

## **Refuge Recovery Meeting Format**

Welcome to the...(meeting name).....meeting of Refuge Recovery. All are welcome here.

Our primary purpose is to offer the Refuge Recovery approach to ending the suffering of addiction. While we are inspired by the Buddha's teachings, this is not a religious program. Our group recognizes and respects that there are multiple perspectives and multiple approaches to recovery; we are gathered in the spirit of investigation of a Buddhist approach. We do not claim to be the only authority, but we know from direct experience that the path outlined in the Four Truths and Actions leads to the end of the suffering that addiction causes. We invite you to investigate and practice these truths and find out for yourself if they are valuable to your process of recovery.

My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I am the current group secretary. This meeting lasts for \_\_\_\_\_ minutes. We begin with readings that explain our purpose. We meditate together for twenty minutes. Then we have time to share our

experience. There will be time for Refuge Recovery announcements at the end of the meeting. Please turn off your electronic devices.

I have asked \_\_\_\_\_ to read, “What is Refuge Recovery?”

I have asked \_\_\_\_\_ to read how to practice the Four Truths and Actions.

I have asked \_\_\_\_\_ to read the Guiding Principles of Refuge Recovery.

In an effort to get to know each other we start by introducing ourselves. There is no need to identify yourself by anything other than your name. My name is \_\_\_\_\_.

## **Meditation**

Meditation practice is an important part of our program. We participate in a 20 minute guided Refuge Recovery meditation. I have asked \_\_\_\_\_ to lead the meditation. One bell will indicate the beginning and three will indicate the end.

I have asked \_\_\_\_\_ to read a short selection from Refuge Recovery and share on the reading. The meeting is tag/pass. Please choose someone to share when you have finished. If you would like to pass please say your name and pass to someone else. In order to give everyone an opportunity to share we have a timer. I have asked \_\_\_\_\_ to be our timer. Please limit your sharing to 3 to 5 minutes. Out of respect for the group, when the bell rings end your share. Please keep your sharing on the topic or the relationship of recovery, addiction and Refuge Recovery principals. We will end the sharing ten minutes before the meeting ends.

Now I will turn the meeting over to \_\_\_\_\_.

**Closing** *(ten minutes before the meeting ends)*

We have come to the end of the sharing portion of our meeting. We leave you with this reading from Refuge Recovery...

*“Recovery is possible. The good news is that we can fully recover from addictions. We can end all the unnecessary suffering our addictions have caused. We can heal and forgive. All living beings have the ability to live life along these lines. No one lacks the ability, only the willingness to take on such a radical path of transformation. We believe in the human capacity for change. We understand it from direct experience. If we can, you can.*

In order for this to be a group where we feel safe to share about our recovery and create an atmosphere of openness,

we ask that who you see here and what you hear here remain confidential.

## **Mentorship**

Anyone who is currently working their inventory with a mentor...please raise your hand.

Anyone with questions about inventory or mentorship, please talk to these people after the meeting.

## **Announcements**

1. All of our meetings can be found on:  
refugerecovery.org
2. This groups business meeting is held on the \_\_\_\_\_  
of each month
3. Upcoming Refuge Recovery events

## **Dana**

I've asked \_\_\_\_\_ to tell us about Dana.

## **Dedication of merit**

I have asked \_\_\_\_\_ to read our dedication.

# **How to Practice the Four Truths and Actions**

In Refuge Recovery, our individual recovery program follows the traditional Buddhist system of the Four Noble Truths, which consists of four actions.

1. We take stock of all the suffering we have experienced and caused as addicts.
2. We investigate the causes and conditions that lead to addiction and begin the process of letting go.
3. We come to understand that recovery is possible and take refuge in the path that leads to the end of addiction.
4. We engage in the process of the eightfold path that leads to recovery.

The eightfold path consists of these eight factors:

1. Understanding , 2. Intention, 3. Communication/Community, 4. Action/Engagement, 5. Livelihood/Service, 6. Effort/energy, 7. Mindfulness/meditations, 8. Concentration/meditations.

