



A.R.T.S. Meeting Basics

Resources for Thriving Meetings

By way of group conscience, your meeting is free to choose the items in this pamphlet that seem most appropriate. Select elements that support the purpose of the program without taking too much time from sharing. We suggest that every meeting include some aspect of the foundation of the Artists Recovering through the Twelve Steps (A.R.T.S.) Anonymous program: the Steps, Traditions, Traits, Talents and Tools.

Types of Meetings

Below is a list of types of A.R.T.S. Anonymous meetings. Your group is also free to develop its own, mindful of the Twelve Traditions of A.R.T.S. Anonymous. The amount of time allotted for sharing by the qualifier and group members is determined by group conscience. Since 2020 meetings have been held via video online, on conference phone calls, and in person.

Personal Qualification Meeting:

A member shares their personal “before” and “after” recovery story in A.R.T.S. (Sharing time is determined by group conscience.) After the qualifier shares, the members of the group share. They can either relate their own experiences to what was shared, or simply say to the qualifier, "Thank you for sharing" and then speak about what is going on in their own lives.

Topic Qualification Meeting:

A member picks a topic and qualifies on it. Sharing time is determined by group conscience. After the qualifier speaks, the other members of the group share on that topic. (Many topics can be found in the A.R.T.S. literature.) If there is time remaining, members may share on other topics.

Step Meeting:

The meeting reads from the A.R.T.S. Step Essay Book each week or once a month. The group conscience decides whether to read an entire Step or to read for a specified amount of time. The members of the group then share their thoughts on the reading.

Step Qualification Meeting:

A member who has completed a particular A.R.T.S. Step shares their experience, strength, and hope on that Step. (Sharing time is determined by group conscience.) The members of the group then share their own thoughts and experiences on that Step

Literature Meeting:

The group reads from a piece of A.R.T.S. literature, and then members share their thoughts.

ARTShare Meeting:

Group members share their art and/or creative process with the group. Length of shares - which may include positive feedback - are determined by group conscience.

Leader's Choice:

The meeting leader may select a topic of their own choosing or solicit suggestions from the group members. (Note: Some groups have this type of meeting in months when there is a fifth week.)

Meeting Etiquette and Guidelines for Sharing:

1. We follow the time structure of the meeting. We restrict our shares to limits determined by the group conscience.
2. We are not here to impress, compete, or compare. We do not judge, criticize, argue or give advice.
3. When speaking, we share our experience, strength and hope.
4. We foster an attitude of unconditional respect for each individual's creativity.
5. There is no feedback or crosstalk at this meeting.

Crosstalk:

For the safety of the meeting, there is no “crosstalk”. Crosstalk is defined as: interrupting, referring to, commenting on, or asking questions about what another person has shared during the meeting. In A.R.T.S. each person may share feelings, experiences and perceptions without fear of comparison or judgment of any kind. We accept —without comment— what others say because it is true for them. We work towards taking more responsibility in our lives rather than giving advice or approval to others.

Serenity Prayer:

God, grant me the Serenity to accept the things I cannot change, Courage to change the things I can, And Wisdom to know the difference.

A.R.T.S. Preamble:

A.R.T.S. Anonymous is a fellowship of artists who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may recover from their common problem and help others to surrender to their creativity. The only requirement for membership is a desire to fulfill our creative potential. There are no dues or fees for A.R.T.S. membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions. A.R.T.S. is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy, neither endorses nor opposes any causes. Our primary purpose is to express our creative gifts and help others to achieve artistic freedom.

A.R.T.S. Vision:

A.R.T.S. Anonymous envisions a world where each individual's creativity is cherished as innate, unique and divinely given. The sacred responsibility of sharing our gifts is vital to a world of joy, abundance and love.

A.R.T.S. Mission:

Artists Recovering Through the Twelve Steps (A.R.T.S.) is a diverse creative community that supports individuals in overcoming challenges blocking their artistic expression. Through meetings, ARTShares, artist-to-artist fellowship, an annual international Conference and Convention, literature and a 12-Step structure, we establish a safe haven in which to explore, take risks and celebrate the many facets of our creativity.

The Problem and the Solution:

The Problem

We were unable to express our creativity in a satisfying way, yet we were unable to abandon our creative ambitions. The hallmark of our condition was avoidance. We invested ourselves in lifestyles incompatible with our artistic purpose. We have found that character defects are largely responsible for our difficulties as artists.

The Solution

We recognize a power greater than ourselves as the source of creativity. We realize that our creativity is not a burden but a gift to be shared. Since the results of our efforts are in the hands of a higher power, we no longer avoid, worry, or try to control our creativity. Neither do we judge it. We recognize the value of persistence and commitment to the often difficult process of creativity. Confident and trusting in ourselves as artists, we grow spiritually, becoming effective stewards of our talents. As a result of our recovery, we are gentle with ourselves and offer loving support to our fellow artists.

