that a person’s submission should be altered or re-written without the original author’s approval.
- It's already being taken care of
- ACA LitCom is already revising this and will report on new ACA literature policy it at the ABC. We do not need to discuss the copyright issue at the ABC as a standalone issue.

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110	Yes	83%	Proposal 2020 – 6
24	No	17%	
20	No Opinion		
			Submitted on November 19, 2019 by NET0019 from Amsterdam, Netherlands

Issue: We propose . . . that WSO create a document regarding the experiences, strength, and hope of members who have faced situations in which individuals or groups have not followed the traditions or principles of ACA. We suggest that this document be published now as a pamphlet and/or online resource and later as a chapter in the next edition of the Big Red Book. We understand that the literature committee oversees ACA-related literature issues, but we believe that this topic is highly relevant and merits fellowship-wide attention and discussion. We note that the Crosstalk pamphlet has some examples of individuals' stories that are directly focused on various dimensions of cross talk. There is another example of the type of stories we have in mind in the current version of the Big Red Book in the section on Tradition 10. We would like to participate with our fellows in expanding this format to other dilemmas that we, as ACA fellows, face but often find difficult to discuss or resolve without the guidance that additional texts might offer. We imagine stories that:

- Address dilemmas related to various traditions or principles;
- Place our common welfare and ACA unity first; and
- Express experience, strength, and hope.

We have included several examples of such stories in the Appendix on the next page (which are not able to be attached to the website survey format).

History/Reasoning: Over time in our recovery in ACA, some of us have had painful and confusing experiences with groups or individuals that have resulted from the traditions and/or principles not being followed. For example, we have participated in online groups that did not rely upon a group conscience in decision-making; we have seen individuals blocked from participation in online groups without recourse; and we have unwittingly subjected ourselves to 13th-step behaviors without realizing it until significant damage was done to us. These are just some examples of situations when we could have benefitted from reading the stories of others who had faced similar situations, stories such as those that address the meaning of the steps and traditions in the BRB, but focused specifically on dilemmas and solutions.

Argument in Favor: Particularly with the rise of online groups and with regard to sensitive issues, such as the 13th step—which can occur with sponsors or others who have many years in the program and to whom we might otherwise turn for advice—we believe that individual fellows as well as groups could benefit from reading about how others have faced, understood, and responded to, various dilemmas in ACA groups. These dilemmas, and the need for their resolution, seem to apply globally.

WSO Analysis: Fellowship safety is essential, and a deeper understanding of the Traditions would help the fellowship support group safety. WSO is working on several forms of additional guidance, including a Fellowship Service Manual, regarding how ACA members and groups can apply the Traditions and Concepts to various forms of safety issues. If approved, this proposal can be incorporated into that larger effort. No major difficulties are foreseen.

Comments:

- improves safety, can apply in many areas
- Yes. I am amongst several members that have walked away from meetings over these issues. One around status of meetings I, usually closed meetings and their unqualified attendees. The group voted against sticking to the BRB guidelines and principles in favour of their personalities which is totally against the traditions we outlined. From there on in once we removed ourselves? There is no support. There absolutely must be 'next steps' available to long standing program abiding members challenged in the face of groups acting out in their traits
- "Look with great wisdom at the intent and purpose of ACA. Keep it Simple. We are neither to create nor prevent a crisis from occurring, if it is to be the natural course of events. Dwell on what works, not what doesn't.
- Big Brother! Smacks of punishment.

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- Articles for Traveler and ComLine maybe; don't need to focus on negative, unfortunate encounters
- In addition to a comprehensive service manual, the fellowship needs a quick-hit handout, such as a trifold. The current service trifold needs replacement
- This is for the Website and or the Literature Committee
- We feel personal shares in the context of the Traditions and service work generally should be highlighted at the ABC to ensure that the literature produced on this front includes the diversity of personal perspectives. A short discussion is warranted.
- Group felt it was nice to see an overarching "Outline of the Journey" and direction of ACA work and recovery.
- Too many controlling moderators on phone bridge who do not acknowledge the traditions.

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114	Yes	85%	Proposal 2020 – 8
20	No	15%	
20	No Opinion		Submitted on November 27, 2019 by CA1385 from Laguna Hills, CA

Issue: We propose that . . . Additional Boundary Resources are needed in ACA Guideline materials to assist adult children with establishing healthy and safe boundaries, using BRB and ACA materials. This material can be used as: a chapter, a workbook, an Introduction to Boundaries booklet, a guide for presentations and Group work at ACA meetings or conventions.

