

Are you interested in becoming a SMART Recovery volunteer meeting leader?

1/13/21

*Please consider the following questions, which can help you decide whether this opportunity is a good fit for you. You do not need to write out the answers. The questions reflect what we have learned from decades of offering SMART meetings.*

**Primary questions:**

A. How motivated are you to be of service to your community, specifically in the area of addictive problems?

B. Is this motivation strong enough that you would 1) Attend at least 3 SMART meetings to learn more about SMART (and observe how much meetings can vary based on the meeting leader)? 2) Complete 3-4 hours of initial (free) training? 3) Commit, for 6 months, to 3 hours per week of ongoing volunteer activity? This activity would include a) leading your own meeting most weeks (1.5 hours, at the same time each week), and b) participating in continuing education of various types, typically about 1.5 hours per week.

C. Is your computer or tablet recent enough that it works well with Zoom? (we will train you on Zoom if needed)

D. Are you comfortable reading out loud (or asking a participant to do so), as other people read along silently? In the hosted meeting we read an opening script (the same each week), then a topic script (a new one each week). Then you read questions, and participants answer them, followed by open discussion.

E. Do you accept the following statement? "I understand that everyone has addictive problems, as well as emotional and behavioral problems. Whether my problems are small or large, or more or less, I am NOT fundamentally different than anyone else. I can participate in a conversation about addictive and related problems and not judge anyone."

F. Do you understand that the meeting is NOT a place to "tell my story?" Rather a SMART meeting is discussion you keep on track, according to guidelines we give you, so that participants can support one another as they discuss the self-empowering approach to change. Ideally in the meetings YOU will say very little.

**Additional questions:**

Do you accept these meeting guidelines (and understand that we will train you about how to enforce them)?

Meeting is free (donations requested) and confidential

No one is required to participate

We do not give advice

We do not criticize other approaches (no approach works for everyone)  
We do not tell anyone how to talk about or understand addictive problems  
    But we do offer suggestions  
We stay focused on *stopping* addictive problems  
    As defined and understood by the participant  
    e.g, participant could focus on stopping before the first drink  
    or after the 2<sup>nd</sup> drink, or before the 10<sup>th</sup> drink

Do you understand that you might make an occasional and limited self-disclosure, if you believe it would help advance the meeting (but it is not required)?

Do you understand that we are not primarily looking for individuals with a history of addictive problems (although they are welcome), but instead are looking for someone who can manage this type of meeting? If you have prior experience managing meetings, great! If not, we will teach you what you need to learn.

Do you understand that meetings are open to anyone, and that they may stay as long as they are not disruptive? (Typically participants discuss alcohol problems, but less frequently they also discuss other substances, or (even less frequently) activities such as gambling, video games, or maladaptive sexual behavior.)

If you feel shocked by some of the stories you hear, can you maintain your composure enough to keep leading the meeting?

If someone violates a meeting guideline, are you assertive enough to interrupt them and get the meeting on track again?

If a participant asks you a question that you do not know the answer to, are you comfortable saying "I don't know. I will find out and have an answer next week"?

If someone challenges your ability to lead the meeting, are you comfortable saying: "I'm not here as an expert about change. The other participants are the experts. My job is simply to keep the meeting on track"?

In the unlikely case that a participant becomes disruptive, are you comfortable issuing one warning, then removing the person (with a mouse click on Zoom) if the disruption continues?

Are you comfortably saying "I'm not sure what happened, but I believe we are off track. Let us go on to the next person/next question."

When you run into a meeting challenge that you do not know how to solve, are you willing to attend the continuing education group, or reach out to your contact in SMART, to consult?

Does this format sound appealing to you?

Arrive 5-10 mins early, to chat  
Remind everyone, especially newcomers, no one is required to participate  
Start the meeting on time by placing the main script on screen and reading it  
Conduct the check-in, by each participant, calling on them in turn  
    “what would you like us to know about you?”  
Read the topic script, which includes the around-the-circle questions to ask  
    Topics include coping with specific emotions, being assertive, craving, etc.  
Ask the first question, calling on participants in turn  
Ask for open discussion after each question  
When discussion dies down, ask the next question  
Keep alternating questions and open discussion until about 10 minutes is left  
Read the closing section of the main script  
Conduct the checkout  
    “This is your chance to thank someone for something they said”  
    “Or say what was most meaningful to you about this meeting”  
    “Or both”  
End the meeting  
On some occasions you may stay in the Zoom room longer  
    Especially if someone is interested in becoming a volunteer  
    NOT to have an individual session with someone

**Additional info:**

When you cannot attend your meeting, you will need to arrange for a substitute. We will show you options for doing so.

Other ways to learn about SMART:

Read the website  
Purchase and read a SMART Handbook (\$12 plus shipping)  
Complete Facilitator Training (after you feel confident leading your group)  
    This training would qualify you to facilitate (vs. host) a meeting  
    The fee for this training currently is approximately \$100.  
    Scholarships and other payment options are available.  
    FYI, you may take Facilitator Training now, and skip Host Training  
Attend the San Diego monthly Community Development meeting  
    2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday, 9:30am to 11:30am, online

***If you are still interested in being a SMART Recovery volunteer meeting leader, please contact:  
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