These eight factors, or folds, are to be developed and experienced. This is not a linear path. It does not have to be taken in order. In fact, all the factors need to be developed and applied simultaneously. To truly break free from addiction, the eight folds must be continuously maintained.

# **The Guiding Principles of Refuge Recovery**

Inspired by 2600 years of Buddhist community organization and over 80 years of recovery group traditions, these guiding principles are our humble attempt at creating guidelines to maintain group unity powerful enough to guide us through any conditions. These necessary principles provide each Refuge Recovery group a basis to resolve conflicts and to keep our focus firmly on helping each other find freedom from addiction.

1. The group is of utmost importance. Our individual recovery depends upon Refuge Recovery unity.
2. For our groups to be successful, there must be a rotating leadership and democratic decision-making process. Group leaders do not act in the capacity of Buddhist teachers. Elected volunteers serve the group for a designated period of time.
3. All are welcome. The only criteria for membership is a desire to be free from addiction.
4. Refuge Recovery is an abstinence-based program. Elected volunteers are expected to maintain abstinence from all recreational drugs, alcohol and adhere to process addiction bottom lines.
5. Each group operates independently, except in matters affecting other groups or Refuge Recovery as a whole.

6. The core purpose of each group is to make the Refuge Recovery program available to all those still suffering from addiction.

7. There are no dues or fees for Refuge Recovery membership. Each group is responsible for its own finances, relying solely on the generosity of its members.

8. Refuge Recovery groups have no opinion on other recovery programs, buddhist traditions, religions, spiritual philosophies, political causes, organizations or institutions.

9. Refuge Recovery groups are entirely volunteer-led. RR World Services is the non-profit service organization that serves and supports our groups, employing only the people necessary for those purposes.

10. Although we are not an anonymous program, individual RR members are responsible for offering privacy to all who desire it. The practice of humility is at the heart of our program. Members should never use the RR name for personal prestige or financial gain.

11. The Refuge Recovery program depends on our remaining mindful that these guiding principles are more important than individual preferences, desires, views, opinions or personalities.

## **Dedication of Merit**

May each of us do what needs to be done to free ourselves from the suffering of addiction and may our recovery benefit this world.

## **What is Refuge Recovery?**

Refuge Recovery is a community of people who are using the practices of mindfulness, compassion, forgiveness, and generosity to heal the pain and suffering that addiction has caused in our lives and the lives of our loved ones. The path of practice that we follow is called the Four Truths and Actions of Refuge Recovery.

This path has proven successful with addicts, alcoholics and those suffering from process addictions. The Four Truths practice requires commitment to meditation, generosity, kindness, and renunciation.

This is an approach to recovery that understands “All beings have the power and potential to free themselves from suffering.”

We feel confident in the power of the Buddha’s teachings, if applied, to relieve suffering of all kinds, including the suffering of addiction.

## **What is Dana?**

In Refuge Recovery we practice the principal of dana or generosity and support. Each group is responsible for its own finances, relying solely on the generosity of its members. Refuge Recovery is freely offered. We have no dues or fees.

Your donations are used at the local level to pay for group rent and literature. Donations collected that exceed these local expenses are used to cover the shared costs each Refuge Recovery group incurs at the world level and are sent monthly to our non-profit, Refuge Recovery World Services. These costs include protecting the integrity of the Refuge Recovery name and program, running the main website and social media, developing new literature, supporting the creation of new meetings and holding an annual conference.

We have a \$5 suggested donation. If you have less, give less. If you have more, give more. I will be available to take credit card and donations after the meeting. Our group PayPal/Venmo address is \_\_\_\_\_  
Support your Refuge Recovery and our mission to provide this path to all those seeking freedom from addiction.

## **Meeting instructions for Secretaries**

Before the meeting, the secretary is to find volunteers:

- To read What is Refuge Recovery
- To read the Four Truths and Actions
- To read the RR Guiding Principals
- To lead the group in meditation
- To read a short selection from the book Refuge Recovery or the RR pamphlets
- To read the dedication of merit

If the group is not large enough to have volunteers for each item on the list above, please prioritize that the meditation and the reading/sharing is done by a different volunteer each week. Multiple meeting readings may be done by volunteers other than the secretary.

