

MEETING SCRIPT: “SMART DISCUSSION”

Text to be read out loud in normal font
Section titles, time cues, and actions in **bold**
Tips for the host in *italics*

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Welcome. My name is _____ and I am the Host for tonight’s SMART Recovery meeting. SMART stands for Self-Management and Recovery Training. Our meetings can vary in format but all focus on how to gain independence from any type of addictive behavior. The format of tonight’s meeting will be a “SMART Discussion.” This type of meeting allows us to brainstorm and discuss our experiences. I have a copy of the ground rules and meeting outline if you would like to see them. *(You may hand out copies of “Ground Rules/Meeting Outline” to each participant if you have extra copies available or pass around the final sheet of this document if you choose)*

Please turn off your cell phones at this time.

Would someone like to volunteer to read our opening statement?
(Hand the following page to a participant or read it yourself)

OPENING STATEMENT

Welcome. This is a SMART Recovery meeting. SMART stands for Self-Management and Recovery Training. Our meetings focus on how to abstain from any type of addictive behavior. SMART is free. We pass the hat only to meet our expenses.

SMART Recovery is abstinence-based and focuses on four points:

- First - Enhancing and maintaining motivation;
- Second - Coping with Urges;
- Third - Managing thoughts, feelings, and behaviors; and
- Fourth - Living a balanced life.

Using Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy and other cognitive-behavioral techniques, we operate on the premise that people are responsible for their own behavior and that they can change their behavior by changing their thinking.

The meeting lasts 90 minutes, is confidential, and operates in a workshop format. At each meeting, we practice one of the SMART Recovery techniques.

We encourage discussion after the check in has been completed. Make comments freely, but keep them in line with the topic of discussion. Please be respectful to everyone in the room. If you are under the influence, you are welcome to stay, but we ask that you only observe the meeting.

We are a self-help peer support group, not professional therapy. The host's job is to make sure everyone has a chance to participate, to keep the focus on addictive behaviors, and to encourage a rational perspective.

We start with a 30-minute check-in. Tell us your name. If you've been here before, give a brief update on the past week and anything coming up that might give you cause for concern about your recovery. If you're new, tell us a little about your background, why you're here, and how you heard about SMART. You may pass during the check-in if you choose.

CHECK-INS

We will begin with a brief check-in. Would someone volunteer to be timekeeper and alert us if a check-in goes over 4 minutes? That way everyone gets a turn and we will have time for discussion afterwards. *(Wait for someone to volunteer and thank them)*

Please start by telling us your name. If you've been here before, give a brief update on how you used SMART Recovery in the past week. You may like to share a recent success or mention anything coming up that might give you cause for concern regarding your recovery. If you're new, tell us a little about your background, why you're here, and how you heard about SMART Recovery. You may pass during the check-in if you choose. If you want feedback from the group on an issue, please let us know and we will add it to our agenda.

After check-ins, we will select a few items for an open "SMART Discussion." Some of you may have particular ways to apply SMART Recovery tools or concepts to the issues raised, and we can help each other with our challenges.

Finally we will pass the hat and check-out with those who wish to share brief concluding remarks.

Now we'll start check-ins. Who would like to begin? *(Allow check-ins to proceed)*

AGENDA SETTING

From what we heard during the check-ins, does anyone have a suggestion of what the group might focus on today?

We can also select a few topics related to SMART Recovery that might be on your mind.

(If no issues or topics turn up after about two minutes, which rarely happens, you may suggest a topic, use a handout, or choose a SMART Point to stimulate discussion.)

RATIONAL DISCUSSION

OK. Now that the check-ins are done, let's divide up the remaining time for each topic. *(Start with first topic, and if discussion peters out or goes on for a long time, move on to next topic)*

(NOTE to HOST: It is not necessary to comment on everything that is said. Try to keep the conversation on SMART Recovery points, tools and applications so experienced participants can share their knowledge and skills with newer folks. Think "friendly recovery" rather than "SMART Recovery.")

[20 MINUTES BEFORE THE END OF THE GROUP]: PASS THE HAT

(Note: if you don't have access to materials to collect donations or pass the hat, feel free to skip passing the hat)

We're almost out of time. I'm going to pass the hat for donations to cover materials, outreach, and other expenses, so please give what you can. *(Begin check-outs while the hat is passed)*

CHECK-OUT

While the hat's being passed, let's start with our check-outs. We'll go around the circle again and each of us can mention one thing about this meeting that was meaningful or useful for us, or what actions we plan to take in the next week. Please allow time so that everyone who wants to gets a chance to speak.

