

Hosted Meeting Script

1) Welcome. Hi, I'm _____. I'm hosting this SMART Recovery discussion meeting. SMART Recovery supports individuals who have chosen to abstain or considering abstinence from any problematic substance or activity. This meeting will last (60 or 90) minutes. Together we can have a helpful meeting by following the meeting guidelines:

- 1) No one is required to participate. We'll go around-the-circle at least twice. When it's your turn, you can say "pass" or waive your hand.
- 2) This meeting is confidential; what is said here, stays here.
- 3) This meeting is free, but later we will pass the hat for donations.
- 4) This meeting is conversational and we keep the discussion moving from person to person.
- 5) We don't give advice, however we can offer ideas to consider. SMART Recovery encourages participants to make their own choices.
- 6) We don't debate issues about addiction and recovery. We are free to view addiction and recovery however we want to.
- 7) In this meeting we "Do SMART Recovery" by doing exercises based on SMART Recovery tools.
- 8) If an issue comes up we don't know how to handle, we'll check in with SMART Recovery and get a report back for next week.

After this introduction we'll go around the circle for a check-in. Tell us, if you wish, what you'd like us to know, perhaps why you are here or what has happened with you recently. After the check-in we'll begin a series of around-the-circle exercises. After each exercise we'll discuss what we learned from it. Then we'll pass the hat and have a checkout, when you can tell us what was most meaningful to you in this meeting.

2) Check-in. Let's begin with the check-in. What would you like us to know?

3) Discussion. Let's do an exercise based on the SMART Recovery Tool...

(See Discussion Exercises)

Did anything come up that you would like to discuss?

4) Pass the hat. Thanks for this discussion. We're now going to pass the hat. Any donation you make is greatly appreciated. With your contributions, we can reach out to others who need to know about SMART Recovery. There are several ways to learn more about SMART Recovery. You can attend more meetings, purchase the SMART Recovery Handbook, visit our website at www.smartrecovery.org and participate in our online meetings, message board or chat room.

5) Checkout: Now it's time to check-out. Tell us, if you wish, what was most meaningful to you in tonight's meeting. You may wish to acknowledge the positive impact someone had on you, or explain how you understand a SMART Recovery tool better.

6) Close: Thanks for attending tonight. We hope to see you here again next week!

Hosted Meeting: Discussion Exercises

NOTE: If needed, repeat the explanation and the question. You might also ask someone in the group to give an example.

1. This exercise is based on the SMART Recovery tool **Change Plan Worksheet**. What could you do tomorrow to advance your recovery or your life? What could you do today to increase the chances of following through tomorrow?
2. This exercise is based on the SMART Recovery tool **ABC**. What helpful belief do you notice developing in yourself? How could you develop that belief even more?
3. This exercise is based on the SMART Recovery tool **Role-play**. You are about to say one sentence. You need to tell someone something. Don't tell us who it is, or the story behind the sentence. Just tell us the one sentence with expression.
4. This exercise is based on the SMART Recovery tool **Hierarchy of Values**. Which value of yours seems especially important to you right now? Why?
5. If there is still time left in the discussion period, you might return to the first exercise and change the timeframes involved:

This exercise is based on the SMART Recovery tool **Change Plan Worksheet**. What could you do (e.g., this week, this weekend, this month, this year, or over the next 5 years) to advance your recovery or your life? What could you do (e.g., today, tomorrow, this week, this weekend, this month, or this year) to increase the chances of following through?

6. If there is still time left in the discussion period, you might return to the second exercise:
This exercise is based on the SMART Recovery tool **ABC**. What additional helpful belief do you notice developing in yourself (perhaps as influenced by this meeting)? How could you develop that belief even more?
7. This exercise is based on the SMART Recovery tool **ABC for Emotional Upsets** (Activating event, underlying Belief, and emotional or behavioral Consequence):
 - a) What has been a "blessing in disguise" experience for you? What happened you initially viewed as a disaster, but later viewed as a blessing or opportunity? How did your thinking change exactly?
 - b) What belief would you most like to develop?
8. This exercise is based on the SMART Recovery tool **CBA** (Cost-Benefit Analysis).
 - a) What was the greatest benefit of your addictive behavior? What was the greatest cost? How is the benefit and the cost related?
 - b) What is the greatest benefit you are getting, or would get, without your addictive behavior?

