

# **Any Lengths**

Online Group of Alcoholics Anonymous

## Chairperson Training – Any Lengths Group

This document is meant to help prepare you for chairing an online meeting. It's advised and wise to review the group's [current Meeting script](#) for the meeting you are going to facilitate. Review both documents before your first meeting and you are sure to enjoy it with more confidence.

- Just like in F2F meetings, **the chairperson** (a.k.a. meeting “secretary” in many groups) **facilitates the meeting** by following the script/format for the day’s meeting.
- Familiarize yourself with where the **service roster** and the **meeting scripts** are located on the [main page on our website](#).
  - Before each meeting, be sure you’re using the latest script version by checking the date in the footer against the “**rev. date**” shown just above script links; if they don’t match, print/use the updated version from the website.
  - It can be useful to print a copy to write names of your service team & readers
  - Please stick to the script, avoid improvising; sharing opens at the **end of side one**, always. If you are not there yet in the reading, don’t open up for sharing.
- **Arrive early to your meeting** (20 minutes) so you can comfortably get readers and ensure your service/support team members are present within 10-15 minutes before start-time; the meeting host or tech host can help fill a missing spot; you just need to be *aware* in case it may affect the flow of the meeting (i.e. missing a screen-share, etc.)
- **Time management** – start & end the meeting on time; stop shares with a **minimum of 3 minutes remaining** for announcements & wrap up; also adjust time limits on shares if you have a lot people sharing and not enough time (group set shares at **3 min.**).
- **Use Chat, and get used to watching for incoming chats** as the best way to communicate to & from your service team; the Chat button displays a number of chats when you have any unread, so click Chat whenever you see a number near the button.
- Chairs should always **stay ‘camera-on’** so the group knows who is leading
- **Look for raised hands** during the sharing part of the meeting; as a “co-host,” you will see raised hands at the bottom of your screen (using a PC), which signifies you have members who want to share. You will need “Participants” open on the side so you can see the order - call on them in order from top down, or, alternate male/female if you wish. You can click on **their name>>more** to lower hands as people share, or your tech host can lower them for you. Lowering hands means you won’t have to remember if someone just shared or not if their hand still shows after their share is over.
- If you can, scan the pages of members occasionally for anyone who might be physically raising their hand to share, or someone seems to want or need to share.
- **Give verbal welcomes before & thank you’s after** members share, **however...**

- **Minimize feedback between shares - both your own and the group's.** Nobody wants to stifle personality, but your role is to **facilitate** - to move the meeting along -not to give advice, not to respond to shares or to address certain aspects of someone's share. If someone is distressed, *do feel free* to mention the time after the meeting that we keep open for those kinds of needs, but beyond that, please do not start a dialog.
- Ensure you are in a **noise-free environment** at home (wherever you login from) when facilitating the meeting, however, regardless of the quiet around you...
- **ALWAYS REMEMBER TO MUTE YOURSELF AND STAY MUTED DURING SHARES.** And, of course, to unmute each time a share is over so you can call on the next person. Meeting chairs often forget to mute and end up sounding to the group like they are having a private conversation with whoever is sharing. You might respond, or laugh, or make any number of audible gestures that you won't notice, but your microphone will. So will the group. Most importantly, it helps hosts & tech hosts keep a secure room.
- If you run a topic meeting and we happen to have a lot of people new to AA in their first few days, generally make the topic "Step 1" (as opposed to the Daily Reflection)

----- ~~~ o o ~~~ -----

- **What to do if/when:**
  1. If someone sharing has bad audio or technical difficulties, you can:
    - Suggest that they turn off camera while speaking to ensure all their available bandwidth is used for audio; turn video back on after sharing.
    - Move on to another speaker, remembering to try them again later
  2. More than one person starts to share at the same time:
    - briefly unmute to suggest who should go first and who follows
  3. If someone ask questions about the group during a share:
    - Unmute and ask them to please save all questions for after the meeting
- **A Few Final Reminders:**
  1. Being a chairperson - especially if you are somewhat new to facilitating an AA meeting - can affect people differently, being in the center of things. It helps to keep in mind that this role, like any other, **is about being of service to AA and the group.** It's not about being a leader, or the center of attention. It's not "your" meeting, it's the groups. It's also not group therapy, should you feel tempted to offer your advice or perspective to someone who just wrapped up a share in tears; not uncommon in AA. The group will console him or her **after** the meeting. Your service-oriented mindset helps our meetings align with AA's Traditions.
  2. Our general secretary will email you a **backup list of experienced chairs** in case you cannot make one of your meeting days. You will need to provide a backup.
  3. During your term as meeting chair, your attendance is expected in **monthly Business Meetings** to stay aware of group news and to report on the health of the meeting you facilitate. Like #2 above, send a back-up if you cannot make it.
  4. *Questions? Send a note to [unity@any-lengths.org](mailto:unity@any-lengths.org)*