History/Reasoning: Background or history of the issue: There are many valuable selections that can be used for boundaries in the BRB, YB, Steps, “Bill of Rights”, “I statements” and “Strengthening My Recovery”. This material can be organized and used as: a chapter, a workbook, an Introduction to Boundaries booklet, a guide for presentations and Group work at ACA meetings or conventions

Argument in Favor: We want to take the information and tools available in ACA materials and lay out this information in a progressive, sequential stages. The Boundary Chapter or workbook will follow the BRB starting at Chapter 1. The Boundary chapter or Workbook will follow the following: BRB reading Selections, The Steps, prayers, Meditations, gratuities, Slogans and Sayings and other tools in chronological order per the BRB- This way, an Adult child can read and learn about boundaries using the BRB. A sponsor or Yellow Book group members could incorporate this information into their meetings. The Adult Child may gain additional understanding and tools to help them evolve in their journey and with the practice of Boundaries.

WSO Analysis: Boundaries are an essential tool of ACA recovery and are receiving increased attention in new literature expected to be published in 2020. This proposal can be incorporated into existing WSO efforts to provide ACA members with practical recovery tools. No major difficulties are foreseen.

Comments:

- very important, missing a chapter or organized info on the in the red Book. Important for growth, progress, safety and clarity. This information makes a difference as one works through the steps and uses the tools from the BRB and ACA
- This topic warrants discussion, if for no other purpose than to let the fellowship know what WSO is working on.
- This goes to the literature committee
- Learning about boundaries and how they work, how to use them is an incredibly important part of the ACA recovery process. We feel the topic should more explicit and be better integrated into ACA literature. It's not clear that a new publication specifically on boundaries though is needed.
- Since their was already focused attention on boundaries for 2020, we felt there did not need to be additional discussion at the ABC on this topic.

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105	Yes	79%	Proposal 2020 – 9
28	No	21%	
21	No Opinion		
Submitted on November 27, 2019 by FL0302 from Gulfport, FL			

Issue: We propose that . . . WSO publish an ACA beginners meeting handbook, much like “A New Hope Beginners Meeting Handbook” currently available at www.ACAhope.com , to provide an introductory ACA program overview that is accessible, digestible and engaging for newcomers and beginners.

History/Reasoning: Many adult children initially identify with ACA strongly, but then fade from the program within the first three to four months. It often seems that despite being enthusiastic and hopeful upon entering ACA, participants can easily become overwhelmed and discouraged. The "Big Red Book" is a life-saving resource, but it’s a voluminous work that can be daunting for ACA newcomers. For many, the idea of immediately jumping into ACA Step work can be terrifying. We who submit this proposal decided in late 2018 to start a new local meeting specifically for beginners. We developed introductory materials that could be used to support and guide those attending that meeting. While there is no single path to healing the effects of childhood trauma through ACA, we created what we feel is a solid initial draft of a clear, concise yet comprehensive ACA program overview that includes:

- Topic summaries that: 1) are written specifically for beginners and address fundamental concepts in ACA recovery, 2) are derived from existing ACA-WSO conference approved literature, and 3) can be read and discussed manageably within a one-hour meeting timeframe
- Questions on each topic that participants can: 1) draw from to help frame their initial personal shares at meetings, 2) use as a tool to connect with other participants outside of the meetings, and 3) experience as preparation for more in-depth program work
- References pointing to additional information on each topic in existing ACA conference approved literature (texts, workbooks, trifolds, booklets, etc.)
- Fundamental program materials (the Problem / Traits, the Solution, the 12 Steps, the 12 Traditions & the Promises) as well as other supplemental resources, tools and exercises.

Argument in Favor: The ACA beginners meeting handbook we’ve initially developed slowly brings participants out of isolation through a predictable, structured, drop-in meeting framework. This approach allows them to engage with program resources incrementally with less likelihood of becoming overwhelmed. Participants can miss weeks, attending at their own pace, and still feel supported as they learn what it means to “work a program.” More intensive reparenting practices and Step work can begin independently from this introductory handbook overview at whatever point participants themselves determine they are ready. We have seen some success so far, and many “non-beginners” who drop-in to check out the beginners meeting have said they really wished ACA had resources like this when they first found the program.

WSO Analysis: The WSO Literature Committee has placed a major emphasis on Beginner-friendly literature. Two projects scheduled for publication are the “Ready Set Go!!” workshop guide, and the “Getting Started” newcomers text. This measure could overlap to some degree with projects under development, but that are significantly different in focus. If this measure is approved, the Literature Committee can work with the proposers to identify strategies for harmonizing the projects to best suit newcomers’ needs.

Comments:

- Our meeting uses a booklet called Breaking the Bonds that is available at <https://acaoregon.com/aca-meeting-materials/>
- newcomers to ACA are always asking for this. Need more than Getting Started and Ready Set go, that was a beginning, this would cover more.
- ACOA is not easy. The level of commitment and effort required to gain recovery is the issue and a newcomers booklet will not change that. We the members of our group in service positions got recovery because of our verve for it. The BRB was enough in this respect to get us there, and along with intensive meeting scheduling and commitment to attend and reaching out to those who have walked the walk is enough in our opinion to teach any newcomer all they need to know. And a very important factor is new arrivals to connect humanly, not just in a literary sense.
- We think this is an attempt to control the newcomers' experience and should not be a subject of ABC discussion.

