

Workshop Handout

Fellow traveler along the road of recovery and discovery

Sponsorship



*“And the day came when the risk to remain tight in bud
became more painful than the risk to bloom.”*

~Anais Nin

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Types of Sponsorship – The Sponsorship Umbrella

Direct Sponsorship

Traditional Sponsor – A fellow traveler that's willing to share experience, strength and hope in helping the sponsee work his/her way through the steps, and to gain the tools for coping with life on life's terms by working the program.

Temporary Sponsor – Serves as an interim Sponsor for a short time until a permanent one is found or mutually agreed upon.

Multiple Sponsors – More than one sponsor to serve various needs of the sponsee, as long as the sponsee isn't hiding out in the various relationships.

Co-Sponsors – Where 2 people are in agreement to sponsor each other. People usually have the benefit of having time and experience in the program in order to be of help to each other.

Long Distance Sponsors – Communication via email, snail mail, telephone or tape recordings, where distance or circumstance prevents person-to-person contact.

Indirect Sponsorship

Step Study Groups that meet regularly to work the steps together.

Support Writing and Discussion Groups that meet regularly to support and encourage each other with working through issues.

Meetings also act as a role model and sponsor in administering attraction not promotion. Attending meetings where people enthusiastically carry out service positions and immediately volunteer to do service, with "healthy family" enthusiasm and contribution that we probably didn't have or see growing up, can be a welcoming sight to new and old members alike. Solution oriented meetings have an emphasis on stepwork, sponsorship, traditions, other program tools, and, well-stocked literature table with a phone list. Persons available for Temporary Sponsorship would make themselves known with a show of hands or by remark on the phone list.

Service Groups add to the trickle down effect of sponsorship influence.

Business Meeting

Steering Committee

Event Committee

Intergroup

Hospitals and Institutions

What We Do As Sponsors

We accept and respect the huge responsibility of helping the fellow traveler along the road of recovery and discovery during transitional times. We carry the message by living the program and leading by example.

As sponsors we can:

- Continue to work our program by practicing the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions
- Offer listening & understanding without judgment
- Ask HP for strength and guidance with the relationship.
- Admit we don't know all the answers, and ask for help when we need it.
- Use "I" statements.
- Carry the message and not carry the sponsee.
- Reserve judgment at all times, and encourages finding own strength.
- Avoid being too firm, overprotective, controlling, manipulative, or otherwise inappropriate.
- Encourage learning about stinking thinking and other ways we sabotage our recovery.
- Encourage the development of a working relationship with Higher Power.
- Practice compassion, kindness, patience, and tolerance.
- Exercise caution when dealing with delicate matters.
- Support and encourage the building of character and confidence.
- Dwell upon solution oriented living.
- Ask and not assume to know what is going on.
- Give without expecting something in return...no strings attached.

What We Do As Sponsees

We begin to see that our ways with which we lived life were getting in our way. Although not quite understanding the ways of the program, or all that it has to offer, we came to believe that learning to live life as the program suggested will have positive changes and results.

Together we can learn:

- To work the 12 Steps, and learn to practice them in all our affairs.
- To continually develop our relationship with our Higher Power through practicing faith and letting go of fear.
- To explore new options and ideas, which had not previously occurred to us.
- To implement new and self-affirming life skills and let go of old ways.
- How to ask for help and how to accept it.
- How to take personal responsibility for our own life, without by playing the roles of victim or martyr.
- How unhealthy thoughts + unhealthy actions = unhealthy feelings, while, healthy thoughts + healthy actions = healthy feelings.
- We will get out of the process what we put into it. Putting in little or no work and expecting great returns is unrealistic.
- To work no one's program but our own.
- How to look for the good, and to place principles before personalities.
- To be supportive of others.
- To get out of black and white thinking, or acting in extremes.
- To be realistic in goal setting and staying away from unrealistic and impractical expectations.
- How the 12 Steps are for the individual, as the 12 Traditions are for the group.
- That we can't recover on our own.
- To thine own self be true.

Suggested Guidelines for Sponsor Selection

Our fears about Sponsor/Sponsee relationship are probably based upon old beliefs, myths, models, superstitions, past and present experiences tied to dysfunctional relationships. It's never too early or late to get a sponsor, or to make a change when the relationship isn't working.

