

# Newcomers Group Inventory December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023

## Question 1: What More Can We Do? Pages 2-4

### Newcomers:

1. Have a variety of topics
2. Have a discord.
3. Have a phone list where oldtimers call newcomers.

### Oldtimers:

4. **Create a phone list including who is open for fellowship and sponsorship.** \*\*\*\*\* 4 people echoed
5. -emphasizing the importance of sponsorship and connecting 1-on-1 with the phone list
6. Offer newcomers to bring up topics that Oldtimers can respond to with their experience.
7. On speaker days without a speaker, ask for a volunteer speaker from a member in the room.

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## Question 2: Do new members stick with us? Pages 5-8

### Newcomers:

1. People are kind and caring; It's a small group, and intimate relations are good.
2. This is an easy meeting for people that need court papers.
3. Not every person with a DUI is an alcoholic; sometimes, people must get court papers before they are ready to surrender.
4. If you have newcomers who are repeatedly relapsing, it could be that they are fulfilling a court obligation (spoken by someone who was in this role). This room is a safe place to come back.

### Oldtimers:

5. Yes, we did because of safety, fellowship, anonymity, non-judgmental, no hierarchy, and history of success with this group: connections during early Zoom days, one day at a time.

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## Question 3: Sponsorship Pages 9-11

### Newcomers:

1. Have a sponsor day once a week, where someone or a team share on sponsorship. \*Many agree

### Oldtimers:

2. Sponsorship is important to me, but it terrifies me to step into the role.
3. We talk about sponsorship a lot, that's what our parking lot is for.
4. **Temporary Sponsorship on day 1 from this group saved my life. We must emphasize temporary sponsorship on day 1.** \*\*\*\* Four more people agreed.
5. Someone shared that the difference between relapse and sobriety was temp. sponsor on day 1.
6. Someone else shared that they are excited to sponsor, but are not yet there.
7. The old-timers agreed with the newcomer's idea.

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## Question 4: Anonymity Pages 12-16

### Newcomers:

1. attending online is more anonymous than in person, its more accommodating for mothers with children.
2. Attending online can be hard to connect at first. The discord will help.

### Oldtimers:

3. We do a good job maintaining anonymity. \*\*\*\* Four people agree. Safety is important.
4. We can change people' names, remove last names; zoom is new to some.

# Newcomers Group Inventory December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023

## **Question 1: What more can the group do to carry the message?**

### **Newcomers:**

Have a variety of topics

Have a discord.

Have a phone list where oldtimers call newcomers.

### **Oldtimers:**

Create a phone list including who is open for fellowship and sponsorship. \*\*\*\*\* 4 people echoed -emphasizing the importance of sponsorship and connecting 1-on-1 with the phone list

Offer newcomers to bring up topics that Oldtimers can respond to with their experience.

On speaker days without a speaker, ask for a volunteer speaker from a member in the room.

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### **Question 1 transcript:**

**Newcomer Private Chat:** have as many different topics as possible.

**Newcomer 1:** I know a lot of people put their numbers and like messages privately. And I know this meeting is only once a day for an hour, but something that I think could be useful is, I don't know if a lot of. You know what discord is. It's kind of like a chat room where everyone can just talk to each other throughout the day, which could be kind of cool, too. Do you know that way? If you don't necessarily have something you want to talk one-on-one to someone about, you can just talk to anyone, and everyone can chime in throughout the day.

**Newcomer 2:** Hello! I realize I sent that to just you. But [newcomer 1] I thought that was a great idea. I don't necessarily have, you know, a need or anything like that. you know, I need to reach

## Newcomers Group Inventory December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023

out to somebody. But sometimes it's just nice to know somebody is there and available, you know, for anything. You know it. That'd be nice. I think that's a great idea.

**Newcomer 3:** You know I was going to have something to say. I had taken this idea that you guys are talking about, like, you know, kind of quicker, easier communication to a different route because lately, I've gotten in the habit of sharing my phone number with newcomers. Although I'm still a newcomer myself. I was wondering if we should reverse it. And say, if you guys want us to give you a call. you know, post your number. I don't know if you know if that difference has helped because there are a few here lately I've been playing phone tag with, and I feel so bad cause I want to start these relationships and have conversations. I think it could be a role that the secretary would take on. I mean, just like a high-level thought of some of the ideas we've come up with. I think there's a category of ideas that are maybe what we would call onboarding. or you know, some kind of thing like that. I mean. I feel like we all sort of eventually pick like figure stuff out, you know. asking questions, and so on, and so forth, and coming back. but if there was like a little newcomer. and maybe there is. you know, one through 10. Get a sponsored, 2. Talk to (name). She'll give you the ropes. You know. Talk to (name). She'll explain all the acronyms because there are 6,000 of them. You know, just like things like that were. you know, you have a little cheat sheet or something like that.

