

Sample format for conducting a group inventory

Before beginning the inventory:

- Distribute copies of the pamphlet “The A.A. Group ... Where It All Begins”.
- Determine who will open the inventory meeting; usually, this person is the group chairperson or group secretary. This person will make introductory remarks and then introduce the person who will be conducting the inventory.
- Determine who will serve as secretary, recording notes of what is said during the inventory process.
- Determine who will serve as timekeeper, timing each contributor’s comments to keep them to a reasonable length of time.

Good afternoon, I am an alcoholic, a member of the XXX Group in XXX, and my name is XXX. Welcome to the (name of group) group inventory, which I am privileged to facilitate at XXX’s request.

Please join me in a moment of silence followed by the Serenity Prayer.

And now, please join me in reciting the Third Step Prayer.

I would like to begin the inventory by reading a couple of passages from pages 63-64 of the Big Book, which I’m sure you’re all familiar with:

“Next, we launched out on a course of vigorous action, the first step of which is a personal housecleaning, which many of us had never attempted. Though our decision was a vital and crucial step, it could have little permanent effect unless at once followed by a strenuous effort to face, and to be rid of, the things in ourselves that had been blocking us.”

“A business which takes no regular inventory usually goes broke. Taking a commercial inventory is a fact-finding and a fact-facing process. It is an effort to discover the truth about the stock-in-trade. One object is to disclose damaged or unsalable goods, to get rid of them promptly and without regret ... We did exactly the same thing with our lives. We took stock honestly.”

In a very similar way, and for very similar reasons, many A.A. groups periodically take an inventory, which basically amounts to an honest and fearless discussion of

the group's strengths and weaknesses. Just as our personal inventory helps reveal how well-positioned we are to fulfill our primary purpose of staying sober and helping other alcoholics achieve sobriety, an inventory at the group level helps reveal how well the group is fulfilling its primary purpose of helping alcoholics recover through A.A.'s suggested Twelve Steps.

And so this **afternoon/evening**, we're going to let our A.A. literature guide us in the process of taking a group inventory. We will be relying on suggested inventory questions from the pamphlet, "The A.A. Group ... Where It All Begins," originally published by A.A. World Services in 1965 and revised in 1990. I believe you received a copy of these questions previously, and copies have been distributed for your reference as we go through this process today.

Before we begin reviewing the questions, I'd like to explain a format that has worked well for other groups when taking their inventory, beginning with some guidelines that other groups have found helpful:

- First, since this is not a group conscience meeting, no decisions will be made today on any discussion that arises.
- While a consensus on a particular item is possible, it is not necessary.
- As we do at a regular A.A. meeting, we will raise our hand when we want to speak.
- We should refrain from interrupting someone else when he or she is speaking.
- And as always, we will strive to place principles above personalities and keep A.A.'s primary purpose uppermost in our minds.

Are these guidelines agreeable to everyone?

Assisting with the group inventory today will be **XXX**, who will serve as secretary. **He/she** will record your answers to the questions we'll discuss. **He/she** will not be recording names, so you can feel free to say whatever is on your mind. **He/she** will be compiling **his/her** notes and sharing them with you so that you can continue a discussion of those items you feel need further consideration at a future group conscience meeting.

Also assisting this afternoon is **XXX**, who will serve as our timekeeper. Because it's important to hear what everyone has to say while staying within the allotted time

for this group inventory, which is an hour and a half, XXX will gently let you know when we need to move on to the next speaker who wants to be recognized. Remember, there will be additional opportunities to share your thoughts when the group reviews today's discussion at a group conscience meeting.

For each question, group members will share around the room in a round-robin fashion. If you want to speak on a particular question, you can do so for 2-3 minutes. If you choose not to speak, you can pass. Once everyone has had the chance to share on a particular question, we'll go around the room again to give anyone a chance to contribute after hearing what others had to say and providing a second chance for anyone who passed on the question.

In this way, we'll work through as many of the questions as we can, with the goal of getting through all 13 by approximately (time) so we can close the meeting at (time).

Are there any questions about the process we'll be using?

Okay, let's get started with the first question.

- 1. What is the basic purpose of our group?*
- 2. What more can our group do to carry the message?*
- 3. Is our group attracting alcoholics from different backgrounds? Are we seeing a good cross section of our community, including those with special needs?*
- 4. Do new members stick with us, or does the turnover seem excessive? If so, why? What can we, as a group, do to retain members?*
- 5. Do we emphasize the importance of sponsorship? How effectively? How can we do it better?*
- 6. Are we careful to preserve the anonymity of our group members and other A.A.s outside the meeting rooms? Do we also leave what they share at meetings behind?*

7. Does our group emphasize to all members the value of keeping up with the kitchen, set-up, clean-up and other housekeeping chores that are essential for our Twelfth Step efforts?

8. Are all members given the opportunity to speak at meetings and to participate in other group activities?

9. Mindful that holding office is a great responsibility not to be viewed as the outcome of a popularity contest, are we choosing our officers with care?

10. Are we doing all we can to provide an attractive and accessible meeting place?

11. Does our group do its fair share toward participating in the purpose of A.A. as it relates to our Three Legacies of Recovery, Unity, and Service?

12. What has our group done lately to bring the A.A. message to the attention of professionals in the community – the physicians, clergy, court officials, educators, and others who are often the first to see alcoholics in need of help?

13. How is our group fulfilling its responsibility to the Seventh Tradition?

We've now come to the end of our fact-finding and fact-facing process. Thank you to everyone who shared. At this time, I'll ask if there's anything else anyone would like to bring to the group to add to the information we've collected.

As mentioned earlier, XXX will compile all of this information and share it with you for continued discussion at a group conscious meeting, at which point you may decide to take action on particular items.

I want to thank you for allowing me to facilitate your group inventory today. Before turning the meeting back over to XXX, I would like to ask that you join me in reciting the Seventh Step Prayer.