

## Section: Safety

**Policy Title:** Predatory Behavior Safety Protocol

**Effective Date:** August 27, 2023

**Revision Date:**

**Purpose:** To establish policies and procedures that address predatory behavior when it happens. To promote the safety and comfort of all members of the community by having clear language and boundaries describing this disruptive behavior. To have our agreed upon procedures visible and easily accessible. To develop safeguards that prevent inaction.

**Policy:** To enable and to enforce the guidelines provided by the ACA WSO with regard to predation, as defined, *“Predatory behavior, as we understand it, encompasses a variety of behavior patterns that share the theme of exploiting someone’s vulnerabilities for the purpose of gratifying one’s own, often unacknowledged, romantic/sexual, financial, emotional, and/or psychological needs. This includes approaching other members, particularly newcomers at or around meetings, often under the guise of “offering” or “requesting” support to establish a connection, which then is taken advantage of for self-serving purposes.”* [<https://acawso.org/2018/06/19/addressing-predatory-behavior-in-the-fellowship/>]

The purpose to is create a “safe enough” space around the ACA SMR zoom meetings (before, during and after) where members are encouraged and supported to address their own boundary issues directly and where processes are in place to address trusted servant or recurrent/egregious member problematic behaviors in a manner that promotes healing, strives to maintain the privacy of all individuals involved, and that shows compassion for the individuals while focusing on the behaviors that need to change.

### **Process**

#### 1. Notification

- a. An individual who experiences predation may contact any trusted servant with pertinent information\*. The trusted servant will relay this complaint to the SMR Wellness Team within 24 hours and let the complainant know they will be contacted by the Wellness Team within seven days.
  - i. Complainant can chat, email, text or phone any trusted servant with whom they are comfortable sharing information. This could be an elected person, a tech host or a room host. Please do this at times other than our regularly scheduled meeting.

\* Please let the trusted servant know how you want to be contacted by the SMR Wellness Team.

- b. Every single incident of reported predation will be recorded and responded to according to this policy and process.

#### 2. Processing of Complaint

- a. The trusted servant will bring the complaint to the Wellness Team within 24 hours of it having been received.

- i. The Wellness Team is comprised of 7-10 diverse volunteers who have been approved by the membership to serve on the Team.
  - ii. Volunteers who wish to serve will submit a brief application with their interests and qualifications. This information will be posted on the website as a poll for members to agree or disagree to having that person be part of the Team. Polls will stay up for 1-2 weeks to give every SMR member an opportunity to vote.
    - 1. We ask that applicants have at least one year of regular attendance in ACA prior to volunteering for this team.
    - 2. Volunteers agree to take training or have been already trained in listening skills.
    - 3. Minimum 1 year/Maximum 2 year timeframe for service.
  - iii. There will be an Interim group to handle the current situation while the SMR Wellness Team is being formed.
- b. At least two people from the Team will record the complainant's information regarding the issue by gathering it during a direct conversation with the complainant. The Team will ask the complainant to confirm the accuracy of the information captured in the report. (We will have some guidelines for the type of information we need to gather).
  - i. Members of the Wellness Team will recuse themselves from any situation where they feel they can't be objective.
- c. Our first steps are to record the complaint which will be kept on file, and to encourage the complainant to handle the matter directly if appropriate (i.e., it does not involve a trusted servant and it does not reflect recurrent/egregious predation behavior by a group member).
  - i. We will have a policy about how to keep yourself safe as well as some resource material on setting boundaries and Nonviolent Communication to help.
  - ii. Complainant is encouraged to bring a support person or witness to all meetings with the Wellness Team.
- d. The alleged perpetrator will be notified there has been a complaint of predatory behavior, and that some action will be forthcoming, either from the complainant directly or from the Wellness Team. The person will be offered an opportunity to speak with at least two Team members to process the complaint.
  - i. The Team will compassionately follow ACA WSO guidelines and BRB p 595-6 guidelines, and encourage the accused person to speak with supportive people to help them navigate the issue.
  - ii. The individual will be encouraged to seek additional help from therapy, a sponsor, or an additional type of recovery meeting.
  - iii. The alleged perpetrator is encouraged to bring a support person or witness to all meetings with the SMR Wellness Team.

- e. If the person does not agree their behavior was out of line, the SMR Wellness Team may request additional information from either party. Our goal is not punishment, but clarity. If appropriate, and if there is agreement by the complainant and the alleged perpetrator, the issue can be taken to a group conscience for consideration and action.

### 3. Complaint Resolution

- a. When individual action has been taken, we ask that the complainant report back about actions taken and their outcomes. If direct action satisfies the complainant, the process is complete, but the complaint stays on the record.
  - i. These actions will be noted in the log and the report described in #4 below.
- b. If the issue involves egregious or repetitive issues by a member, or if it involves a trusted servant, further steps may be taken such as asking a member to take a break from the meeting, or asking a trusted servant to step out of their position for a length of time:
  - i. Trusted Servant: Step down from providing service for six months. The SMR Wellness Team will ask for a commitment to seek assistance from a sponsor, therapist or engaged participation in another 12-step program.
  - ii. Member: We ask that you do not step up to provide service for six months from incident resolution date. If it is a repeated offense, we will ask for a commitment to seek assistance from a sponsor, therapist or engaged participation in another 12-step program.
    - 1. Repeated behavior includes multiple instances toward a single person or single instances to different people. We consider repeated behavior to be two instances within six months.
- c. Guidelines for returning to the meeting or to service
  - i. The member or trusted servant is welcome to return to the group when they can refrain from any predatory behavior that interferes with the recovery of other meeting members.
  - ii. Recidivism. Continued behavior will go to a Group Conscience vote of the entire membership to decide whether to block the person from attending the meeting.
- d. To avoid authority figure issues, these procedures need to be well understood by the SMR membership. The membership should be apprised of the complaint, but not the individuals involved.
- e. If the complaint cannot be handled privately, the complainant and/or the alleged perpetrator may call for a group conscience as described in the BRB, pages 595-596.

### 4. Reporting

- a. ACA SMR will maintain a log of dates, first names & last initials, SMR Wellness Team participants in discussions, and resolutions. This log is only available to the body approved to handle these issues and the elected GC Chair.
  - i. Log entries will be purged after 3 years.

- b. There will also be a brief report (redacted so no names and no details that break anonymity are in the report) after the incident of how it was handled. These reports will be publicly available in the safety section of the website so SMR members can be educated about how these safety issues are resolved and to educate members in self-care and boundary maintenance.