9. This exercise is based on the SMART Recovery tool **ABC for Urges** (Activating event, underlying Belief, and emotional or behavioral Consequences):
 - a) When you have an urge, what thought is most likely to get you to engage in it? What do you think of that thought now?
 - b) What is the last urge you coped with successfully? How did you do it?
10. This exercise is based on the SMART Recovery tool **DISARM** (Destructive Images and Self-talk Awareness and Refusal Method):
 - a) If you were going to picture your addictive behavior as something or someone out to get you, how would you see it?
11. This exercise is based on the SMART Recovery tool **Brainstorming**:
 - a) What is the most helpful idea you have ever heard or read about to overcome a problematic addictive behavior?
12. This exercise is based on the SMART Recovery tool **USA** (Unconditional Self-Acceptance):
 - a) In your mind—without telling us what it is—tell yourself what you think your biggest flaw is. Then tell us out loud what you think your life would be like if you didn't have it. Don't tell us the flaw; just tell us how your life would be different without it.
13. This exercise is based on the SMART Recovery 4th Point, **Lifestyle Balance**:
 - a) To lead a more balanced life, what do you need to do more of?
 - b) If you don't get enough (e.g., sleep, exercise, healthy food), what could you do to get more?
 - c) How has your addictive behavior balanced out your life? How could you balance it in new ways?

Hosting a SMART Recovery Discussion Meeting

Read the Script, Enforce the Guidelines, & Do SMART Recovery

Thank you for learning about how to host a SMART Recovery Discussion meeting. SMART Recovery meetings make the difference between life and death for some individuals. You are helping us reach the goal of making SMART Recovery available everywhere. We're glad you're joining our community.

This will review how to use the Discussion meeting guidelines, script and exercises. In summary, as Discussion Meeting Host you simply read the provided script and enforce the Guidelines. By doing so you will "Do SMART Recovery".

Please read the meeting script and exercises as written, no more or no less. These have been carefully developed over several years. When they are followed and read as written, they result in successful meetings with few (if any) problems.

A truly successful meeting occurs when participants feel safe enough to speak very openly about themselves. We want our recovery tools to be applied to deeper thoughts and feelings, not the thoughts and feelings people express when they are afraid of being criticized. The meeting script is designed to promote a sense of safety and acceptance. Besides providing better material for using the tools, deeper meetings also promote community and connection. People feel closer with and bond with others when deeper thoughts and feelings are discussed.

You can set the stage for safety and acceptance before the meeting starts. Smile as people enter, and greet them. For instance, you might say to someone who seems to be a newcomer, "Hi, I'm Tom and I'm hosting tonight's meeting. No one is required to participate, so you can just listen if you want. I'm glad you're here." If you recognize someone, you might say, "Hi, glad you could make it."

Similarly, during the check-in, smile and say "thank you" or otherwise acknowledge each person's contribution. Although it takes effort on your part to acknowledge each person, you'll see that effort reflected in the quality of your meeting. For instance, during check-in you might say "I'm sorry to hear about that bad news..." or "Congratulations on achieving that milestone..." or "That's really unfortunate. I'm glad you made it to the meeting tonight."

Likewise, during the checkout and after each person's contribution during an exercise, looking them in the eye and saying "thank you" may be sufficient. Then look to the next person, as a non-verbal indication that it is their turn.

Be careful not to mention personal information from previous meetings, or even someone's presence at a previous meeting. Revealing that information would violate the confidentiality rule: what is said here, stays here. So don't mention someone's name until you hear the participant say it first. In some cases you will know that a participant is very open about their SMART Recovery participation, so this guideline won't apply as much to those situations.

You also create a sense of safety by establishing routines. With routines, participants know what to expect and therefore relax more. You can sit in the same place each meeting, go around the circle in the same direction from the same starting point (usually the person on your right or left), and, of course, read the meeting script the same way each time. Even though people hear the script many times, they may hear something new or a new emphasis, just like listening to a favorite song again and again.

