MM MEETING GUIDELINES

(Members should alternate chairing the meetings.)

1. Begin by welcoming everyone to a group meeting of Moderation Management.

2. Hand out the Opening Statement, The Steps, and The Ground Rules to be read aloud by members at the beginning of the meeting. This is important when there are new people present.

3. Ask if anyone is attending their first meeting. Newcomers are asked to introduce themselves, if they wish to, by their first names only. Regular members should also briefly introduce themselves to all newcomers. Some groups choose to use nametags. If there are any visitors who are present to provide support to a family member or friend, or to observe only, they should also introduce themselves and briefly mention why they are attending a meeting. Most MM meetings are "open," meaning that non-members are welcome to attend, as long as they observe the anonymity tradition and are not disruptive.

4. Make any announcements regarding MM Network news or other group matters that should be brought to the attention of members. The group leader or MM internet liaison can update members about important news from our on-line mailing lists or Web site. Some groups make announcements towards the end of the meeting.

5. Ask if anyone has completed or is working on Step 2 (thirty days of not drinking). Completion of Step 2 is an accomplishment that should be acknowledged by the group.

6. Begin the first half of the meeting with a "round-robin" where members get a chance to tell how they have been doing since their last meeting. Anyone attending their first meeting can tell the group about what brought them to MM at this time. Members can discuss what they are working on, progress they are making, or problems they are having. As members move beyond establishing personal drinking limits, encourage discussion about the second half of Step 7, "small steps" toward finding balance and moderation in other areas of life. Remind the group that feedback is encouraged, but that everyone should get a chance to talk.
7. Open the meeting up for general discussion if there is time after the round robin. Ask if someone in the group has something specific they want to talk about or suggest a topic yourself. Suggestions for discussion: ideas from the MM handbook; current topics from our MM on-line groups; other excessive behaviors that members are trying to reduce, such as over-eating, coffee consumption, smoking (quit, or reduce then quit); or healthy behaviors that members are trying to increase, such as exercise, stress reduction techniques, and ways to reward oneself without using alcohol.

8. The treasurer should pass a basket for voluntary donations before the close of the meeting. The treasurer should also give a simple report of donations and expenses from the previous week, and the balance of group funds. Remind everyone that MM groups are self-supporting and that MM Network is funded solely through membership fees and individual donations. Some groups choose to collect contributions at the beginning of the meeting.

9. Read the Closing Statement at the end of the meeting and ask for volunteers to help straighten up the meeting area.

Notes for the Group:

   Establish a core group of members who can open, close, and run the meetings.
   Keep copies of basic MM literature and a group "loaner" copy of the MM handbook available at meetings. (As funds allow, a "mini-library" of other suggested books can also be provided.)
   The treasurer should mail a portion of collected donations (suggested: 25%) to MM Network quarterly, after the group has become well established.
   Periodically set aside the last 15 minutes of the meeting to discuss or vote on any group matters.
   If members bring up problems that seem to be beyond the scope of your group, gently discuss the option of professional counseling (a national list of professionals offering moderation/abstinence training is under development and available from the national office on request).
   Reminder: MM is a program for people who have a sincere desire to reduce their drinking to a non-harmful level. For some this level will be zero and a significant minority of MM members will eventually choose abstinence. Of those who choose abstinence, some will move on to an abstinence-only group, and some will remain in MM. MM should never be viewed as anti-AA or anti-abstinence, but as an important early approach to recovery from problematic drinking, regardless or the final goal chosen.
OPENING STATEMENT

My name is ____ and I’m the discussion leader tonight.

Welcome to this meeting of Moderation Management. We are a group concerned about our drinking. The only requirement for participation is sharing this concern.

The purpose of Moderation Management is to provide a supportive environment for healthy decision-making about drinking and lifestyle. MM meetings are safe, confidential, and non-judgmental. MM support groups are not treatment or therapy. We’re here to assist each other with the elimination of any harm related to alcohol use.

The research-based guidelines for moderate drinking emphasize good health and safety. MM recommends No Drinking and Driving. We share our strategies for moderation and balance, which include techniques for behavior change and managing negative emotions.

The strength of this program lies in the members of MM. We are here to share our experiences and to help each other change. Individuals’ goals and progress vary, therefore we offer support but do not dictate behavior. We do ask members to refrain from drinking prior to meetings and to maintain confidentiality.

We usually begin by inviting each person in turn to say a few words about his/her current situation. If you are new to the group, tell us what’s been going on in your life and what brings you here. If you are already following a plan of moderation, tell us a bit about it and how it is working for you. If you are still feeling your way toward an approach that will work for you, let us know your latest thoughts and impressions.
THE STEPS

Nine Steps Toward Moderation and Positive Lifestyle Changes

1. Attend meetings or on-line groups and learn about the program of Moderation Management.

2. Abstain from alcoholic beverages for 30 days and complete steps three through six during this time.

3. Examine how drinking has affected your life.

4. Write down your life priorities.

5. Take a look at how much, how often, and under what circumstances you used to drink.

6. Learn the MM guidelines and limits for moderate drinking.

7. Set moderate drinking limits and start weekly "small steps" toward balance and moderation in other areas of your life.

8. Review your progress and update your goals.

9. Continue to make positive lifestyle changes and attend meetings whenever you need ongoing support or would like to help newcomers.
THE GROUND RULES

1. MM members accept responsibility for their own actions and have a sincere desire to reduce their drinking to a non-harmful level.

2. MM meetings are anonymous.

3. Members should never come to MM meetings intoxicated.

4. MM has a "zero tolerance" policy toward drinking and driving.

5. MM does not condone underage drinking.

6. Problems related to the abuse of illegal drugs are outside the scope of MM meetings.

7. MM meetings are for problem drinkers. This program is not intended for alcoholics or others who are seriously dependent on alcohol.

8. MM discourages members from socializing together in drinking situations.

9. MM never permits alcohol at meetings or other MM-related activities.

10. MM suggests that members make their MM meeting days non-drinking days.
CLOSING STATEMENT

Thank you for attending this meeting of Moderation Management. In order to protect the privacy of our members, we ask that "what you hear here, and who you see here, stays here." Remember that moderation is the avoidance of extremes and that management is the art of self-control. These two powerful skills can help you achieve balance in your life and face the challenges of everyday living.