

SPECIAL INTEREST MEETING STATEMENT

There are many reasons why members create and require special interest meetings in CPA. Examples include meetings for men; women; LGBTQ2S+; Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), etc.

Special interest meetings are not new to Twelve Step programs. For example, Alcoholics Anonymous began listing meetings as “gay” as early as 1974. Today, there are thousands of special interest meetings in Twelve Step programs across the world.

The CPA fellowship respects all of its members and supports a safe environment for recovery. This includes the existence and autonomy of special interest meetings that support the recovery of our unique and diverse fellowship.

CPA supports special interest meetings for the following reasons:

- Despite a fellowship’s best effort to address discrimination, topics discussed in special interest meetings are not always safe for members of a marginalized group to raise in general meetings.
- Special interest meetings are a necessary part of some individuals’ recovery process. And, while some members of the same group may feel comfortable in a general meeting, many do not.
- Special interest meetings allow for individuals to share their whole selves in unity with others who have similar lived experiences.

CPA recognizes that as respectful members, it is our compassionate responsibility to refrain from attending a meeting that does not describe us.

Every meeting in CPA is autonomous and guided by members’ group conscience. It is recommended that special interest meetings still welcome newcomers who are attending their first CPA meeting. “Any person who says they have a chronic illness or chronic pain is offered a hand of fellowship and welcomed into an atmosphere of unconditional love and acceptance.” *Our Common Welfare*, page 47.