TOOLS OF pa-A

In working PA-A’s (parental alienation anonymous) Twelve-Step program of recovery from PA, we have found a number of tools to assist us. We use these tools regularly to help maintain our emotional, physical and spiritual recovery.  
Parental alienation Anonymous (PA-A), is a program of action. It is a program for people that want it and not people that need it. It is not a silver bullet program, it is slow, connecting, resourcing and invaluable in the usually lonely isolating fight against PA. The tools below are useful is maintaining a semblance of normalcy and consistency in your life.

A Plan of Living

As a tool, a plan of living helps us get through the days and sometimes hours, minutes and seconds. Having a personal plan of living guides us in our daily decisions. We see plans that include, how many support group meetings we will attend, what professionals we see, exercise, food choices and safe places to connect be seen and heard. It is our experience that sharing this plan with a sponsor or another PA-A member is important.

There are no specific requirements for a plan of living; PA-A does not endorse or recommend any specific plan of living, nor does it exclude the personal use of one. PA-A suggests where needed to consult a qualified health care professional

Although individual plans of living are as varied as our members, most PA-A members agree that some plan — no matter how flexible or structured — is necessary.

This tool helps us deal with the emotional, spiritual and physical aspects of our struggles with PA. From this vantage point, we can more effectively follow PA-A’s Twelve-Step program of recovery and move beyond the debilitating emotional, spiritual and physical pain.

Sponsorship

Sponsors are PA-A members who are living the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions to the best of their ability. They are willing to share their experience, strength and hope with other members of the Fellowship and are committed to working the 12 steps.

We ask a sponsor to help us through our program of recovery on all three levels: physical, emotional and spiritual. By working with other members of PA-A and sharing their experience, strength and hope, sponsors continually renew and reaffirm their own recovery. Sponsors share their program up to the level of their own experience.

Ours is a program of attraction: find a sponsor who has what you want, and ask that person how he or she is achieving it. A member may work with more than one sponsor and may change sponsors at will.

Meetings

Meetings are gatherings of two or more alienated folks who come together to share their personal experience, strength and hope with each other. Though there are many types of meetings, fellowship with other alienated folks is the basis of them all. Meetings give us an opportunity to identify and confirm our common problem and to share the gifts we receive through this program. It is suggested to try at least 6 meetings before you decide if the program is for you. It takes time to acclimate, feel safe and start to understand the function of the 12 steps.

Telephone/Text/Email

Connecting with others helps us share one-to-one and avoid the isolation which is so common among us. Many members connect with other PA-A members and their own sponsors daily. As a part of the surrender process, it is a tool with which we learn to reach out, ask for help and extend help to others. Connection also provides an immediate outlet for those hard-to-handle highs and lows we may experience. We no longer have to be isolated and alone.

Writing/Journaling

In addition to writing our inventories and the list of people we have harmed, most of us have found that writing/journaling has been an indispensable tool for working the Steps and navigating our daily lives. Further, putting our thoughts and feelings down on paper, or describing a troubling incident, helps us to better understand our actions and reactions in a way that is often not revealed to us by simply thinking or talking about them. When we put our difficulties down on paper, it becomes easier to see situations more clearly and perhaps better discern any necessary action. Some members find to it useful to use Courage to change a daily reflection from Allanon as a primer to touch into some of those areas we can’t necessarily reach by ourselves.

Literature

We study and read PA-A pamphlets; suggested PA- books, such as Paths to recovery. Paths to recovery is the book currently used to take members through the 12steps, it is suggested to get a copy. Many PA-A members find that when read daily, the literature further reinforces how to live the Twelve Steps. Our PA-A literature, allanon literature and the AA “Big Book” are ever-available tools which provide insight into problems and the strength to deal with it, and the very real hope that there is a solution for us.

Anonymity

Anonymity, referred to in Traditions Eleven and Twelve, is a tool that guarantees that we will place principles before personalities. The protection anonymity provides offers each of us freedom of expression and safeguards us from gossip. Anonymity assures us that only we, as individual PA-A members, have the right to make our membership known within our community. This protects both the individual and the Fellowship.

Within the Fellowship, anonymity means that whatever we share with another PA-A member will be held in respect and confidence. What we hear at meetings should remain there. However, anonymity must not be used to limit our effectiveness within the Fellowship. It is not a break of anonymity to use our full names within our group or PA-A service bodies. Also, it is not a break of anonymity to enlist Twelfth-Step help for group members in trouble, provided we refrain from discussing specific personal information.

Another aspect of anonymity is that we are all equal in the Fellowship, whether we are newcomers or seasoned long-timers. And our outside status makes no difference in PA-A; we have no stars or VIPs. We come together simply as folks struggling with PA.

Service

Carrying the message to alienated community who still suffers alone is the basic purpose of our Fellowship; therefore, it is the most fundamental form of service. Leading meetings, secretaring or timing at a meeting are great ways to get in the middle of the fellowship. Any form of service—no matter how small—which helps reach a fellow sufferer adds to the quality of our own recovery. Getting to meetings, putting away chairs, putting out literature, talking to newcomers, doing whatever needs to be done in a group or for PA-A as a whole are ways in which we give back what we have so generously been given. We are encouraged to do what we can when we can. “A life of sane and happy usefulness” is what we are promised as the result of working the Twelve Steps. Service helps to fulfill that promise.

Action Plan

An action plan is the process of identifying and implementing attainable actions, both daily and long-term, that are necessary to support our individual emotional, spiritual and physical recovery. While the plan is ours, tailored to our own recovery process, most of us find it important to work with a sponsor, fellow PA-A member and/or appropriate professional to help us create it. This tool, like our plan of living, may vary widely among members and may need to be adjusted as we progress in our recovery.

For example, a newcomer’s action plan might focus on meetings to attend, getting a sponsor, making outreach calls, looking for a therapist ect. Some members may need a regular meditation, journaling and fitness routine to improve strength and health. Some of us may need an action plan that includes time for meditation and relaxation or provides strategies for balancing work, personal interactions with family and friends, and our program. Others may need help to organize their homes; deal with their finances; and address medical, dental or mental health issues.

Along with working the Steps on a daily basis, an action plan may incorporate use of the other PA-A tools to bring structure, balance and manageability into our lives. As we use this tool, we find that we develop a feeling of serenity and continue to grow emotionally and spiritually while we make measurable progress one day at a time.