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# REGIONAL MEETING GUIDE



## WELCOME TO YOUR WFS MEETING

Welcome to the Women for Sobriety, Inc. New Life Program! We are honored that you have chosen to share your recovery with us. WFS offers an empowerment approach that encourages women to develop a sense of self-efficacy and self-worth to support abstinence from alcohol and other drugs. While every woman's individual path is slightly different, many have been helped by following some or all of these practices:

### Use the Statements Daily

Get up 20 minutes earlier than usual each morning and take some time to meditate on the Statements, selecting one to use throughout the day. Each evening, take a few minutes to journal and/or reflect on how your use of the Statement impacted your day.

### Attend WFS Meetings

This booklet will acquaint you with what to expect at your first local or regional meeting. Please remember that the group leader, known in WFS as a Certified Facilitator (CF), is a volunteer. While she has demonstrated knowledge of the philosophy of WFS in becoming certified, please keep in mind that she is likely just like you—a woman in recovery in need of support. Please help support her efforts in facilitating the group by attending regularly and respecting the Group Guidelines (see page 4).

### Participate in the Online Peer-Support Community

This vibrant, worldwide community of women is a great source of support and daily online meetings. Visit [wfsonline.org](http://wfsonline.org) to join for free.

### Read about Addiction, Recovery, and the New Life Program

- Access free articles by program founder Jean Kirkpatrick, Ph.D., at [womenforsobriety.org](http://womenforsobriety.org);
- Join to review material within the private community website, [wfsonline.org](http://wfsonline.org);
- Obtain printed literature and audio/video recordings of program-related content at [womenforsobriety.org/shop](http://womenforsobriety.org/shop); and
- Sign up for the WFS mailing list to receive weekly inspiration (*Monday Thoughts*) right in your inbox at [womenforsobriety.org/email](mailto:womenforsobriety.org/email).

### Support your Physical Healing

Practice a healthy lifestyle, including eating nutritious foods, getting regular sleep and exercise, and monitoring or reducing sugar and caffeine intake. Our program founder also recommended taking high-quality vitamin supplements to further support your brain and body during this time of healing.

***We are so glad that you found us! We hope that the WFS New Life Program will be helpful to you in your recovery.***

## WFS VISION, MISSION, VALUES

### Vision

WFS envisions a world where individuals live mindful lives and take responsibility for their thoughts and actions.

### Mission

Through the New Life Program, WFS supports women seeking a sober life in recovery from problematic substance use.

### Values

- Compassion: WFS promotes empathy and caring for self and others.
- Connection: WFS creates safe spaces where women support the expression of thoughts, feelings, and needs.
- Empowerment: WFS encourages and celebrates women and their right to be their own unique individuals.
- Love: WFS commits to authentic relationships defined by mutual value and worth.
- Respect: WFS acts with integrity, honoring every woman's experiences and ideas.

## WFS FOUNDING PRINCIPLES

Women for Sobriety is an organization whose purpose is to help all women find their individual path to recovery through discovery of self. We share experiences, hopes, and encouragement with other women in similar circumstances. We are an abstinence-based, self-help program for women overcoming challenges with alcohol and other drug use. The New Life Program acknowledges the needs women have in recovery — the need to nurture feelings of self-value and self-worth, and the desire to discard feelings of guilt, shame, and humiliation.

WFS is unique in that it is an organization of women for women. We are not affiliated with any other recovery organization and stand on our own principles and philosophies. The New Life Program offers a variety of recovery tools to guide a woman in developing coping skills which focus on emotional growth, spiritual growth, self-esteem, and a healthy lifestyle. We encourage all women to engage in lifelong personal development through our 13 Acceptance Statements.

WFS believes that addiction began to overcome stress, loneliness, frustration, or emotional deprivation in daily life — dependence often resulted. The physical, mental, and emotional components of addiction are overcome with abstinence from all substances and the self-awareness gained by practicing the program. Participation in WFS requires a sincere desire for a New Life. We live by the philosophy: "Release the past — plan for tomorrow — live for today."

## WFS LEVELS OF RECOVERY

Just as the Acceptance Statements are our guide to everyday thinking and living, the Levels of Recovery can be thought of as a guide to our overall growth in recovery. In practicing the Levels of Recovery, we are encouraged to remember that life is a fluid process —there may be times, such as during periods of great change or stress, when we may need to revisit a Level. This is an expected part of recovery.

### Level 1: Acceptance of Substance Use Disorder (Statement 1)

This is the very foundation of the New Life Program. We accept our addiction and the need for abstinence from all mind- and mood-altering substances. We see that addiction has damaged our minds and bodies, and that special care and time are required for recovery.

### Level 2: Releasing Negativity (Statements 2, 4, 9)

We are now ready to examine our attitudes and approach to life by writing down our experiences, difficulties and feelings with total honesty. We recognize the distorted, negative, and self-destructive patterns we have developed and resolve to change.

### Level 3: Practicing a New Self-Image (Statements 5, 12)

We exchange our irrational, negative attitudes for realistic, positive thoughts about ourselves and our lives. We make our environment pleasant, uncluttered, and attractive to reinforce the idea that we alone create the world around us.