When it's time to begin the meeting, sit up, speak up clearly, and convey non-verbally that the meeting is beginning. Take charge of your meeting, even though you are NOT taking charge of anyone's recovery. Your job is to host a good meeting. Recovery is THEIR job. You are the host; they make the party.

NOTE: We encourage you NOT to check-in or to participate in the meeting as others do. There is a different satisfaction in being a meeting host and you can go home feeling great, knowing that you established a setting for others to create positive change. If you check-in, it can reduce the sense of safety and participants may wonder if you're there for them or for yourself. With this in mind, find another meeting to attend for yourself, or you can attend the weekly online "Fresh Start" meeting provided for our volunteers on Monday at 8pm Eastern time.

DO SMART RECOVERY

The overall three-word guideline for a SMART Recovery meeting is "Do SMART Recovery." Our meetings are lively discussions about how to use the SMART tools to accomplish the 4-Points of the SMART Recovery program: (1) Building and maintaining motivation; (2) Coping with urges; (3) Managing thoughts, feelings, and behaviors; and (4) Living a balanced life.

In addition to "Do SMART Recovery," other meeting guidelines are listed in the script. The primary ones to focus on are: No monologues, no advice, and no off-topic discussions. In most cases it will be necessary to interrupt someone in order to enforce these guidelines. Although interrupting others is not desirable social behavior, in your role as meeting host it is often necessary. In some cases it may be useful to acknowledge the interruption as you are doing it:

- "I'm interrupting you because it's time to move on to the next person."
- "I'm interrupting you because that sounds like advice. Can you re-phrase it as a suggestion, or just summarize from your own experience?"
- "I'm interrupting you because this topic is not an appropriate one for a SMART meeting. We are here to "Do SMART Recovery". Would you like to make a different statement?"

In many cases, however, you do not need to name the interruption, simply make your statement, such as "it's time to move on to the next person."

NO MONOLOGUES

If a monologue is occurring, interrupt and say “it’s time to move on to the next person.”

If someone has a particularly emotional issue (perhaps they just got fired) you may extend the time somewhat. Generally speaking, participants can finish their contribution in a minute or less. If you are not sure whether to interrupt, look around the room. If others are paying close attention, it might not be time to interrupt just yet.

However, keep the big picture in mind. A good meeting is a discussion, not just one person talking at length. Some of your participants might be described as “addicted to attention.” For them a mutual help meeting is a high-risk situation. By interrupting them and moving the discussion along may be the only way to prevent your meeting from being hijacked by an attention-seeker.

NO ADVICE

If someone is giving advice, interrupt and say “Can you re-phrase this as a suggestion, or just summarize from your own experience?” We want to hear participant experiences, but each participant is free to judge the relevance of those experiences for themselves. Advice, like criticism, can lead people to shut down, not open up.

NO OFF TOPIC DISCUSSIONS

If an off topic discussion starts, interrupt and say, “This topic is not an appropriate one for a SMART meeting. We are here to “Do SMART Recovery”. Would you like to make a different statement?”

A SMART Recovery meeting is not the place to debate addiction controversies. Is addiction a disease? Is belief in a Higher Power necessary for recovery? Is there a Higher Power? Is AA better than SMART or vice versa? Am I an addict or an alcoholic? These issues and subject matters are up to each participant to decide for themselves. You can remind everyone of the SMART Recovery slogan “Discover the Power of Choice”.

There are several off-topic discussions that merit specific attention. If a participant says “I’m suicidal” immediately respond by saying “I’m sorry to hear that. Are you feeling suicidal enough that we need to do something right now?”

Although we’re not aware of an instance of someone in a SMART meeting being immediately suicidal, if you do, stop the meeting and call 911 if necessary. Otherwise say “This meeting focuses on doing SMART Recovery. I hope that by coming here tonight you’ll feel better and that you’ll seek appropriate help later. I have the number of a suicide hotline to give you after the meeting.”