It is the responsibility of the Secretary to choose a different RR member to lead the meditation at every meeting. This rotation is vital to the spirit of our program.

Please remind the meditation leader :

- That the instructions are to be read slowly to the group, pausing between instruction to allow each participant to absorb and implement these practices

- That is necessary to speak loud enough for all in attendance to hear the meditation.
- The meditations have been specifically created for those practicing Refuge Recovery and are to be offered to the group as written.

It is the responsibility of the Secretary to find a different RR Member each week to read a section of Refuge Recovery literature and to have that person share on the reading.

The Secretary is responsible for ensuring that the RR dana reading is read as written and for facilitating the group in offering donations. In addition to accepting cash, donations can be collected using Square (or other) card readers and other electronic payment systems to allow our members to contribute with a wide variety of electronic payment. All RR Groups collect donations in the Refuge Recovery name and need to have oversight by their own RR group business meeting. Donations are to be administered by the elected group treasurer.

It is the responsibility of the Secretary to start and end the meeting on time.

It is the responsibility of the Secretary to not allow crosstalk at the meeting. Cross talk is the commenting on or offering of advice to others in the meeting. Mindful listening is our practice.

The group Secretary is responsible for the meeting atmosphere. Any disruption of the meeting should be handled in a firm and clear way by pausing the meeting and asking anyone disrupting the meeting to leave.

*The Group Secretary and Group officers are responsible for running the group in accordance with Refuge Recovery guidelines.*

## **What are the necessary elements for a Refuge Recovery meeting?**

1. A group secretary, elected by the group for a designated period of time, generally 6 months. Please disregard any mention of facilitators in the Refuge Recovery book, RR has moved to elected secretaries for all meetings. No facilitator language will be included in the meeting formats in the second edition of the RR book. If you are a brand new RR meeting, please hold an election within the first 6 months, by those members regularly attending, to create the first group business meeting, and to elect its officers and meeting secretary. We have a common and consistent RR service structure for all meetings and all group business meetings. Specific guidelines for how to create the business meeting and how to run the business meeting and how to elect officers can be found on the resources pages of [refuge-recovery.org](http://refuge-recovery.org).

2. The reading of the preamble, the 4 Truths and The Process, and the RR Guiding Principles.

3. Use of the meditations from the Refuge Recovery book. These meditations are designed specifically for people in recovery and practicing Refuge Recovery. No other meditations are approved for use. Meditations are led by a different member every week to ensure our meetings are operating on the guiding principle that trusted volunteers are not buddhist teachers.

4. A reading from the Refuge Recovery book, the RR pamphlets, or the RR inventory also read by a different member every week. We use only Refuge Recovery approved literature and the program described in the book Refuge Recovery: A Buddhist Path to Recovering from Addiction.

5. Sharing without crosstalk by anyone including the secretary.

6. RR only announcements, including an announcement listing the monthly group business meeting. We offer no announcements for any individuals, groups or organizations other than Refuge Recovery and Refuge Recovery World Services.

7. An announcement regarding inventory/mentoring to help people get connected with mentors.

8. Please read only the approved dana reading. This reading asks for support for the local meeting and for RR as an organization beyond the meeting.

Questions? Please read the meeting resource and service re- source pages on [refugerecovery.org](http://refugerecovery.org). Downloads of the format, meditations and other material are available on those pages.

All Refuge Recovery groups using the Refuge Recovery name must follow these necessary meeting elements and group secretary instructions in order to be licensed by Refuge Recovery World Services as a Refuge Recovery group.

*The Secretary and group instructions and this meeting format represent the combined wisdom of those who have been doing service to bring Refuge Recovery meetings to their communities since 2014.*

*All RR groups are registered with Refuge Recovery World Services and are listed on [refugerecovery.org](http://refugerecovery.org). These instructions describe the methods that have been found to be instrumental in creating inspiring and attractive RR meetings and cooperative and stable RR groups.*

*If you or your group have questions regarding material covered by this document please contact: [refugerecoveryworldservices@refugerecovery.org](mailto:refugerecoveryworldservices@refugerecovery.org)*