

EARLY DRAFT LIFERING MEETING POLICY

REASON FOR THIS POLICY

Maintaining these basic standards for LifeRing meetings is important because:

- A clear and dependable description of our meetings allows members and prospective members of the organization to decide for themselves whether they wish to participate.
- Standards help people know what to expect, and so diminish the fears associated with participation. Our meeting policy creates a safe environment for meeting attendees.
- Meetings standards provide members with an understanding about what topics of conversation are appropriate in our meetings and forums, and what kinds of advice, discussion and encouragement are not tolerated, so that people can feel comfortable about offering and receiving mutual support and self-help resources.
- Standards give convenors reliable information about when and in what direction they are expected to guide their meetings.
- These very basic standards distinguish LifeRing meetings from other mutual support and self-help alternatives.
- The policy set wording for describing LifeRing meetings in our publications, on the web, and in printed and broadcast media, so that our descriptions of LifeRing meetings are consistent and accurate.

POLICY

EXPECTATIONS FOR LIFERING MEETINGS EVERYWHERE, FACE TO FACE AND ONLINE :

- We welcome everyone who wants to live sober, regardless of age, economic status, geographic location, culture, lifestyle, language, race, gender, sexual orientation, level of dependency, or type of drug or alcohol addiction.
- Whenever there are newcomers to the meeting, we read an opening statement that describes LifeRing and what to expect from the meeting.
- We inform participants that they may choose any name to be called in the meeting, and that they are not required to give any particular kind of introduction, give any information, or label themselves in any manner.
- We use the “How Was Your Week” format (sometimes supplemented by a topic) unless published otherwise on the international meeting schedule.
- We provide everyone attending the meeting with a chance to summarize their current sobriety concerns and to give and receive conversational support.
- We provide everyone attending with the opportunity to pass (to not speak or participate).
- We encourage cross talk throughout the entire meeting (with the exception of the opening statement).
- We note at the end of the hour that people are welcome to leave if the meeting is running long.
- We convene meetings no shorter than half an hour, and no longer than an hour and 15 minutes, unless published otherwise on the international meeting schedule.
- We provide free copies of the basic welcome brochure OR make reference to LifeRing’s other support services, online and face to face.
- We sign proof of attendance at the end of the hour or the end of the meeting (whichever comes first) for those who have attended for at least one-half hour.

CONVENORS ARE EXPECTED TO REDIRECT MEETING CONVERSATIONS TO PRECLUDE:

- Participation by those who appear to be behaving irrationally or incoherently.
- The use of language that may be offensive to others.
- Disrespect to or about another member or participant.
- Discussion or statements about persons who are not in attendance at the meeting.
- Statements to the effect that people cannot stay sober without some particular method or belief.
- Giving advice as distinguished from personal experience or a choice of sobriety resources.
- Lengthy or repeated presentation or explanation of specific methods, approaches or resources.
- Repeated requests regarding people's length of sobriety, private lives, employment or identities.
- Pressure to agree with a particular religious, political, or other point of view.
- Discussion or espousal of any religious or spiritual beliefs, including agnosticism and atheism.
- Advocating the use of any substance.
- Advocating the disuse of any substance that is prescribed by a physician.
- Disparaging or advocating any recovery program, method, or theory.

WHENEVER POSSIBLE, LIFERING CONVENORS ARE EXPECTED TO:

- Split meetings with a co-convenor when there are more than 15 present, so that all may fully participate.
- Pass the hat for financial contributions.
- Arrange the room so that people may sit in a circle, face to face.
- Set the time frame at the beginning of the meeting to give participants a sense of how time limitations may affect their participation.
- Give people the opportunity to opt in to LifeRing participation by circulating a sign-in sheet or opt-in postcards.

LIFERING'S FOUNDATIONS PROHIBIT:

- Requiring financial contributions to any meeting.
- Requiring individuals to provide identifying information to attend any meeting.
- Readings greater than 15 minutes without prior notice in the schedule.
- Readings from other support groups (NA, AA, SOS, SMART) as part of LifeRing meetings.
- Holding separate meetings for drugs and alcohol or for specific substances.
- Holding joint meetings with other self-help or support groups. (Social events are okay.)