

Give Something Back

When you have made a solid start on your recovery from drinking/drugging, you will probably find that you can see more clearly where you have come from and where you are going. You may see that the support you have received from your LifeRing meetings has profoundly changed your life for the better. It is normal for people at this point to feel grateful, and to look for a way to give something back.



You can, of course, give money. LifeRing operates on a shoestring and donations to the Service Center are always needed and welcome. (The address is on the back of this brochure.) But you can also give something more precious than money: your time and your abilities.

When the LifeRing Service Center asked LifeRing participants in early 2005 for their ideas on how to improve LifeRing, the Number One request was: more meetings. People love LifeRing and they want more of it — more meetings in more places, more times, and more different flavors.

The key to more meetings is **you**. Meetings don't grow on trees. Someone has to start them. Someone who sees the need for recovering people to have choices. Someone who can say "LifeRing works for me." Someone who has found a new energy and purpose. Someone who knows that helping others is a great way to help yourself. Someone who wants to give something back. **You**.

This brochure is an introduction to the role of the LifeRing convenor. The word 'convenor' means "people who bring people together." When you start, facilitate, or support a LifeRing meeting, the essence of your effort is to bring people together in recovery. LifeRing convenors are the vital connectors at the centers of the LifeRing support network. LifeRing convenors are ordinary people in recovery, but they are also very special. Read this brochure to find out whether you can be a convenor, and, if so, how you can get started.



About LifeRing

LifeRing is a self-help recovery network for individuals who seek group support to achieve abstinence from alcohol and other addictive drugs, or who are in relationships where chemical dependency is a problem.

LifeRing is a poly-abstinence group that welcomes everyone without distinction based on "drug of choice."

LifeRing includes people of all religious faiths and none. Meetings are free of religious observances.

LifeRing supports participants in working out their own personal recovery programs, and requires no particular Steps other than abstinence from alcohol and "drugs."

LifeRing meetings are autonomous except in matters affecting other meetings. A basket may be passed for voluntary donations but there is no charge for participation.

LifeRing is a free-standing, self-supporting organization and is not affiliated with any other.

LifeRing meetings are conducted by peer volunteers called convenors.

For more information about the LifeRing approach and philosophy, and to connect with LifeRing participants, or to order LifeRing books and other literature online, please visit us online at www.lifering.org. If you have questions, please feel free to call or email the Service Center.

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**Help yourself
by helping others**

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Who can be a LifeRing convenor?

Anyone with a personal history of recovery from addictive substances who has at least six months continuous clean and sober time can be a LifeRing convenor. In some situations, people become convenors earlier. Occasionally, treatment professionals with no personal recovery history start LifeRing meetings, but the aim is to turn the meeting over to a person in recovery as soon as possible.

Do I have to take a test to be a convenor?

No. It is useful for convenors to be familiar with LifeRing literature — particularly *How Was Your Week?*, the convenor's handbook — but no exam is required. Convenors are peers in recovery. They are not treatment professionals and do not need a license or certificate. However, being a convenor can be very educational. Some veteran LifeRing convenors could probably teach classes in addiction recovery, based on their personal experience and readings. High among the qualities that make a good convenor is being a good listener, being modest, and having a positive outlook.

What kinds of things do convenors do?

Convenors make connections among people in recovery, between recovering people and relevant publics, and with other convenors. Here are some examples:

Convenors start meetings. They find suitable meeting

rooms, order LifeRing literature, get the word out, and make a commitment to be there for as long as it takes the meeting to get off the ground.



Convenors facilitate meetings. They set up the room and the literature, organize the box of meeting supplies, welcome people as they come in, invite someone to read the opening statement, get the conversation started, keep people on topic if necessary, move things along, take care of signup sheets, pass the basket, and lead the applause at the closing.



Convenors of online meetings host chat rooms, or act as listmeisters or moderators of email lists or bulletin boards. They contribute to the LifeRing web sites.

Convenors get the word out. Convenors make contact with treatment professionals and other referral sources. They make sure that flyers and schedules are posted and available wherever people might need them. They speak to recovery audiences, classrooms, and the general public about the LifeRing approach. Convenors talk to the press and appear on radio and TV if invited.



Convenors connect with other convenors. They stay in contact with the LifeRing Service Center. They attend convenor workshops where available. They participate in convenor email lists and chats, and read and discuss convenor literature. Convenors help prepare for the annual LifeRing Congress and may be Congress Delegates. Convenors may become members of the LifeRing Board of Directors and/or officers of LifeRing Inc.



Convenors at the 2002 LifeRing Congress

Convenors may act as writers, editors, publicists, accountants, fundraisers, administrators, or do other useful work not directly connected with a particular meeting. Any role that brings people together in recovery the LifeRing way, directly or indirectly, is a LifeRing convenor role.

What resources exist for convenors?

The mission of the LifeRing Service Center in Oakland CA is to "Serve the Meetings." The Service Center is a primary resource for LifeRing convenors. From a friendly ear to a range of material supplies, the volunteers at the Service



Center can help you get a new meeting off the ground or grow one that exists. The complete contact information is on the back of this brochure.

Among other resources, the Service Center can:

- Send you a Meeting Starter Kit with all the essential literature and supplies to get going.
- Send you a LifeRing meeting charter.
- Get you started on the LifeRing convenor email lists.
- Post your meeting on the lifering.org website and keep your listing updated as you provide new information.
- Provide you with contact information for your area.
- Do mass mailings to treatment professionals and programs in your area to let them know about your meeting.
- Keep you posted about events and publications of interest to LifeRing convenors.



The LifeRing Service Center is the LifeRing convenor's home base.

What are the rewards of being a convenor?

The LifeRing convenor's main reward is the satisfaction of being useful in other people's recovery. For many, the convenor role also solidifies their own recovery and gives them a much deeper insight into life. For a person whose past life may have been isolated and centered on drugs or alcohol, the experience of being a LifeRing convenor is like living in a whole new world. Convenors are connected. Convenors matter. Convenors are midwives to seeming miracles of healing and recovery. Convenors can hold up their heads and look people in the eye. Convenors become walking storehouses of collected wisdom. Convenors earn appreciation and respect. Convenors are important.

Convenors make no money; in fact, they may dig in their pockets to meet incidental expenses. But the warm feeling that comes from helping others — priceless.



How Was Your Week? Bringing People Together in Recovery the LifeRing Way -- A Handbook. By Martin Nicolaus.

The helpful convenor's handbook, based on experience in more than 1000 LifeRing meetings in all kinds of settings. In-depth introduction to the nuts and bolts of the convenor's role together with a personal vision of the Big Picture. **From LifeRing Press, www.lifering.org or 1-800-811-4142.**