CLOSING

It's time to end the formal meeting, so would someone like to volunteer to read the closing statement? *(Hand the following page to a participant or read it yourself and collect copies of the "Ground Rules/Meeting Outline" if distributed)*

CLOSING STATEMENT

It's time to end the meeting and pass the hat. SMART meetings are free, but running them isn't. Your donations help us cover the cost of materials, outreach, and other expenses. Anything you can give is appreciated.

SMART meetings provide an opportunity to learn and practice new techniques. If you are struggling with urges or if you relapse, come to a meeting and discuss what happened. We can help you learn to prevent more relapses by managing your urges. It takes time to learn the SMART tools and to deal with daily hassles without relying on addictive behaviors.

Be patient with yourself, but be persistent. You can take responsibility for your behavior and emotional life by exercising the power of choice.

You may want to consider helping to keep SMART Recovery available to others. Many people volunteer with SMART by becoming facilitators, coordinating meetings or working behind the scenes. They often find that this enhances their recovery, leads to a more balanced life, and can even be fun. If you can help, send an e-mail to volunteer@smartrecoverynyc.org.

A few final notes:

If you want a weekly e-mail with the meeting schedule and upcoming changes, visit our website at www.smartrecoverynyc.org and sign up on our "contact" tab.

Also, we sell a SMART Recovery Handbook for \$10 that is well worth the price.

We hope that you have felt supported and welcome here. Thanks for coming!

GROUND RULES for SMART Recovery® Meetings

(revised for SMART Recovery NYC from work by Robert F. Sarmiento, Ph.D and Henry Steinberger, Ph.D.)

- 1. Use of alcohol or drugs is seen as a personal matter**, so you are welcome to attend regardless of whether you are currently using or not. If your behavior is disruptive for any reason, you may be asked to leave. However, no one will shame you or try to pressure you into quitting. In coming to the group, participants agree to be responsible only for their own behavior and to allow others to make their own decisions.
- 2. All participants agree to confidentiality** for all that is said and done at meetings. It is not permissible to tell anyone outside the group who attended or what was said in any way that would identify the individual. Violation of confidentiality is grounds for being barred from attendance.
- 3. Participants are encouraged to take primary responsibility for their own recovery.** Thus, there is no sponsorship or buddy system. It is helpful to actively participate in meetings, but not required. What you do during the week in your daily life is much more important than what happens in the meeting. Practicing what you have learned on a daily basis is usually the best way to overcome your addictive behavior. “Homework” assignments may help you develop competence at self-management and recovery.
- 4. Socializing between members** is seen as a private matter between individuals.
- 5. Relapse is seen as a chance for practicing your new skills, not something to be ashamed about.** Instead of downing yourself or using your relapse as an excuse to give up, use it to observe how you got yourself to relapse, what the triggers were and what thoughts led you to act against your better judgment. Write down an ABC analysis and bring it to the next meeting for discussion.
- 6. If you think someone in the group is having a serious problem** like severe depression, suicidal thoughts, incoherence, or “flipping out”, **contact the group’s advisor immediately.** The advisor is a mental health professional who has volunteered to be a resource to the group.
- 7. Please be respectful to everyone in the room.** Our meetings encourage “cross-talk” and open discussion; sometimes differences of opinion and personalities conflict. We strive to “agree to disagree” in a civilized manner without personal attack, name-calling or abusive language. Ultimately, the Facilitator or Host has the authority to ask any person to leave for any reason, or to end the meeting to maintain a safe environment.
- 7. Attendance is free, but donating time and money keep the organization alive.**

MEETING OUTLINE: "SMART Discussion" (90 min. total)

1. **Welcome and Opening Statement:** Read by host or volunteer. (5 min.)
2. **Check-in/Successes:** What's happening related to your recovery? (5-20 min.)
3. **Agenda Setting:** Based on the Check-in an agenda is set. (5 min.)
4. **Rational Discussion:** This is working time to focus on issues/challenges. (30-45 min.)
5. **Pass the hat:** SMART Recovery® is a 501(c)(3) educational not-for-profit. (2 minutes)
6. **Check-out** What was most meaningful about this meeting? What SMART Recovery tool can you use this week? (15 min.)
7. **Closing Statement:** Read by host or volunteer (5 min.)