

Chairing an ABA Meeting

Here are guidelines for being the chairperson of an ABA meeting including who can chair, how to prepare, and how to choose a “sober member” to tell their story if needed. Some of the suggestions are for online meetings however most suggestions apply to face-to-face meetings also.

Chairing a meeting is a good way to do service. It is an important role as you are the “face of ABA” for the newcomer, who is the most important person in the room.

Who can chair

- The suggestion is to have a sober member who attends this particular meeting regularly, so that the person is generally familiar with its format.
- Some meetings have a monthly “roster” for the chairperson, organised during a Group Conscience.

Preparing

As you chair the meeting you are the first impression the newcomer has of ABA. It is important to be prepared so that you help the meeting run smoothly.

Here are a few suggestions...

- Plan ahead – put a reminder in your calendar
- Check with the secretary that you have the latest meeting format and have it ready - Ideally printed or on another device
- Be on time - log in 5-10 min early, and make sure your internet and microphone are working
- be “stable” (i.e. sitting down, avoid moving around)
- Be present (avoid checking your phone/emails as you chair the meeting)
- Dress conservatively (especially on a hot day—cover yourself to be respectful of all cultures)
- If possible, use a laptop or iPad rather than a phone in order to see all participants
- Stick to the format where possible. The meeting will run more smoothly
- Pray before the meeting to let your Higher Power speak through you and help you
- If you commit to chair and are no longer available, make sure you let the Secretary or other group members know as soon as possible so that someone else can replace you

On the day of the meeting, if you are running late or have a bad internet connection, it may be better to ask someone else to help.

Choosing a sober member to tell their story

- If there is a newcomer, the preamble suggests (which should be read) that we ask a sober member to outline “what we used to be like, what happened and what we are like now as a result of joining this fellowship and working the Twelves Steps”.
- Ideally choose someone you know is sober in ABA
- If no one is available, suggest reading a story at the end of the book

Sometimes things don’t go to plan – it’s ok! Have faith that your Higher Power is in charge...