

The Twelve Guidelines for Safe Sharing at SIA WSC Open Share Meetings

The 12 Guidelines for Safe Sharing have been developed to keep our phone line a safe place for childhood sexual abuse survivors. Please follow the Guidelines during meetings, and in your communications with fellow Survivors outside the phone line.

These guidelines grow directly out of Traditions One and Two. Their purpose is to provide survivors with a framework for communicating in healthy, functional ways that are considerate of themselves and other survivors. Why? Simply stated, growing up we were not taught healthy ways of dealing with or communicating about our pain and conflict. When triggered it is easy to forget about mutually affirming communication transactions.

The Guidelines central purpose is to educate, not chastise. Although there are consequences if safety guidelines are not followed repeatedly, please don't worry about not remembering a guideline. If you accidentally cross a guideline because you're new, triggered or dissociated, the moderator will gently reread the guideline after your share is finished.

Guideline 1: No Perpetrators

Perpetrators are not allowed at SIA meetings. We are here to heal from the wounds of sexual abuse by sharing our experience, strength and hope. We may talk about the incest, its effects, our memories, our feelings, our problems, our recovery, our dreams or any other experience, but not on current or past adult perpetrating behaviors including sexual objectification, in practice or fantasy, for personal pleasure.

Guideline 2: Identifying

We keep the focus on our own recovery and take our own inventory, not other survivors'. It's okay to identify with what another has said and share our personal experience about the same topic, but we do not name that person while we say that we are identifying.

Guideline 3: 'I' Statements

We talk in 'I' statements. However, if you're multiple or referring to you and your inner kids, feel free to share using the "We" voice, but please let the group know that your "We" applies to you and not everyone else.

Guideline 4: Non-SIA Literature

We care for fellow Survivors by trying to remember to announce when we are going to read or quote non-SIA literature, share highly graphic abuse memories or use four-lettered language. When we share non-SIA literature, we relate it to our recovery from the disease of childhood mental, emotional, physical and sexual trauma.

Guideline 5: Intense Emotions

We may safely express intense emotions - anyone may sob freely without interference, express anger, terror, shame or any other feeling through words, without risk of being asked to leave.

Guideline 6: No Discrimination

We do not express anger or criticism towards a group of people based on gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, affiliation or disability. It is okay to share that we feel triggered by a group because they remind us of our abusers, but anger needs to be directed at the perpetrator specifically, not general groups.

Guideline 7: Communication Boundaries

We respect and honor our fellow Survivors by refraining from name calling, criticizing, gossip, talking about conflicts we may be having with other members of the line or violating communication boundaries when sharing at meetings. Likewise, we place other Survivors' needs on equal footing with our own in the context of the meeting.

Guideline 8: Anonymity

We don't break anonymity about what was shared in the meeting outside of the meeting, or vice versa.

Guideline 9: No Cross Talk

We don't cross talk, which includes:

- No interrupting while others speak
- No commenting on what others have said when it is our turn to share
- No giving advice or attempting to comfort others

Note: Using another person's name when thanking them for their share is not considered cross talk.

Guideline 10: Triggers

We attend meetings with the awareness that we may be triggered. We avoid turning the present into the past. Other Survivors' words, vocal tones, and responses may make us feel that we are dealing with perpetrators. Therefore, we caution Survivors not to treat other Survivors as if they are abusers. If someone on the line is triggering, we learn to deal with the evoked emotions responsibly by stepping away from our phones when needed, setting boundaries with anyone who triggers us, taking evoked feelings back to the original abuse experiences, comforting our inner children, and refraining from acting upon the desire to gossip that may arise due to being triggered by a fellow survivor.

Guideline 11: Safety and Courtesy at meetings

A-In Person Meetings: No Physical Touch without Permission If you wish to give someone a hug or touch them, please ask that person for permission first. We all have the right to reject physical touch at any time.

B-Virtual Meetings: Please respect the sharing of others by keeping your device muted when not sharing. Avoid distracting movements/visual behaviors all can see. Do not use provocative screen saver photos, and do not take screenshots of anyone. Please remember to act as if you are actually present with others in a room.

Guideline 12: No 13th Stepping

We maintain safety in and out of meetings by refraining from 13th stepping, or using the meeting contact list to ask someone for a romantic date.

What to do if Guidelines for Safe Sharing are Not Followed

We strive for meeting safety with our Guidelines, yet practice grace by providing a protocol for Guideline infractions. When a Guideline has been accidentally crossed or forgotten about, the moderator will come in after the share is completed and gently remind everyone of the guideline by rereading it. Please know this is not being done to shame any individual. Rather, the guideline is being reread to help everyone learn about how to communicate safely with other survivors

If the moderator is unable to reread the guideline, any member may gently request that the moderator do so. If the same guideline is repeatedly crossed, a Group Conscience Safety Check, may occur.

We recognize that there may be situations not covered by these Guidelines. When situations occur that repeatedly create a lack of safety in our rooms, or when a member continues to cross existing guidelines repeatedly, the person creating disruptions may be asked to leave until such a time as the individual is able to own their behavior and agree not to engage in this behavior again at SIA WSC virtual meetings.

Lastly, a gentle reminder: as survivors we may walk into this meeting feeling dissociated, triggered, emotionally raw, vulnerable, devastated, and confused. When enforcing these guidelines, we need to be gentle with each other and ourselves.