We try our best to be brave and courageous by taking a leap of faith in practicing new loving and functional ways that will help take us from the problem into the solution. You are hereby encouraged to give yourself the opportunity to step up to the plate and hit a home run.

When looking around for a prospective Sponsor, find someone that:

- Has a working relationship with a Higher Power.
- Has a program and works it.
- Has worked the steps (or is currently working the steps).
- Has a working relationship with a sponsor.
- Practices the 12 Traditions.
- Has what you want in recovery, and is worthy of trust and respect.
- Has continuing interest, responsibility and accountability in recovery.
- Enjoys life and living on the whole, and is happy, joyous and free.
- Willing to spend time with you on the phone and in person, on a regular and on an as needed basis.
- Has similar schedules, wants and needs.
- Shares experience, strength and hope in a way that is meaningful to you.
- You feel comfortable in talking freely, candidly & confidentially with her/him.
- Listens attentively and is trustworthy.

When looking around, it's a good idea to remember that a Sponsor is not:

- Your Higher Power, guru or authority figure
- A family member or relative, spouse or lover
- A banker, counselor, therapist, social worker, nurse, doctor, or baby sitter
- A potential sexual partner – someone attractive or attracted to you
- In active addiction and not in recovery

We do these things on a best effort basis since we are learning what these healthy and nurturing qualities mean for ourselves in a new light – progress not perfection.

There may be times when the person you approach declines to be your Sponsor. Try your best to not take this response personally or as a rejection because they may already be working with someone else, or just not able to work with you at this time. Use this opportunity to simply ask someone else.

These guidelines are meant to be suggestions only. It is highly unlikely and virtually impossible to find all of these traits in any one person. Do the best you can with what you've got.

Initial Boundary Setting

Healthy boundaries for Sponsees and Sponsors can be initially developed and put in place before beginning to start working together. There's always room to make adjustments down the road. When maintained, these practices create space to allow mutual growth and development within the relationship.

When two people are interested in developing a Sponsor/Sponsee relationship, it's generally a helpful idea to first check out with one another issues/things/considerations that inherently can come up in the course of fulfilling commitments to each other.

- Is there ample-adequate time available that each person is willing to give?
- What are the best times to call one another, and/or to get together?
- What is the length of time and frequency with calls and meetings that each person is comfortable with?
- Are there any foreseeable circumstances that can change and impact the relationship in the near future? i.e. marriage, pregnancy, job/career, moving away, or _____?
- To agree upon periodic check-ins to evaluate and assess the viability and success of the relationship. Also to make any needed adjustments as circumstances change.
- To voice any expectations from each side, and to discuss them.
- To talk about getting together to celebrate accomplishments, honor milestones, or to simply relax and have fun.
- To talk about and agree upon circumstances that warrant termination of the relationship. i.e. change of heart, lack of willingness, untreated active addiction, abusive behavior, or _____?
- To be in agreement with being personally responsible and accountable for your half of the relationship...no less and no more.
- To set a time limit on the length of the relationship.
- To agree upon giving each other sufficient time and space to say goodbye, so long, or farewell in a respectful way.

After having the initial interview and discussion with one another, you may also take into consideration making a temporary commitment (i.e. for a _____ period of time) and then agreeing to take a test drive together to check out compatibility, before transitioning into a more permanent relationship.

Rights & Responsibilities In Recovery

As program members we sometimes had difficulty showing up for our rights, in a moderate way, even though we knew what our entitlements were.

We can be more assertive with boundaries after learning about our rights.

Rights are not privileges, do not have to be earned, and already belong to us.

You have the right and responsibility...

- To say, "NO!" especially when feeling not ready or unsafe.
- To dignity, respect and appreciation.
- To your own feelings, thoughts and opinions, and to express them accordingly.
- To change your mind, make mistakes and to take responsibility for your actions.
- To make your own choices, independent of the wishes of others.
- To say I don't know, understand, or don't care.
- To privacy, safety and entitlement to your own sacred space.
- To ask for what you want and need.
- To live life not motivated by fear, guilt or shame.
- To change, grow and to be healthier than those around you.
- To take care of yourself, no matter what circumstances you are in.
- To live life happy, joyous and free.
- To trust, respect and love whomever you choose.
- To disagree, not understand and not participate when asked.
- To terminate conversations with people who humiliate and put you down.