### Level 4: Positive New Attitudes (Statements 3, 6, 11)

We become aware that we do not need to wait for or seek enthusiasm and happiness — all we need to do is reach out and grasp them! We make the choice to practice a joyful and appreciative outlook on life.

### Level 5: Improving Relationships (Statements 7, 10)

Having begun to be open about our feelings and balance giving and receiving in our WFS group, we build on our foundation of self-respect and self-love, expanding these skills to other relationships.

### Level 6: A New Self, Continued Growth (Statements 8, 13)

As we gain in knowledge and understanding of ourselves, our connection to others, and our place in the world, we find a spiritual home that is both unique and personal to us.

## WFS MEETING FORMAT

### Readings and Announcements

- Group Guidelines
- Acceptance Statements—The primary Statement portion is read by one woman, and the thought-action (italicized portion) is read by the entire group
- Vision/Mission/Values Statements, WFS Founding Principles
- Announcements

### Introductions

- Each woman introduces herself by saying “My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am a competent woman.
- Share a positive action of yours from the last week (such as a situation/feeling you handled well). Choose a Statement it relates to.

### Extra Support

- If a woman has an urgent need for extra support, feedback, or encouragement, she is offered an opportunity to share.
- WFS groups use a dynamic, discussion-based format. It’s common for participants to ask questions of the person sharing or provide feedback. If someone does not wish to receive feedback or answer questions, they simply let the group know.

### Topic

A topic is introduced, typically based on a piece of WFS literature, and the discussion portion of the meeting begins.

### Closing

The group joins hands in a circle and recites the WFS motto:

“We are capable and competent, caring and compassionate, always willing to help another, bonded together in overcoming our addictions.”

### Donations

- Women for Sobriety, Inc. is a self-supporting, non-profit organization;
- A \$2-\$5 donation per meeting is recommended but never required;
- For video meetings, a recurring donation of \$2-\$5 can be made at <https://womenforsobriety.app.neoncrm.com/forms/pledge-donation>;
- The collected amount is sent to the WFS organization to support outreach, group literature & supplies, and other program services;
- Donations made via group collection are not tax-deductible for any individual; and
- To make a tax-deductible donation, visit [womenforsobriety.org/donate](https://womenforsobriety.org/donate).

While this is the general recommended format for WFS meetings, local groups often develop their own unique variations, such as combining Introductions and Extra Support, discussing the Topic first, etc. Your group and Certified Facilitator can help answer questions about any chosen variations.

## WFS GROUP GUIDELINES

### We are 4C women: Capable, Competent, Caring, Compassionate

#### We show we are Capable by:

- Beginning and ending the meeting on time;
- Staying on topic in our discussion;
- Contributing to the discussion when we are comfortable doing so;
- Refraining from disrespectful, profane language; and
- Limiting our participants to women in recovery from problematic substance use.

#### We show we are Competent by:

- Coming to meetings sober, having ingested no alcohol nor other mind-altering substances the day of the meeting, excluding prescribed medications taken as directed;
- Refraining from telling drinking or using stories;
- Volunteering to assist the facilitator with the tasks of running a group; and
- Redirecting the funds we used to spend on our addiction toward more positive actions, such as donating to the WFS organization.

#### We show we are Caring by:

- Giving our full attention to whomever is speaking, without interruptions, side conversations, smoking, eating, cell phone use, and other distractions;
- Being mindful of our speaking time to allow others to contribute;
- Being available to other group members for support; and
- Letting the facilitator know if we are unable to attend a meeting.

#### We show we are Compassionate by:

- Respecting the confidentiality of all group members;
- Refraining from judgment or criticism of our peers;
- Protecting each other from being triggered by sharing details of violence, or engaging in controversy and debate that is outside the realm of our mutual recovery efforts;
- Speaking of substances in as general terms as possible (omitting brands and street names to minimize triggering others); and
- Respecting each woman's ability to make her own decisions—we do not give advice, but instead focus on sharing empathy and support for those facing difficult challenges in their New Lives.

## WFS NEW LIFE PROGRAM ACCEPTANCE STATEMENTS

- 1. I have a life-threatening problem that once had me.**  
*I now take charge of my life and my well-being. I accept the responsibility.*
- 2. Negative thoughts destroy only myself.**  
*My first conscious sober act is to reduce negativity in my life.*
- 3. Happiness is a habit I am developing.**  
*Happiness is created, not waited for.*
- 4. Problems bother me only to the degree I permit.**  
*I now better understand my problems. I do not permit problems to overwhelm me.*
- 5. I am what I think.**  
*I am a capable, competent, caring, compassionate woman.*
- 6. Life can be ordinary or it can be great.**  
*Greatness is mine by a conscious effort.*
- 7. Love can change the course of my world.**  
*Caring is all-important.*
- 8. The fundamental object of life is emotional and spiritual growth.**  
*Daily I put my life into a proper order, knowing which are the priorities.*
- 9. The past is gone forever.**  
*No longer am I victimized by the past. I am a new woman.*
- 10. All love given returns.**  
*I am learning to know that I am loved.*
- 11. Enthusiasm is my daily exercise.**  
*I treasure the moments of my New Life.*
- 12. I am a competent woman, and I have much to give life.**  
*This is what I am, and I shall know it always.*
- 13. I am responsible for myself and for my actions.**  
*I am in charge of my mind, my thoughts, and my life.*