Twelve Traits:

These are some of the common traits that many struggling artists experienced before seeking a solution in A.R.T.S. Anonymous.

1. We grew up in an atmosphere of invalidation which resulted in ambivalence about our artistic expression.
2. In any given twenty-four hour period we find ways, consciously or unconsciously, to avoid doing that which gives us the most joy – expressing our creativity.
3. We have withdrawn from our art by investing ourselves in lifestyles, relationships and work activities incompatible with our artistic purpose. Our creative energy has often been diverted into destructive compulsions toward alcohol, food, sex, money, drugs, gambling and preoccupation with the past.
4. We have made needless sacrifices for our art and yet are afraid to make the necessary sacrifices.

We are unable to balance the significant areas of our lives – Physical, Financial, Social, Love, Family, Spiritual and Creative.

5. Self-defeating thoughts and societal myths turn in our heads: It's too late – I'm too old – I'm not ready – I am not enough – Art is not practical – Artists are neurotic – You'll starve. We have accepted these as true when, in fact, they are not.
6. We have felt intimidated by other artists' success. Jealousy, envy, fear, self-pity, perfectionism, resentment and other character defects block our creative expression.
7. Repeatedly we stood at the edge of a beginning; unable to move forward, avoiding our art, and unable to commit to pursuing or developing our creativity as a means of earning a living. The concept of supporting ourselves through our art seemed overwhelming.
8. We have thought of our art as divorced from reality, denying ourselves the right to follow our dreams. We forget that artists are entitled to their right work and deserve the happiness and success that right work brings.
9. We deny our responsibility to fully develop and realize our talent. We do not feel worthy of the success we achieve or desire. We feel like a fraud.
10. Being multi-talented, we have difficulty discerning our true artistic vision, making a commitment to it and establishing the priorities to fulfill it.
11. We have difficulty following through on projects and frequently sabotage our efforts. We want to work at our art but don't know how. We become impatient with the process, forgetting that the results come in God's time, not ours. Our time is unmanageable.
12. We have been afraid of our creative energy and have mistrusted our artistic instincts. Lacking spiritual awareness, we have not seen ourselves as channels for the infinite creative process. Our art is a gift to be shared.

Twelve Talents for a Good Life:

1. We grow in an atmosphere of affirmation and conviction that our artistic expression is essential to our existence and is part of our unique contribution to the world.
2. We realize every day is an opportunity to express our creativity and have an artistic experience. We know our inspired creative process will give us the joy we deeply desire.
3. We invest ourselves in lifestyles, relationships, and work activities that nurture our creativity.
4. We immerse ourselves in our art, refusing to be diverted from our creativity by destructive compulsions. We nurture significant relationships to stay professionally involved, socially fulfilled, and lovingly engaged with family and friends.

5. Seeing the tapes of societal myths that play in our heads for what they are, we release them, realizing that we, as artists, have wonderful gifts to contribute and that with the help of our Higher Power, we have what it takes to express our art.
6. We rejoice in the success of other artists. We keep our focus on our own God-given abilities. We take heart that we will find our own fulfillment through our creativity.
7. We know where our phobic reactions come from and we have chosen to separate. Safe in our new faith we wait for inspiration to lead our heart. We give our fears to our Higher Power and send our art out into the world.
8. As our art becomes more and more real to us, we enthusiastically follow our dreams. We accept that we are entitled to our right work and deserve the happiness and success that right work brings.
9. We are committed to our art, and pursue avenues that may lead to our ability to earn a living by means of our creativity. We explore methods of determining the monetary value of our art, recognizing that we are living in a world where money is an exchange of value necessary to our survival.
10. Being multi-talented, we explore each of our abilities taking joy in the fluidity with which we move from one to the other. Each of our abilities is a facet of our true artistic vision and each contributes to the whole. We accept full responsibility for developing and honoring our gifts.
11. We are aware that the process is a learning experience. We know that the outcome is in God's hands and may well prove more fruitful than our immediate goal. We take time each day to be thankful that the results come in God's time, not ours. We bless each day that we are given to pursue our art.
12. We turn our lives and our art over to our Higher Power, recognizing that without the aid of that Mystic Force, we are lost. Trusting our intuition and artistic instincts, we know that we are channels for the Infinite Creative Process. Deeply grateful for our creative energy, we offer our art as a gift to be shared.

Twelve Tools:

In addition to working the Twelve Steps, which are fundamental to working the program, we use the A.R.T.S. Tools to build connection with others and bring our art into the realm of reality. These positive disciplines support us in living every day as the artists we are.