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**Oldtimer 3:** Perhaps reminding the newcomer that they have a topic or something that is, you know, troubling on their mind that, maybe, it's a topic they could pose to the group for folks that have been here a little longer.

**Oldtimer 4:** A list of answer phone calls. I was thinking that perhaps a list of members and their phone numbers could be available to those who desire to get in touch with people who are, and

## Newcomers Group Inventory December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023

also a list of people willing to sponsor our responses. I know it's hard. It was hard for me to get into reach out to a particular person to ask for sponsorship. and I know that a lot of people put their numbers in the chat. It's not everyone's here every day. There are people, you know, willing to privately in text or also that I found helpful them.

**Oldtimer 3:** A lot of us are, you know, newcomers, and it, I think it'd be good to, you know, have individuals that are willing to sponsor, you know, share their number a little more often. I don't. I don't see that too often in our meetings. for the newcomer, it's important to find a sponsor.

**Oldtimer 5:** about sponsorship is one. yeah, for those of us who maybe have a few more days. And whether it's offering to be a sponsor or just a fellowship. you know, here's someone you can talk to, one-on-one, or text with one-on-one and even ask questions about sponsorship causes. I just realized that's something. I certainly feel like I could. I have offered things that I've learned about sponsorship, even though I'm not able to sponsor yet soon. that's one. Just that, I guess. Encouragement to, yeah, to offer that. and just that pause moment I know it can be scary to raise your hand and speak in the beginning. Again, just an opportunity, whether it's in chat or just to reach out to someone, one-on-one might not feel so scary, including. you know, putting something in chat or reaching out one-on-one to be able to do it the first time.

**Oldtimer 6:** the group could benefit from more speakers shares, you know, 15 minutes of sharing from folks. We don't seem to be able to get many guest speakers, and we revert. We revert to the reading of the books, which is fine but not interactive. From my standpoint, you can always read a book. Maybe we could have a backup system if you don't have a guest speaker. You just kind of go around the room and ask if someone with a little more time would be willing to share their story. that day. I just want to support this idea of discord. I have an intensive outpatient program which I've had for almost 3 and a half years. And we have a group text. And

## Newcomers Group Inventory December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023

that group text is always open. And anybody can, you know, message each other, and then whoever is close or capable can respond so that you're messaging 15 people at once. And then we share whether we're going to be able to either respond online or respond physically.

**Oldtimer 1:** I just had a quick question; we didn't take that part out of the script right about being of service, and if you need a sponsor, stay after it and connect with these people privately, okay? So that's still in our script.

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# Newcomers Group Inventory December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023

## **Question 2: Do new members stick with us?**

### **Newcomers:**

People are kind and caring; It's a small group, and intimate relations are good.

This is an easy meeting for people that need court papers.

Not every person with a DUI is an alcoholic; sometimes, people must get court papers before they are ready to surrender.

If you have newcomers who are repeatedly relapsing, it could be that they are fulfilling a court obligation (spoken by someone who was in this role). This room is a safe place to come back.

### **Oldtimers:**

Yes, we did because of safety, fellowship, anonymity, non-judgmental, no hierarchy, history of success with this group: connections during early zoom days, one day at a time.

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### **Question 2 Transcript:**

How can we keep people here? How can we get them to keep coming back like we say? And here every day What is keeping you guys coming back every day? What makes this your home group?

**Newcomer 1:** This was the first meeting that I came to, and the reason why I stuck around was that everyone who shared or responded was very, very welcoming and caring in a genuine way. I've tried other meetings. and most of them, there are over a hundred people. So, it's kind of hard to connect. So, I like that. It's smaller, so everyone can kind of feel more comfortable and get to know everyone on a deeper level. So, for me, I think everything's just fine in that department.

