

WELCOME TO ASCA

Welcome to our Castro ASCA meeting! The purpose of this group is to bring together within a nurturing and supportive community, we who were abused physically, sexually and/or emotionally as children. Our aim is to transform our identities from victims, to survivors, to thrivers. In this meeting, we will share our experiences, resources, and ideas.

Meeting Format:

This meeting has a rotating format each week. The first part of the meeting consists of brief individual check-ins, the reading of our 21 steps, and one of the following:

- 1) **Book study** – members of the group read from the book we are currently working on
- 2) **Speaker meeting** – one of the members chooses to share for 15 minutes their childhood experiences and the journey that led them to ASCA
- 3) **Step study** – one of the members reads that week's step (we make our way from Step 1 through Step 21), and then each member can briefly share their thoughts on the step

After a short break we begin the second part of our meeting, which consists of individual shares or “tag shares” where members can speak for a few minutes on whatever they feel like sharing. After their share, members can choose to receive supportive feedback (see below). Our first volunteer picks the next speaker from among those who raise their hands, and so on, until our time is up. Please feel free to pass if you don't feel like speaking.

We close our meeting with brief individual check-outs, and reading our closing statement together.

Ground Rules:

Do:

- Show respect for each other and for the group
- Stick only to supportive feedback (see handout)
- Speak about your own feelings and experiences, and use “I” statements
- Observe the time limits allotted for your share
- When in doubt, tone down your comments or ask for clarification from the co-facilitators

Don't:

- Shout or use excessive profanity in the group
- Use “should” statements
- Criticize, belittle, attack, or “tease” anyone in the group
- Try to psychoanalyze or “take another person's inventory”
- Interrupt another speaker or have side conversations

Please remember that we all bear responsibility to keep this meeting helpful and safe.

Guidelines:

1. ASCA meetings are **exclusively for adult survivors** of physical, sexual, or emotional childhood abuse. No observers please.
2. This is an **anonymous** meeting. Only first names are used.
3. What you hear today is **told in confidence** and should not be repeated outside this meeting.
4. We ask that no one attend our meeting under the influence of **alcohol or drugs**, unless the medication is prescribed by a physician.
5. ASCA meetings are not intended for survivors who are currently perpetrating abuse on others. Talking about your own acts of **present or past perpetrator-type behavior** is not permissible.
6. Language that is considered **derogatory** concerning race, gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity or other minority status is **unacceptable** in our meeting.
7. By participating in this meeting, we all agree to abide by the spirit of ASCA, our guidelines and ground rules, as well as any interventions made by the co-facilitators.

Meeting Tips:

- Don't talk about others in the group or refer to their shares
- You may experience some strong feelings that may seem unexplainable or unexpected. See if you can allow yourself to experience these feelings here among other survivors.
- Should you feel safer leaving the room, please do so quietly. If you would like someone to accompany you, quietly ask one of the co-facilitators, or raise your hand so that we may ask for a volunteer to go with you.
- If you disagree with an intervention by a co-facilitator, please discuss the matter with the co-facilitators after the meeting. Trying to talk to the co-facilitator about an intervention during the meeting is disruptive and creates an unsafe environment for everyone.

Supportive Feedback:

In this meeting, we allow speakers to decide if, after their share, they'd like to receive "supportive feedback" from other members of the group. Learning to give feedback within ASCA guidelines can be a challenging process. **Please see the handout on giving supportive feedback and familiarize yourself with it before deciding to give feedback to a speaker.**

Resources:

In order to participate in this meeting, it may be helpful to have a copy of the **Survivor to Thrive Step Work Manual**. You can, at no charge, download the manual from the ASCA website, at www.ascasupport.org. You can also purchase a printed copy for \$15 from one of the co-facilitators.

New members are encouraged to take a copy of the "Guidelines for Member Interactions After and Outside the Meeting Environment" handout.

For additional information on our meetings, as well as other resources and materials, please visit our website at www.castroasca.org.