

How to Start a Meeting - Frequently Asked Questions

Below we try to answer some of the most frequently asked questions about how to start a Recovery Dharma meeting. These questions were taken from the community and answered by the community during a Zoom video call, which is available here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JBtS1DI__Bo&t=1285s. This is intended as a living document, to be changed and updated as our community evolves. We offer these suggestions for consideration and welcome any feedback about this document via the contact form.

Are there any special requirements or qualifications needed to lead a meeting?

No. Any sober person can lead a Recovery Dharma meeting.

How should I prepare to lead a meeting?

Recovery Dharma has a forgiving format, so you will not need to prepare much in advance. Some facilitators like to select the reading and meditation beforehand, or group them around themes from the eightfold path, like wise speech, wise action, and so on. Others will let the group decide which meditation they'd prefer. If you have the time, it's a good idea to practice reading your selected meditation and timing it, so you can be comfortable with the words and make sure you are coming in around twenty minutes.

Where can I find the materials to run a meeting?

The Recovery Dharma website has everything you need to run a meeting, including meditation scripts, a starter kit, and templates for promotional flyers.

Can we use other meditations or readings at our meeting?

In order to have an authentic Recovery Dharma experience, we recommend that you stick primarily to Recovery Dharma material. The material is rich and varied, and there is great comfort in consistency. Many people are eager to explore the wealth of Buddhist experience beyond Recovery Dharma, so please encourage them to do so in their own private practice. That said, every Recovery Dharma group is independent, so you are welcome to include outside meditations or readings alongside Recovery Dharma material if the group decides that's what it wants to do. Please be sure the process to choose outside materials, as well as the materials themselves, meet Recovery Dharma's [core intentions](#).

What should we do when we get to the end of the Recovery Dharma book?

Start over again from the beginning! There will always be new people hearing Recovery Dharma for the first time, and regular sangha members will experience each subsequent reading differently because they are at a new point in their journey of recovery. Your group is also free to skip around in the book, and to match readings with meditations by theme.

How do we find a meeting space?

Yoga studios, churches, hospitals, educational facilities, recovery centers, libraries, book stores, and numerous other venues might likely offer meeting space. Some places will offer space for free, while others may charge rent. Rent is sometimes negotiable, a percentage of the dana, a flat fee, or something that you may need to raise funds for.

Is it okay to meet at a church, treatment center, or other specialty location?

You can meet anywhere. Bear in mind, however, that some locations may have restrictions--some treatment centers may not allow open meetings, for instance--and some people may avoid attending meetings in spaces that have negative personal associations. You can also meet in a public park or on the beach!

Do we need cushions or other props for our meeting?

Pillows are nice but not necessary. At a bare minimum, you will want to have chairs.

How do we promote our meeting?

The Recovery Dharma website has templates for promotional flyers. Leave flyers at recovery events, treatment centers, Buddhist gatherings, and other places people in recovery are likely to visit. Post meeting information on appropriate social media channels, and don't forget word-of-mouth!

How do we encourage community growth and development of wise friendships?

There are nearly endless opportunities to build connections within the sangha. Many groups organize post-meeting gatherings at a nearby cafe or restaurant. Some groups organize Buddhist book study sessions or listen to podcasts together. Circulate phone

lists, create a group list serve, or set up a group Facebook page. Really, anything that brings people together is worth giving a try.

How often should we have a business meeting?

Most groups find that monthly business meetings work best.

Should we consider a specialty meeting (e.g., women's group, LGBTQIA, etc.)?

Sure! If your group identifies a special need, try it out.

How should I answer difficult questions about Buddhism, Recovery Dharma, etc.?

For Recovery Dharma questions, refer people to the Recovery Dharma website. Recovery Dharma's principles are based on the four noble truths of Buddhism, along with the eightfold path; it is part of a 2,600-year-old tradition, and is designed to be compatible with other recovery programs and belief systems. Additionally, you can study the basics of Buddhism on your own (there's a lot on Wikipedia!), answer questions to the best of your understanding, and encourage interested people to seek out answers for themselves. Don't feel pressure to respond to questions you aren't comfortable with. "I don't know" is sometimes the best and most respectful answer.