**Newcomer Private Chat:** The people and support of everyone keep you coming back.

## Newcomers Group Inventory December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023

**Newcomer 2:** Hi. Well, I think this is kind of a hard one cause a lot of people do come for court, and I'm not going to say I've never been one of those. It's one of the easiest ones to come to for court. And it's a matter of a lot of us, not me currently, but me in the past that I wasn't ready to stop. So, once I was done with my obligation, I stopped coming like I was with you guys 2 years ago, and once I, you know. I got through my court stuff, and I said, Hey, you know what I can drink. I just can't drive. Well, we all know that's bullshit, so I think that's a really hard one to say, but I do think, you know, once you turn that leaf of realizing, hey? I am ready to, you know, totally try this new journey of not drinking period for the rest of my life, and I know that's a lofty goal. But it! It's nice to see, like, such friendly faces and people that are like, hey, you know what, I've done that before, too. So, I think you guys are doing great at what you do. I just think, you know, if you feel like you're not getting a lot of new, you know, people repeating after so long. I think that's just how things go with newcomer meetings, because you know they fulfill their obligation. Again, there is nothing wrong with that. You know, not everyone is an alcoholic, just as they have a DUI. I know I'm not in that group, but you know. So, I think overall. I think you're doing a great job at it because, I mean, I want to keep coming back.

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**Oldtimer 5:** I know initially. Still, today, what keeps me coming back is, I feel safe and hopeless. this was a safe place. It kept me coming back even after I relapsed, and I came back into this room rather broken and battered because I knew I would be safe here and I would be welcomed. So, safety shows up number one, and then, I believe, with someone who said in chat, but for me, I keep coming back because of the fellowship that I found in these rooms, that is, in these rooms. That yeah. I now have a whole circle of sober friends, which I value and treasure. and that's because of this room.

**Oldtimer 4:** I there are 3 things I was thinking about on this subject.

## Newcomers Group Inventory December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023

First is the promise of anonymity, you know. That's kind of a keystone, for people, is the promise of nonjudgment, no matter what. And a reminder to the newcomers that we all just have today; we are all on the same level. There's no one above, and there's no one below because I know it's some meetings. There are people who the same people always speak, and they, you know, and they get called on. And this meeting is special in that way that there's not a hierarchy. We're all at the same level. And I think that that's a good thing and nonjudgment. No, you know, just the promise of nonjudgmental anonymity. we're all equal, as alcoholics are a good thing.

**Oldtimer 7:** this room keeps me coming back for my sobriety. When I first came here, which was (date) 2021. And I was out of the hospital. This is the first Zoom I found. This is the first Zoom I figured out to go to. But what keeps me coming back is watching everyone's growth because it helps me grow. and it helps me stay strong to see the people I've known since day one. and to see them hit a year makes me like hell happy. It just fills my bucket, and that's something that's so important to get me through my day. This has become a regular place to check in when I need a meeting. It's just like, Okay, I can make it till tomorrow's meeting, and that's how I started off. It was like, I came here, and I'll be here tomorrow, and I'm not going to show up and say, I drank last night, and that's what kept me sober and kept me going.

**Oldtimer 6:** I joined this meeting early when it was just starting, and I had been for 10 years trying to get sober, and I had been to many, many alcoholics, anonymous meetings. And I'll tell you what happened happens here, and no matter what, it's always where I come now. It's the culture of the people here. The culture of this room has always been to help and help and help and anything you can do. And I think that goes way back to the founders of this meeting to the original host. And it's almost like culture continues. I can tell truthfully that another alcoholic

## Newcomers Group Inventory December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023

that I meet come to this meeting, and I do because I am confident that this culture will support you. So, I think that's the best thing. I guess it's what (name) said, too. But that's what I think.

Oldtimer 1: This is my family. We follow each other to other meetings. We are there for each other. For shares? I can be. I can say just about anything in this meeting to any of you. And honestly, with the anonymity. I feel completely safe and comfortable being able to come into this room after 3, almost 4 years of sobriety. I know that this is going to be a safe place to meet for me, including my women's meetings. I go to other meetings where I feel safe. We have started a women's thread for women, and if anything gets bad on that, we just remove the person from the thread, and I know there are a few ladies I don't check. Put my phone number on the screen anymore. That is for safety reasons because when you're in this program, you'll learn about 13 steps.

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# Newcomers Group Inventory December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023

## Question 3: Sponsorship

### Newcomers:

Have a sponsor day once a week, where someone or a team share on sponsorship.

### Oldtimers:

Sponsorship is important to me, but it terrifies me to step into the role.

We talk about sponsorship a lot, that's what our parking lot is for.

Temporary Sponsorship on day 1 from this group saved my life. We must emphasize temporary sponsorship on day 1. \*\*\*\* Four more people agreed.