AFFIRMATIONS: We identify ourselves as the artists we are. "My name is _____ and I am a _____." This and other positive statements affirm our commitment and help offset invalidating societal myths, attitudes and beliefs.

MEETINGS: We attend meetings to learn how the program works. We share our experience, strength and hope with each other, as well as our art and/or creative process.

ANONYMITY: We respect the confidential nature of each member's share. Who and what we see and hear at meetings is not repeated outside the meeting. We also maintain anonymity at the level of press, radio, TV, video, social media and other public forums.

ACTION GROUPS: We form mutual support groups of fellowship members to help each other develop action plans and follow through on them.

ART BUDDY: An art buddy is another A.R.T.S. member, someone we speak with on a regular basis to turn over what we have done or will do for our art today. Our art buddy may be someone in our field or a different one.

BOOKENDING: We bookend by making contact with another member before and after taking action for our art. Expressing our thoughts and feelings clarifies our course of action and helps us to move through the process.

COMMUNICATING: We address our feelings of isolation by reaching out to other A.R.T.S. members and sharing between meetings. Communicating with one another helps both artists.

ACTION PLAN: This is our personal roadmap for recovery. It includes specific actions to take for the development of our art and ourselves as artists, as well as listing our creative goals. It may also include a plan for realizing our professional aspirations and achieving balance in the significant areas of our lives.

CREATIVITY INVENTORY: We take a written inventory of our artistic efforts and accomplishments since childhood.

LITERATURE: We use A.R.T.S. literature to learn how a spiritual recovery can remove the blocks to artistic freedom. We use A.A., other Twelve Step Program literature or other inspirational material.

PRAYERS & MEDITATIONS: We use prayer and meditation as we seek to become channels for the Infinite Creative Process.

SERVICE: A.R.T.S. could not exist without the service of its members. Service expands our commitment to our A.R.T.S. recovery by providing a safe environment where we practice how to work with others, compromise, be open to the point of view of others, lead and work through problems.

SPONSORS & SPONSORSHIP: A Sponsor is an A.R.T.S. member who embodies the recovery you seek and is experienced in working the A.R.T.S. 12-Step program. We can work the Twelve Steps with the help and guidance of a Sponsor through a one-to-one relationship and/or in a group setting. Sponsorship can benefit all concerned.

5-ALIVE: We do our art for at least five minutes every day. We nurture our creativity every day. Five minutes a day keeps our art alive. Five alive!

HONORING THE CREATIVE SELF: We abstain from behavior, thinking and attitudes that keep us from using our creative energy productively. We appreciate and express the creativity that is both inside and around us, taking time to play and to rest. Members often make commitments to nurture their creativity.

Twelve Steps of A.R.T.S. Anonymous:*

1. We admitted we were powerless over our creativity - that our lives had become unmanageable.

2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to artists, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

Twelve Traditions of A.R.T.S. Anonymous:*

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.R.T.S. unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority — a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for A.R.T.S. membership is a desire to identify and express our creativity.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.R.T.S. as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose - to carry its message to artists who still suffers.
6. An A.R.T.S. group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the A.R.T.S. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every A.R.T.S. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.

8. A.R.T.S. should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. A.R.T.S., as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. A.R.T.S. has no opinion on outside issues; hence the A.R.T.S. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio and films.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

A.R.T.S. Closing Prayer:

In closing, I would like to say that no matter how distanced we may feel from our creative sources, no matter how long it has been since we were in touch with our creative spirit, or how feeble may seem our creative impulses, they are reawakening in our Higher Power's time, through this program and through our actions, no matter how small or how simple, a day at a time. I may not be able to see my own growth, or even to see my creations as beautiful, but I am able to see yours as inspiring and enriching my emotional, spiritual and physical world. We are not recovering merely to hide our light under a bushel; our creative gifts are a gift. To celebrate them, we humbly apply ourselves, sometimes to the work of art, and sometimes to play. May A.R.T.S. Anonymous teach us that our art, celebrated, will benefit and feed our own souls first, and the world's second, for the world hungers as much for this beauty as for food. We meet here together to feed this deeper hunger.

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THE TWELVE STEPS *of Alcoholics Anonymous*

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol -- that our lives had become unmanageable. 2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity. 3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him. 4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves. 5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs. 6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character. 7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings. 8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all. 9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others. 10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it. 11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out. 12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

THE TWELVE TRADITIONS *of Alcoholics Anonymous*

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity. 2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority -- a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern. 3. The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to identify and express our creativity. 4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole. 5. Each group has but one primary purpose - to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers. 6. An A.A. group ought never endorse, finance, or lend its name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose. 7. Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions. 8. Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers. 9. A.A., as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve. 10. Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the A.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy. 11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio and films. 12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.