



Local Alumni Chapter / Recovery Groups Suggested Guidelines

The following set of guidelines and suggestions have been helpful in organizing effective local TRC Alumni Chapter meetings. These tools are by no means a “rule of law,” but have proved useful to alumni when starting-up our existing chapters.

Local TRC Alumni Chapters provide alumni in a specific geographic area an additional form of recovery meeting. The meetings are another tool to support the ongoing recovery of alumni and serve as a bridge for the newest alumnus during the critical transition from treatment at TRC to life in their homes and communities. For a newcomer, belonging to a group of people who share a common experience at TRC can be a key element to making that transition as smooth as possible. While a TRC alumni recovery meeting can be a valuable tool for recovery, TRC does not believe or endorse alumni recovery meetings as a substitute for regular attendance at 12-Step meetings. Rather, alumni chapter meetings serve as an enhancement to a patient’s continuing care plan and can enrich and strengthen sobriety.

Alumni recovery meetings can utilize a variety of formats and practices. Some meetings will be successful and continue to grow over time. Other meetings will have attendance that ebbs and flows. The reason for this inconsistency varies. Although Alumni Recovery Group meetings are autonomous and self-supporting, TRC Alumni Services, with the help of many alumni, has created the following guide for your group to consider in a “group conscious” format. It is suggested that participants consider each factor to help maintain a group that meets the needs of as many alumni as possible and is attractive to newcomers.

As your recovery meeting grows over time, please feel free to offer TRC Alumni Services any suggestions that could be helpful to new or other existing alumni chapters.

Logistics

1. Meeting Day & Time:

- Is the meeting time good for everyone at this meeting?
- Does anyone in attendance know of alumni who could not attend because of the time?
- Is there another feasible time, maybe for an additional meeting?

2. Meeting Location:

- Is the meeting location in a place that is consistently available and centrally located?
- Is the meeting place in a neutral place, such as a church or community center rather than the home or business of an alumnus?
- Is there another location that would better serve more alumni?

3. Other Considerations:

- Is the group self-supporting?
- Are meetings held frequent enough? (Most meetings are more successful if they meet at least once a week).

Meeting Guidelines

4. Who can attend:

- Is the meeting intended for TRC alumni only?
- Can family members or guests be invited to attend any meetings or only specified meetings?

5. Meeting Format

- Are members satisfied with the meeting format? Here are some suggested questions to ask that have helped other Alumni Chapters define a format.
 - Do alcoholic/addicts and family members want to have separate meetings before sharing begins; providing a choice at each meeting?
 - Some groups have varied formats each week of the month to add variety and diversity to their meetings. For example: Speaker meeting, step study, open discussion, book study, etc.
 - Some meetings invite outside speakers
 - Some meetings have a break in the middle of the meeting for more fellowship.
 - Some meetings have regular dinners/meals before or after the sharing meeting.
- Is there a consistent format for opening and closing each meeting?
- Is individual sharing encouraged without cross talk / prescribing / interpreting or advice giving?
- Is safety assured by a confidentiality statement (“What you hear stays here”), and by limiting cross talk to supportive feedback, or a statement reminding members to talk about their own experiences?
- Does the group plan social gatherings for additional fellowship?
- Are newcomers made to feel welcome and a part of the group?

Service

6. Commitment Issues

- Are commitments regularly rotated among members?
- Are greeters present to welcome attendees/newcomers?
- Is an address/phone list kept current and available to all Alumni attendees?

- Is the address/phone list given to the TRC Alumni Services at least quarterly to update the master file for newsletters/alumni contacts/and emails?
- Are possible alumni contacts identified and provided to TRC to be of service to the newly released alumni?
- Is there a regular business meeting held? (Suggestions would be to have a business meeting when election of commitments is made – every 6 to 12 months.)

7. Suggested commitments:

Secretary – Primary contact with Alumni Services, chooses leader for each meeting, sets up meetings, coordinates other “officers”.

Treasurer– Handles finances –7th tradition, rent, etc.

Contact Person – Maintains an up-to-date phone/email list with Alumni contacts identified and provides this to Alumni Services quarterly.

Activities Chair – Organizes social events, birthdays, etc.

Literature Person – Provides literature about TRC. Local meeting directories and other AA, NA. AL-Anon literature. Sends current meeting directories to Alumni Services for distribution to patients before they leave.

Coffee Person

Greeters

We hope you find this information helpful and useful as you organize and help to grow your Local TRC Alumni Chapter. Alumni Services is here to assist you. If you have questions about the suggestions in this material or on any other issue, please contact Carol Bowers (carol.bowers@uhsinc.com) who will assist you with your questions. We look forward to helping you build an effective Alumni Chapter that will be an asset to the recoveries of all alumni in your area.