

Alcoholics anonymous attending a meeting essay examples

[Health & Medicine](#), [Alcoholism](#)



Abstract

Attending an Alcoholics Anonymous (A. A.) meeting for the first time was a somewhat nervous experience, not knowing what to expect. A little research before attending helped prepare for the meeting. The people and the conventions followed at the meeting led it to be a positive experience that can be recommended for anyone interested in dealing with alcoholism.

Alcoholics Anonymous: Attending a Meeting

Before attending an Alcoholics Anonymous (A. A.) meeting, I wanted to know a little bit about what to expect. Would I feel pressured to speak about myself and would they question my reason for being there? What if there were people there who knew me? If they knew why I was there, would I be embarrassed? What was the proper etiquette for participating in a meeting? It was important to find the answers to these questions before going to the meeting.

The first thing I did before attending was to learn what to expect at a meeting. GPSolo Magazine, a publication of the American Bar Association, has an article providing me with reassurance about how members would confront me, because “ if a person is called upon and does not wish to talk, he or she has only to say, ‘ I think I will just listen today,’ or, ‘ I’ll pass’” (Sweeny 2004, ¶ 3). Also, there are different types of meetings, some of which are “ Open” meetings where anyone is welcome, and “ Closed” meetings, where only alcoholics or those with a desire to stop drinking are invited to attend (Sweeny 2004, ¶ 6). I searched for an “ Open” meeting, and armed basic information, I selected a time and meeting that seemed

appropriate for a first-time experience.

Still nervous, I arrived about fifteen minutes before the meeting began.

Several people stood outside the church smoking, chatting about work and family, so I approached and asked, "Is this where the meeting is tonight?"

They were very friendly and told me if I went inside, the coffee was probably ready, but if I wanted to smoke I'd have to do it outside. I thanked them and went inside.

Inside, chairs were set up in a circle, and a table on the side of the room offered several pamphlets about A. A. and alcoholism. I picked up one, A. A.: An Introduction to the A. A. Recovery Program, perused it before the meeting began. I learned that "the only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking," that A. A. is not associated with any particular religious denomination, and people of all ages, genders, social, economic, and cultural backgrounds are members (A. A. World Services 1984, pp. 2, 7). As I read, a woman stopped by and asked if I was new and had any questions. I admitted I had never attended a meeting before, and she reassured me that the "Anonymous" part of A. A. seriously adhered to, because what happens at stays private within the meeting, including identities of attendants. I left my notebook in my bag, because it seemed like sitting there and taking notes amongst strangers might somehow appear as a breach of etiquette to the anonymous nature of the gathering.

As the meeting began, the members read the "Preamble" together. Each person had an opportunity to speak for a few minutes about what was going on their lives pertaining to their struggles with alcohol. Many had positive things to say about their progress, and a members remaining sober for a

month were treated with equal accolades just as another member was reached their tenth year of sobriety. At my turn to speak, I followed the advice of Sweeney's article and said I preferred simply to listen. This was accepted with grace and understanding. A few members expressed distress at events in their lives such as divorce, custody battles, job loss, or battles with depression that were threatening them to relapse. Other members did not tell them what to do, but offered the advice that things needed to be handled one day at a time, or the "24-Hour Plan" as described in the pamphlet (A. A. World Services 1984, p. 14).

The meeting ended with the "Serenity Prayer," in which the members held hands and recited it together. I joined the group but did not speak since I did not know the words. Overall, it was a very positive experience that I would recommend anyone desiring to confront issues with alcohol should try without trepidation.

References

Alcoholics Anonymous World Services (1984). This is A. A. an Introduction to the A. A. Recovery Program [Brochure].

Sweeny, Michael (2004). What To Expect At Twelve-Step Meetings. GPSolo Magazine. Web. Retrieved from http://www.americanbar.org/newsletter/publications/gp_solo_magazine_home/gp_solo_magazine_index/whattoexpect12.html