

6. Consider putting your name on speakers' lists for various community organizations.
7. Give literature and meeting information to local psychotherapists and counselors.
8. Meet with local priesthood leaders to give them an overview and introduction of *Heart t' Heart*. You may want to use pamphlets, *Heart t' Heart* newsletters, or other *Heart t' Heart* or Twelve Step material to introduce the program to community and church leaders.

When the group first starts, it is probable that one person will serve as the sole leadership for that group. There will be "slow times" when no one but this group leader shows up. Leaders should not become discouraged; consistency is important for group stability and to encourage others to attend. A meeting can produce much recovery even if the only members attending are you (the group leader) and the Lord. It can be a precious time for reading, writing, and prayer without other distractions.

#### **How do we run a meeting?**

Each meeting is "led" by a member of *Heart t' Heart*, using the suggested meeting format. Each member of the group should be invited to lead from time to time, or on a rotating schedule. However, no one should be pressured into doing so.

The group will ideally be striving to cultivate a loving, supportive atmosphere, where a fellowship of acceptance and unity can flourish. In this environment, participation in all aspects of any *Heart t' Heart* meeting is strictly voluntary, with any member feeling free to "pass" on any participation. On the other hand, service is a tool of recovery and should be discussed regularly in meetings, encouraging any and all members to help in service to the group.

First, decide what kind of meeting(s) you are going to have: general focus (dealing with any problem), or special focus (placing extra emphasis on one area of addiction). Then decide how you will implement your plan: book study, writing, open sharing, or a combination meeting.

At each meeting follow the suggested format included in your new meeting packet. In general, this will include a greeting, opening prayer, introductions, explanation of the program, reading of the Twelve Steps and Traditions, discussion of the tools, business items including passing of the envelope (or basket) for the 7th tradition donation,\* an activity such as reading or writing, and then open sharing.

To conclude a meeting, the leader wraps it up and calls on someone for the closing prayer. There are important guidelines for participation in meetings included in the pamphlet on the Traditions, as well as in the *Heart t' Heart* Group Handbook.

*\*When meetings are held in an LDS meetinghouse, we do not collect monetary donations. Members may, however, pay for literature.*

*Additional information on starting a group may also be found in the group handbooks published by Overeaters Anonymous and Alcoholics Anonymous.*

For more information, you may contact us at:

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# *How to Start and Maintain a Heart t' Heart Group*

*Heart t' Heart*  
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### **Why meetings?**

One of the most essential parts of any twelve step program is coming together, face to face, with other people who are suffering and recovering from compulsions and addictions. No other engagement is as effective as personal contact with others. Telephoning, letter writing, e-mail or any other creative methods for communication can and are used as means of recovery, but face to face meetings are singularly effective.

### **Who attends meetings?**

Anybody is invited to attend, whether they be male or female, member of the LDS church or not, no matter what their problem or addiction(s). The only requirement for membership is that a person desires to stop participating in compulsive, addictive behaviors. This is done through a practical, proven application of the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ—as those principles correlate with the Twelve Steps, originating with Alcoholics Anonymous. *Heart t' Heart* is not affiliated with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; we do, however, sustain its doctrines and teachings.

### **Where are meetings held?**

Every locale is highly individualized, both in terms of available facilities and in the make-up of the membership of each group. For this reason it is necessary to use a creative and flexible approach to choosing a meeting place. Prayer and a little “footwork” will yield a place for an effective *Heart t' Heart* meeting. Some of the places other groups have used are LDS meeting houses, hospitals, libraries, schools, senior citizen centers, community or recreation centers, businesses and other Twelve Step facilities.

For a new group it is more practical to use a place which charges little or nothing in the way of rent. However it is recommended that from the beginning the group make a regular

donation to the facility or institution. This can be monetary, service, or some kind of commodity such as Twelve Step literature. Tradition Seven states that we are self-supporting; it is in the spirit of gratitude that we pay our own way as much as possible.

### **When are meetings held?**

Groups generally meet once a week. It is important to be consistent in holding meetings even when other interests seem to conflict. Meetings are vital to recovery and need to be a priority. Meetings may be in the daytime or evening, although evenings seem the most popular and practical. Any day of the week may be used except Monday evening or Sundays during the local LDS meeting schedule. *Heart t' Heart* meetings are generally an hour to an hour and a half in length and should begin and end on time.

### **How do we start a meeting?**

You and one other person interested in having a meeting is all that is really needed to begin. Choose a time and a place that is agreeable to both and that you believe would be conducive to growth. Then contact the *Heart t' Heart* General Service Organization (GSO) for a new meeting packet. This packet contains all the materials you need to start a meeting.

Please! When you receive your new meeting packet, promptly complete all pertinent information on the Meeting Registration Form, then mail it back to the GSO. This allows the GSO to keep track of meetings and make them available to all who have a desire to recover. Group reports need to be sent to the GSO on a quarterly basis with your donation to GSO of *Heart t' Heart*.

### **What duties are associated with a meeting?**

Meetings provide opportunities for service as simple as unlocking the door, carrying the literature, arranging chairs, and cleaning up. As soon as the group grows large enough, a

“steering committee” can be set up to guide the meeting and create “service positions” (program chair, secretary, treasurer, etc.). These positions should be rotated to give others opportunities to serve. When there are changes in the day, time, place or group representative for the meeting, you may use the same form as that used for the original registration to let the General Service Board know about these changes. (When you send in your completed registration form, the GSO will send you a new one to use when changes occur.)

### **What rules does a group follow?**

Because we follow the Twelve Traditions of *Heart t' Heart*, each group governs itself, unless it becomes harmful to *Heart t' Heart* as a whole. It is vital to remember that we uphold the doctrines and teachings of the gospel of Jesus Christ and of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. *Heart t' Heart* meetings must never encourage any behavior or sentiment that is in conflict with the doctrine or standards of the LDS Church.

### **How do we get others to attend?**

Here are a few suggestions to get started. Using prayer, and observing and talking to other Twelve Steppers will help you with more ideas.

1. Send meeting listing(s) to the local newspaper or community bulletin.
2. Submit information about the meeting to radio and television stations for public service announcements (PSA).
3. Call the local paper and ask if they will do an article; regional magazines may also have a place for announcements.
4. Consider news releases about special events such as workshops, retreats, or speakers.
5. Use community calendars and bulletin boards.