

Survivors of Incest Anonymous

For Adult Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse

Suggestions for Starting a Meeting



So you are interested in starting an SIA meeting in your area? Successful groups have been started by one person, but if there are several survivors who can commit to getting it rolling, all the better.

Some initial questions to consider when starting a meeting are:

- What changes, if any, do we want to make to the basic format? Helpful structure for a meeting goes a long way towards keeping it focused and productive.
- New or changed safety guidelines? What aspects of safety are really important to us?
- What site can we choose that is accessible? (It usually takes some time finding a site) easy access from public transportation, ideally doesn't require a key to get in (there are inevitable issues with this). it feels safe enough for all attendees. Is it 12 Step friendly?
- What day and time works best for the founders?

How do we actually get started?

- Create a notebook with all the meeting documents in it. (I.e., format, "How this meeting works", Safety Guidelines, etc. (These documents can be downloaded for free from the siawso.org website).
- It's important to remember that no one person is the "leader" of a group. Follow the 12 Traditions to help you set your format, boundaries, and sharing and safety guidelines.
- During your first few meetings you can spend the 2nd half of the meeting making changes to the format, etc. After that, a group conscience can be called whenever changes need to be made.
- Do we open to new members right away? Though successful groups have started with just one committed person, if you have several founders, you may want to run several initial meetings to work out the kinks, etc.

How many meetings can the founders commit to attending?

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- During the first 3-6 months it is critical to have as many founders as possible there every meeting, ready to start on time. This helps newcomers feel safe and the meeting has a consistent feel to it. It's hard on a newcomer to show up and find no one there.
- Meetings that start with 3-4 people have an advantage as it enables each major role to be filled for the first 6 months easily and it makes it much more likely that someone would be present on time for each meeting.

What will we name our meeting?

- If you look at meeting lists you will see that each meeting has its own name that tells people a bit about it.

Who will be the Group Service Officers? Ideally, members take a position for a set amount of time (1-3 years). Some positions may need to be combined when the group is small. Follow the 12 Traditions and 12 Concepts of Service to guide your efforts.

- Group Representative, This person represents the group with the local Intergroup and/or the World Service Conference. Attends meetings, can vote for the group, etc.
- Secretary, This person is the groups contact for the World Service Office. This person usually is the one that registers the group in the meeting directory on SIAWSO.org. Also, should place notices of the meeting in local outlets where other 12 step meetings are listed. May want to send meeting info to counselling centers, etc. The more outreach the more likely the meeting will grow.
- Treasurer, handles the weekly donations. Keeps a prudent reserve. Pays the rent. Orders and downloads Literature from siawso.org. The group may choose to print several copies and sell to members to recoup the cost of printing. Or, have group copies of everything, and members can look over and purchase on their own. Sends contributions to WSO.

We wish you all the best in your endeavor to start a meeting. You are doing a service for yourself and fellow survivors everytime to you show up for healing and recovery. One of the greatest gifts we get from meetings is knowing that we are not alone!