Program Tools of Recovery

Your program is like any living thing. Nurture your recovery and it will flourish. Neglect your program and it cannot take you very far down your recovery path.

Awareness + Acceptance + Action = Change. This program doesn't automatically work for those who need it. It works for those who want it. It works if you work it.

Prayer & Meditation – Are useful tools to help us build and maintain a healthy relationship with our loving Higher Power.

Meetings – Are gatherings where members share their experience, strength, and hope with one another. Meetings offer us opportunities to share, identify and solve our common problems through the gifts of the program.

Telephone – Is a means of communicating with other members between meetings, and also helps us to break the harmful effects of isolation. We can build links and relationships with friends and sponsors by making program calls.

Books and Literature – Help us to learn more about our selves and the process of recovery. New perspectives and ideas are made available through this resource.

Fun, Play, & Relaxation – Try to incorporate these healing and nurturing practices to maintain balance in your life because recovery work is not all work without play.

Journaling and Writing – Will often help us to clarify our thoughts and feelings by writing them down on paper. This tool is also used in our Fourth Step Inventory, and Daily Tenth Step check-in with ourselves.

Stepwork – By working the steps, and learning to practice their principles in all your affairs, you will experience positive changes happening in your life. The promises of recovery will come true and be present in your life as long as you continue to work for them.

Family of Origin Work – Taking a closer look at our family patterns and other characteristics will often help us know why we do the things we do, and why were the way we are. Knowing these traits can help us to make changes to bring us in alignment with who and what we want to be.

Service – Is a way of giving back what rewards you have received through the 12 Step process. Whether answering questions for newcomers, helping out in service positions, or being a sponsor. Service creates the opportunity to repay your gratitude.

Sponsorship – A sponsor is a fellow member that can help you to work the Steps, and to help you with your own program of recovery. Get a sponsor, or be one!

Gentleness, Humor, Love, & Respect – Remember to apply these principles while working your program. Too often we forget to treat ourselves well.

<i>Daily Program Journal</i>						<i>Month of:</i>				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<i>Prayer & Meditation</i>	<i>Attend Meetings</i>	<i>Program Calls</i>	<i>Books & Literature</i>	<i>Fun, Play & Relaxation</i>	<i>Journal & Writing</i>	<i>Step Work</i>	<i>Family of Origin Work</i>	<i>Service Work</i>	<i>Gentleness & Humor</i>
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First Aid Kit

During the course of your recovery process, it is highly likely that you will run smack dab into a personally threatening situation. This external or internal condition can appear in the form of a panic attack, shame spiral, or similar feelings of hopelessness, helplessness, and utter despair.

It is during these fearful times when the First Aid Kit can be called into action, and help you to deal with and resolve the issue at hand.

1. Contact your Higher Power and turn it over through Prayer and Meditation. Do the necessary footwork and then let it go.
2. Get on the phone and talk to your sponsor and/or program friends.
3. Write a gratitude list.
4. Go to a meeting and share about your experience. Don't isolate.
5. Ask for help with what you're going through, and be willing to receive help.
6. Do something physical. Walk around the block, do the dishes, clean the house, or _____?
7. Slow down because you're probably moving too fast. Remember to breathe. Take deep breaths and do your best to relax.
8. Ask yourself from a mature and objective perspective "Is my survival at stake – and what is really happening to me?"
9. Do some journaling/writing about the event.
10. Remember that thoughts and feelings aren't always fact.
11. Try your best to objectively describe what just happened to you, and then come up with a positive game plan to place into action in order to prevent this from happening again.
12. When implementing your First Aid Kit, remember the following: Progress not perfection. Actions speak louder than words. Easy does it but do it.

It's generally a good idea to practice your plan of action at least a few times before you really need it. This way you'll have a sense of what you're doing when you have to do it.

You can also practice when things are going well in your recovery process. Practice, practice, practice.

It works if you work it.