

ENSURING SAFETY FOR A.A. GROUPS

Safety is important to the functioning of the group. By maintaining order and safety in meetings, the group as a whole will benefit and members will be able to focus on recovery. Because each group is autonomous, the meeting secretary is responsible for maintaining order and responding to disruptive individuals and problems that may occur during a meeting.

If a situation should arise where someone feels their safety is in jeopardy, or the situation breaches the law, the individuals involved should take appropriate action. Calling the proper authorities does not go against any A.A. Traditions and is recommended when someone may have broken the law or endangered the safety of another person.

In case of immediate danger, threatening, potentially violent, or violent disruptions:

Call the Berkeley Police Dept., as appropriate:

- **Emergency: (510) 981-5911 or 911**
- **Non-emergency: (510) 981-5900.**

Never step into a physical fight to attempt to break it up: call the Police. If you are unsure whether the situation is potentially dangerous, do not risk your safety or that of others present: Call the police immediately!

When safe to do so, report inappropriate or predatory behavior to the Secretary Coordinator and/or the Business Manager. These instances should also be reported at the business meeting on the 1st Saturday of the month at 2:00 p.m.

In case of non-threatening disruptions:

1. If an individual is disrupting a meeting, you should ask them to stop disrupting and wait their turn to speak.
2. If they continue disrupting, you should ask them to leave the meeting.
3. If they still continue disrupting, inform them that if they don't stop, it is the policy of the Fellowship for the Secretary to call the police to have them removed.
4. If they continue disrupting, call the police and ask them to intervene. The Berkeley Police Department non-emergency number is (510) 981-5900.
5. If the person appears to need mental health attention but is not an immediate threat, call the Berkeley PD non-emergency #: (510) 981-5900. The PD has a trained Crisis Intervention Team that works in partnership with the Berkeley Mental Health Mobile Crisis Team. The Police will refer the call to the MCT when appropriate.

Additional Safety Recommendations:

Secretaries may want to consider additional precautions to make everyone feel safer. Suggestions from other groups include the following:

- Identify trusted member(s) of your group who you can rely on to assist you in responding to a disruptive individual.
- Identify trusted member(s) of your group who you can call on to walk members to their cars if they feel unsafe.
- Discuss safety with your sponsees. Let them know that predatory behavior (aka 13th Stepping) is not acceptable.

In case of individuals attempting to attend while under six (6) months suspension:

1. The names of suspended individuals are posted on the Secretary's Desk
2. Inform them that they have been suspended. Ask them to leave the premises. If they won't leave immediately, call the police and ask them to intervene ((510) 981-5900).

In case of accidents involving injury or significant damage to the premises:

Notify appropriate services and make a written account with the date and details. Notify the Secretary Coordinator, Business Manager or Assistant Business Manager. If neither can immediately attend to the matter, leave the written account in the safe.

Harassment Policy:

Harassment is not tolerated at the BFAA. We are committed to providing a harassment free experience for everyone regardless of gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, body size, race, age, or religion.

Harassment includes but is not limited to: offensive verbal or written comments related to gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, body size, race, religion; sexual images in public spaces; deliberate intimidation; stalking; following; harassing photography or recording; sustained disruption of talks or other events; inappropriate physical contact; unwelcome sexual attention; unwarranted exclusion; and patronizing language or action.

Remember: *Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon AA unity.*