

NA Safety

On Predatory Behaviour

What is unsafe or predatory behaviour?

Unsafe or predatory behaviour is behaviour that interferes with the peace, security and integrity of a meeting and its members. It diminishes the atmosphere of trust, community and love that is necessary for carrying the message of recovery and making meetings a safe place to be. Not only does this behaviour damage our unity, it also inhibits us from carrying out our primary purpose.

No form of harassment will be tolerated, including harassment for the following reasons: race, colour, financial, national origin, religion, age, gender, culture and sexual orientation.

Special attention should be paid to sexual harassment, displayed by all genders, and can be in person or electronically. There are behaviours that don't rise to the level of predatory but are still problematic. New members or members coming back after a relapse may be especially vulnerable to manipulation.

Each member has the responsibility of maintaining an atmosphere of recovery during a meeting and anyone is capable of this behaviour.

Why is it a problem?

This behaviour may result in:

- Member no longer attending the meeting
- Losing faith in the program
- Isolation
- Putting a members recovery at risk
- Harm to personal and NA reputation



What to do

Take personal responsibility – have a sponsor, read the literature, develop friendships with people you trust, join a home group, talk about how you feel and listen to others

Talking about it in a healthy, caring and productive way can help NA members to better understand the issue and how it can be dealt with. Talk with your sponsor, GSR or service member or a trusted NA fellow to process the feelings and get support through any next steps, avoiding gossip.

If there is a good relationship with the perpetrator two people may wish to take them aside and offer them guidance on their behaviour or, where appropriate, suggest help they might need. Listen and hear the views of everyone involved and allow everyone the chance to respond and give their version of events. We want to help them become aware of the consequences of their behaviour and find solutions to allow everyone to feel safe in their recovery.

Choose a safe space for a conversation and be gentle, loving and firm and choose your language carefully.

Depending on the nature of the incident, it can be discussed at a home group and a group conscience held together reach a decision and agree appropriate action. Concept 10 tells us that any member of a service body can petition that body for the redress of a personal grievance without fear of reprisal.

If after this, the meeting feels that they can't deal with the issue, they can seek guidance from the safety sub-committee.



What to do

For newcomers and those in early recovery who are still learning to understand and regulate their behaviours and who have acted in a predatory way that challenges the safety and recovery of a fellow then compassionate intervention, guidance and support may prevent a recurrence and lead to healthy, appropriate behaviours in the future. The sponsor or two committee/NA members are ideally placed to have the conversation and offer guidance.

For those who repeatedly behave in a predatory way towards fellows or the act is considered serious enough for intervention but not a police matter, the home group meeting / conscience can decide on the best way forward for their meeting. This could mean asking the perpetrator to leave the home group meeting or not to attend future ones in the interests of its unity and safety.

If a law has been broken, take the matter to the police or relevant authorities.

This extract from the Violent and Disruptive Behaviour service leaflet reminds us of the spiritual concept of anonymity.

"While we want to respect each member's' anonymity, a violent individual sacrifices their right to personal anonymity by their behaviour. Calling law enforcement is appropriate when personal safety is at stake."