NOTE: If you are professional or a specific institutional setting for your meeting, you may have other options available to you. The method just described is useful for a typical community meeting.

If someone describes during check-in, a plan to continue using or cut back on some substance (typically alcohol or marijuana), state: “I’m glad you’re here. SMART Recovery discussions support stopping, not using. In the main section of our meeting, the discussion section, our focus is on stopping. However, you are free to use these ideas and the tools we use as you see fit. We are not trying to control you, but we do control our discussions.”

If someone is intoxicated, simply state “You appear to be under the influence of some substance. You are welcome to stay and listen, without speaking. We hope to see you again soon”. It may be necessary to assist this person in getting home safely.

Although beginning hosts are often concerned about suicidal or intoxicated participants, these problems are rare in SMART Recovery meetings. If you feel stuck in dealing with an unexpected situation, you can request assistance from your meeting participants. Collectively the group will arrive at some solution to whatever problems arise.

If unexpected discussion problems arise in a meeting, simply move on by saying, “I think this discussion may not be the best use of our time. Let’s (finish going around the circle; or, begin a new exercise).” If it’s appropriate, have someone read up on the issue, or you can check in with your supervising Facilitator, the Central Office, or SMART Meeting Management and report back next week.

AROUND-THE-CIRCLE EXERCISES

In starting out use the Discussion meeting exercises 1 – 6, which may keep you busy for weeks. These exercises are written to allow participation by anyone, even individuals who do not see themselves as seeking recovery.

Remember, our SMART meetings are open to anyone and you may get graduate students, family members, or curious professionals attending. These exercises allow anyone to participate in the meeting discussions. Full participation increases the sense of safety of the group. If students make notes about the meeting, typically starting from the beginning of the meeting, ask them to do so after the meeting by saying, “I know you would not be writing down personal details, but it can be uncomfortable for anyone speaking to see you taking notes.” However, regular participants can be supported if they wish to record important ideas during the discussion.

As you gain confidence in your role and your group gains knowledge about SMART, you can move onto exercises 7 - 13. Because of the constant change in participants at your meeting, these sets of exercises will likely be sufficient. Besides enforcing the guidelines, the most important decisions you will make are which exercises to use. You might select exercises based on the concerns mentioned during the check in. After check-in you might ask if anyone has a suggestion for the exercise to start with. You may simply wish to rotate through the exercises in the order given. Some of these exercises could be repeated every week with constantly changing answers.

You may develop a group of regular participants who have been through the exercises often. Check with your supervising facilitator or attend SMART Meeting Management meetings to discuss creating your own exercises based on the SMART tools or the SMART Recovery 4-Point Program. Even better yet, move up to the next level by completing the advanced host training. We encourage you to go even further and complete the Facilitator Training to gain a full, in-depth understanding of the SMART Recovery program and tools.

TIMING OF MEETINGS

Generally speaking, 60 minute meetings will be better attended. Your community may wish to add 90 minute meetings later.

In many meetings only one or two exercises will be used. At the conclusion of going around the circle for the exercise, ask the question in the script: “Did anything come up that you would like to discuss?” Then stare at the floor in the middle of the room, and slowly and silently count to five. If no one has spoken, it’s time to introduce another exercise. However, the discussion that occurs after you go around the circle may very well last right up to the time to “Pass the Hat” for donations.

If a discussion spontaneously occurs during check-in or any exercise before going around the circle is complete, wait a moment to see if it dies out on its own. If not say, “Great, we have a discussion going, which is what we want. However, let’s finish the circle, and then come back to this discussion. Because I interrupted while you were speaking, when the circle is complete I’ll come back to you to re-start this discussion. Does that plan sound OK?”

Although you cannot predict exactly how long checkout will take, estimate the needed time based on how talkative everyone seems, and how many participants you have. If you start checkout and realize you are likely short on time, you could say “We only have a brief time for checkout, so please keep your checkout brief.”

SUMMARY

Remember the three 3-word guidelines of hosting a SMART Recovery Discussion Meeting:

1. Do SMART Recovery
2. Read the script
3. Enforce the guidelines