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Meeting Format for Friday at VVMC

[Note to the leader: items in italics or highlighted are for your use, you don't need to read them aloud. If leading this meeting is new for you, please read through the italicized instructions now, so you won't feel surprised.]

Welcome to the Freethinkers Living Sober meeting, an open meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous. My name is _____ and I am an alcoholic. An open meeting of AA means that anyone is welcome to attend. It should last about an hour, though we sometimes go over.

We would like to start with a moment of silence, to be used as you like, for the still sick and suffering alcoholic in and out of the rooms *[please allow 30-60 seconds as you like]*.

This weekly meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous attempts to maintain a tradition of free expression and conduct a meeting where alcoholics may feel free to express themselves about their own experience, beliefs, or feelings (including any doubts or disbeliefs they may have), and to share their own personal form of spiritual experience, their search for it, or their rejection of it without fear of contradiction or disrespect.

As freethinkers, we value the opinions, experiences, and beliefs of others. We want to keep an open mind about the views of others, particularly those with whom we disagree, without attempting to dissuade, argue, or disrespect those views. Please remember this when you share.

As a group, we are secular. That is, we do not endorse or oppose any system of belief, nor do we have any quarrel with any form of religion. Our only wish is to assure suffering alcoholics that they can find sobriety in A.A. without having to accept anyone else's belief or having to deny their own.

We would like to welcome those who are new to A.A., those who are at this meeting for the first time, and those visiting from out of town. Do we have any new members or visitors who would like to identify themselves?

I have asked _____ to read the official definition of What is AA.

Secretary's announcements & 7th Tradition

[over]

[Last Friday of the month is a 20 minute speaker. Secretary leads the meeting and introduces the speaker. After the speaker, secretary will ask for a show of hands for sharing, or go around the room. Otherwise:]

At Freethinkers Living Sober, we would like to give everyone a chance to share for a few minutes, perhaps 3-4, depending on the size of the meeting; If we have a timer **(recommended for 10 or more people)** then when the timer goes off, please try to wrap up your comments so everyone can have time to share. Anyone can pass if they like. After everyone has shared, if time permits, anyone who has something to add is welcome to do so. Please, no “double dipping” until everyone has shared.

[Leader can share for 3 to 5 minutes and then the topic is leaders' choice: 1. if you want a reading for the topic, ask someone to read (or read it yourself), or 2. ask for a topic, or 3. choose one yourself.]

Also your choice: ask for show of hands for sharing, or go around the room. We do not use “as the spirit leads” for the Friday meeting. Once everyone who wanted to share has had the opportunity, please ask any who passed if they would like to share now. No “double dipping” until after you’ve asked those who’ve passed.]

[for close of the meeting]:

We often follow up the meeting with coffee and fellowship together at a local restaurant, a “meeting after the meeting,” so feel free to ask anyone where we might be meeting and join in.

We will close the meeting today with the "Responsibility Pledge":

I am responsible: When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of A.A. always to be there. And for that I am responsible.

Format last updated 10/16/2017

Alternate reading: From Bill Wilson’s 1965 Address to the General Service Conference quoted in <http://aaagnostica.org/2012/10/07/responsibility-is-our-theme/>

In AA we are supposed to be bound together in the kinship of a universal suffering. Therefore the full liberty to practice any creed or principle or therapy should be a first consideration. Hence let us not pressure anyone with individual

or even collective views. Let us instead accord to each other the respect that is due to every human being as he tries to make his way towards the light. Let us always try to be inclusive rather than exclusive. Let us remember that each alcoholic among us is a member of AA, so long as he or she so declares.