



American Chronic Pain Association®

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ACPA Drug and Procedure Policy

Discussion of Medicines or Therapeutic Interventions at ACPA Group Meetings

- In group meetings, discussion of medicines or other therapeutic interventions should be strictly limited to information intended for general education.
- ACPA policy prohibits endorsement at group meetings of any specific medicine (prescription, over-the-counter, or herbal) or any therapeutic intervention. The experience of some individuals may be very different from the experience of others, and recommendations of a group member, though well intended, may not be helpful and could be harmful. It has been the ACPA's consistent position, and an essential element in our philosophy and approach, that decisions about treatment should be made by individuals in collaboration with their health care providers.
- ACPA policy absolutely and unequivocally prohibits the exchange of medicines or other agents at group meetings. Exchanges of prescription medications not only are against ACPA policy, but also may be illegal and therefore may put at risk those individuals providing such medicines.
- If an individual's behavior at a group meeting violates ACPA policy, is disruptive, or otherwise has the potential to adversely affect the benefits that members may derive from participating in the group, the facilitator should counsel that individual privately. After careful consideration, the individual may be restricted from attending future meetings.

ACPA Drug Policy

The following are the positions of the ACPA concerning drug use by members and facilitators:

- We believe that chronic pain is best managed without the regular use of narcotic pain relievers, habituating tranquilizers or sleeping pills. However, we recognize that physicians may prescribe temporary use of these agents.
- The ACPA and its groups do not provide medical care or advice. The health care of members is left to the discretion of the member and his or her physician.
- If a person uses mind-altering chemicals, whether alcohol, prescription medications or non-prescription drugs, to the point of impaired thinking, drowsiness, or lack of coordination, he or she is not capable of productively participating in an ACPA meeting.
- Persons who are psychologically addicted to mind-altering drugs, whether prescription, non-prescription, or alcohol, will in most cases have impaired judgment in an effort to



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rationalize their drug use and to deny their problem. Because of this, they are likely to be a destructive influence on other members who are attempting to learn healthy ways of coping with pain.

The following policies follow from these principles:

- No illicit drugs will be consumed or present at any ACPA meeting or function.
- No ACPA facilitator may take charge of a group while in a drug-or alcohol-affected state. Members should be discouraged from attending while so impaired.
- Members and facilitators are jointly responsible for implementing these rules. It is recognized that this responsibility requires making judgments in uncertain situations. A useful rule of thumb may be this - if you would not lend your new car to someone, they should not participate in the group.
- In addition to the above policy, any discussion of drugs (prescription, non-prescription, or recreational) in group is prohibited. (See Policy on “Discussion of Medicines or Other Therapeutic Interventions at ACPA Group Meetings.”)