\*Someone shared that the difference between relapse and sobriety was temp. sponsor on day 1.

\*Someone else shared that they are excited to sponsor, but are not yet there.

The old timers agreed with the newcomer's idea.

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## Question 3 Transcript:

**Newcomer 3:** You know, one of the shares during the week could be sponsor-focused or sponsor relationship development-focused or something like that. I didn't have the experience of not having a sponsor. I mean, it took a little longer than I wanted, but it was just. It was weeks, not, you know, months or anything. but if every other Wednesday was Sponsor Day, (name) shows up with their sponsor, they could talk about some good tips or some good things that we did, talk about some things that maybe weren't so useful, just for the rest of the group. I don't know what anyone else's relationships with their sponsors are, and I know we're not supposed to know. But

## Newcomers Group Inventory December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023

if we put, you know, that kind of emphasis on it through an agenda, I think that it could help raise the awareness.

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**Oldtimer 6:** as to how we could do this better. I think we talk about it a lot, and I think we have a parking lot available to people. But I know that in my recovery, the 7 years I didn't have a sponsor. It was hopeless. And then the 3 years I had a sponsor who was in, I'll never. I owe them forever for what he did. but I know that I have now had enough time so that I could be sponsored, but I am scared out of my mind about it, about offering it because of you know the and you know you're dealing with people fragile people. And anything could happen. And I wondered if we could have a training program for Sponsorship. I don't know, but something that could say the person, you know, with a year or more. Here are some things you should think about. I have the program that was given to me by my sponsor, and I trust it. But you know he was more talented than me, and more able. And so, I've done this temporary thing. But I just can't get my head around having responsibility for another life, you know.

**Oldtimer 2:** I remember being new in this room and having no idea what a sponsor was. I thought it looked like it was something more of a sponsorship. Because I'd never been in AA before. This was my first meeting room, and I remember people talking to me about the importance of a temporary sponsor in the beginning. And I found a temporary sponsor in this room when I didn't understand what a sponsor was. I think that that was vital to my sobriety on the very first days in the future. Maybe we should figure out a way to support people in their first days, connecting with someone in our meeting immediately with the temporary sponsor. Right? It just must be somebody who can listen today. That saved my life.

**Oldtimer 5:** yes, to what [oldtimer 2] just said. offering that connection. you know. Sponsorship. Yay, but is a temporary sponsor, just a connection with another person who's going to understand

## Newcomers Group Inventory December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023

right from the beginning. Because, yeah, it saved my life, too. that I had someone I could speak to. and I knew they weren't going to judge me.

**Oldtimer 1:** I have my third sponsor, who I meet in this meeting. I also sponsor 4 women from this meeting, and I can temporarily sponsor them. I'll temporarily sponsor anybody for a month or 2 because I have 6 sponsees now. I love you, (oldtimer 2). so glad you're still here, and this is why I keep coming back.

**Oldtimer 5:** I think this is more to keeping our rooms safe. Question one or 2 kinds of putting back in the safety statement that used to be in the script. is one thought. I think that that might be helpful to everyone. But perhaps you know more. So to women, just that they know. that's while I'm you know. excited about staying sober long enough to be a sponsor. I can also see that it would be helpful for me to potentially have a forum not here. But just a thought. Have a forum of people who sponsor or coming up on sponsorship, that you know. Occasionally we could have a meeting and just chat and talk about that.

**Oldtimer 6:** (oldtimer 2), you just cut my heart, and you're 100% right. And I went back to think about my failures, my relapses. And what was this? What's the defining moment in both? And it's a sponsor on day one. It's my collapse in a parking lot and begging a guy who just was so great to me on day one and him spending hours with me. And I wonder if we could put together, maybe a list of people that day one or 2, 3, 4, whatever you can call these people, they're temporarily available to you, but you can call them, and then and put your number up for that. Because, and that's a lot of that. Would that alleviate a lot of my fear of being a handoff for maybe a local person who could sponsor? But put put my number in and say, I'm here for you. Day one. That's great, (oldtimer 2). That's just fantastic.

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## Question 4: Anonymity

### Newcomers:

attending online is more anonymous than in person, its more accommodating for mothers with children.

Attending online can be hard to connect at first. The discord will help.

### Oldtimers:

We do a good job maintaining anonymity. \*\*\*\* Four people agree.

Safety is important.

We can change people' names, remove last names; zoom is new to some.