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- This goes to the literature committee
- While other types of ACA literature are being developed specifically for newcomers and beginners, this handbook would fill unmet needs in unique ways.
- Group likes the idea for more introductory information. An overview for newcomers and beginners with more psychological guidelines would be great.
- Since this was already in progress, we didn't not feel additional discussion was warranted at this time.
- Beginner's meetings are very helpful in other programs and have a place in ACA.

2020 ABC Ballot Results for Adult Children of Alcoholics

120	Yes	89%	Proposal 2020 – 10
15	No	11%	
19	No Opinion		
			Submitted on November 27, 2019 by MA047 from Cambridge, MA

Issue: We propose that . . . the WSO create a daily reparenting reader similar in structure to the Strengthening My Recovery (SMR) daily reader. Reparenting tips, meditations, etc. would draw from the forthcoming Loving Parent Guidebook, the Big Red Book, other ACA literature, including new material, and ACA member submissions. The daily reparenting reader will complement the upcoming Loving Parent Guidebook, which helps ACAs learn and apply reparenting tools. The proposed reparenting reader will provide daily inspiration and support us to reparent ourselves with gentleness, humor, love, and respect.

History/Reasoning: A daily reparenting reader would reinforce the first line of the solution: "The Solution is to become Your Own Loving Parent." Daily entries would help ACAs make reparenting a regular and accessible practice. Having 365 entries would give our large, diverse fellowship more options to deepen their reparenting skills. The reparenting reader would support and complement the existing SMR daily reader. It would offer another way for ACAs to connect with each other and break isolation. Practical and inspirational themes could include, but would not be limited to:

- The meaning of reparenting
- Reparenting and gentleness humor, love and respect
- Working the steps and reparenting together -Detaching with love from the Critical Parent
- Strengthening your Loving Parent
- Learning Loving Parent skills to validate, reassure and nurture your inner child
- Helping your inner child learn to trust your loving parent
- Strategies and tools to connect with your inner child -Growth and changes in inner child work
- Reparenting and self-care

Argument in Favor: The SMR daily reader provides enormous value to the fellowship. SMR covers a wide range of ACA recovery topics and helps ACAs deepen their overall recovery. A reparenting reader would expose ACAs to more ways to engage with and incorporate reparenting into their daily lives. ACAs can use the reader alone, in pairs, in groups, etc. It offers members an accessible way to feel supported with reparenting, which can be elusive for many.

WSO Analysis: Much like literature focusing on newcomer needs, safety, and Traditions, WSO is placing an expanded emphasis on Reparenting and Inner Child work. The Loving Parent Guidebook, authorized by the 2017 ABC, is scheduled for beta-testing release in 2020. A daily reader could be a logical companion to Reparenting literature already in development.

Comments:

- Our group was very enthusiastic about this proposal!
- Yes.. great companion to Reparenting Inner child Need Loving parent, inner child information to make safer, honest, clear boundaries... Beneficial for early morning reading
- We think this will give people the option. However, someone needs to step up to writing this - the submitting group?
- This goes to the Literature Committee
- Great idea.
- Group felt additional discussion on re-parenting was warranted as this ballot item proposes.

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117	Yes	85%	Proposal 2020 – 13
22	No	15%	
15	No Opinion		Submitted on November 28, 2019 by NV0072 from Reno, NV

Issue: We propose that . . . The "Alcoholic/Dysfunctional Families" part of the title on the cover of the Big Red Book be moved up to be consistent with the Title Page, Page I. "Adult Children of Alcoholics Alcoholic/Dysfunctional Families". Also that the spine be changed to read "Adult Children of Alcoholics/Dysfunctional Families".

History/Reasoning: Past proposals show that there is an issue with members from dysfunctional, non alcoholic homes feeling left out.

Argument in Favor: In order for members of ACA who are from dysfunctional, non alcoholic homes to have equal billing as those with alcoholic parents. "Dysfunctional Families" should not be an afterthought or Subtitle. Also, the cover of the book should match the Title Page.

WSO Analysis: This proposal would require modest redesign efforts but could be accommodated as part of new reprint orders. ACA literature generally identifies us as Adult Children of Alcoholics/Dysfunctional Families, so this proposal would eliminate inconsistency on the cover about our organization's identity.

Comments:

- With so many forms of dysfunction in families, we would like to see the word "dysfunctional" have equal billing with "alcoholics" on our big red book. We believe this will help more people feel included in the program and allow us to reach more suffering adult children.
- It be less expensive to just change the title page to match the outside of the book.
- End run to try to change the name of the organization
- This proposal is consistent with proposal #5, and the proposed action would help members who are from dysfunctional, non alcoholic homes feel included, once they join us, having overcome the obstacle of identifying out before they start. Substantial unanimity in our group.
- This seems easy, and makes sense. Not sure a huge discussion is warranted on this front at the ABC, but we support this change.
- We agreed it is positive to the fellowship and newcomers to include "Dysfunctional Families" in our titles and literature.