Are we careful to preserve the anonymity of our group members and other Aa members outside of the meeting room?

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Are we careful to preserve the anonymity of our group members? Do we leave what they share in the room? What happens here stays here.

(Moderator): Is there anybody we haven't heard from yet?

**Oldtimer 2:** I just wanted to take a moment to reflect that when I was a newcomer, if I had been sitting in this conversation in this moment, I would be talking negatively to myself and saying that I do not have anything valuable to say. That's the conversation that I would be having with myself. And I want to say that if you're having that conversation with yourself, whatever you have to say, we would love to hear it, believe it or not. It's true. We want to hear from you.

**Newcomer 4:** Hi, I was just going to say I'm still very new. But even in not just here. It has been really good. But I've noticed that in-person meetings as well have been great with anonymity.

## Newcomers Group Inventory December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023

And then I was going to say, even as a newcomer, it is hard for me. I'm still learning like. I walked out of a meeting last week, and it was like one of my first days. An in-person meeting. And there was someone right outside the meeting. That was standing, and I believe they're homeless, and they're like, what is this? And I didn't know what to say I just said, Oh, it's a woman's group. And then she was like, oh, I know exactly what it is, and that's disgusting. You brought your kids to you because I had my girls. It was like my first meeting. I almost cried. But I was just like, they don't know. It's okay. But yeah, II, that was just funny. It was just an awkward visit in the very beginning because I didn't know what to say. But I think everybody does a great job.

**Newcomer 2:** I think the importance of the sponsorship is, of course, really important. But it's also really hard for newcomers to come in there and say, hey? I need a sponsor. I've already joined the group chat that has been started up by (member), and I think that's gonna be my best way to do this and to say, Hey, you know what? Okay? Great. I'm feeling comfortable with these people, that's where I can. you know. Go ahead and ask for this further guidance you know, I'm looking for a sponsor, so often do they expect you to just get one within the first week, and that's it's just not the way I work. Maybe other people do. But personally, I'm like, I'm sorry I can open up to you guys anonymously here, but maybe not pour my heart out too. You know somebody on this deeper level of day thing. And you know, at any time I need anything. It is a little helpful for me, at least, so I mean, I'm looking forward to the group chat that got started, and that way, I feel like I can maybe get to know you guys a little bit more organically without coming out and say, Can you please help me stop being a drunk. you know. but I do appreciate everyone's time. I also kind of got a run back to work here. But, this has been a nice good meeting. I appreciate it all.

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## Newcomers Group Inventory December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023

**Oldtimer 1:** I believe I feel this is one of the. not, the most important thing in our program is animality. If we can't conduct ourselves in a manner to where everybody feels safe and comfortable here. that someone's text isn't going to be sent to somebody else. And you know this, we're not in preschool. We are all adults, sick people trying to get well. it took me over 6 months to speak in this meeting, because, you know, I felt like it. I could only the people that I met at the farm. But then I got into this meeting, and then, you know, I had some men show their vulnerability and their soft side, and for me it was so powerful and so moving because I didn't get to see that in a lot of men, I didn't see that in my life growing up, you know, men had to be stoic and strong. 24, 7. And that's the way it was, and it wasn't for me when I came in here. So, I think it is our most important thing in this meeting is an amenity. What is said here stays here. I love that, and I think I would love that to be in our script because it it is so important.

**Oldtimer 6:** it is critical. And this was this group. Still, today, I talked about culture earlier. This is a group that I'm completely confident in, and I will share all of my needs and wants and stupidity and everything with, And I think that's why I keep coming back every, you know, day for day and 3 years and 3 months is because of the people take care of you, you know they don't just flippantly say something to you. They don't just record you and send it somewhere else. And that's an amazing thing for a group, a wide, open group to me. The only other place that I have is in my intensive outpatient program, which started 3 and a half years ago with 45 people, and now is down to 6, and those that's where we can share anything, but this group is second to that. name) said it's critical. I think so too.

**Oldtimer 5:** first. I think we do a a good job of maintaining, at the beginning of the meeting, If anyone would like their name changed. That reminder to message a host your Co. Host cause. I know people that you know are new to Zoom and have logged in, and their last name shows up.

## Newcomers Group Inventory December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023

They've asked me to change their name so we could just make sure we have that one line. I do not want the You know the script that we use to keep us on track to become an encyclopedia. there would be. But yeah, I think we do a good job. And that thing about renaming.

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