

# Savvy

WOMEN'S ALLIANCE

## CHAPTER AMBASSADOR HANDBOOK

**This is your hard copy.**

An online version with live hyperlinks and the latest updates is available in the [Chapter Dashboard](#), located at the base of our homepage at [www.savvywomensalliance.org](http://www.savvywomensalliance.org).

NOTES, IDEAS, PEOPLE TO INVITE:

## The Heart and Soul of the Savvy Women's Alliance

*Welcome!*

From the bottom of my heart, I want to thank you for choosing to be an integral team member of our growing educational nonprofit, dedicated to the health of our homes, our communities and the planet.

We bring together the curious and the passionate, those who want to learn about nontoxic living alongside like-minded women. Under your leadership, women will unite to effect positive change within their communities.

- We refer to those who want to learn as our **Guests** and our **Members** and the local network as **Chapters**.
- We refer to your role -at the heart of it all- as an **Ambassador**.
- Your team facilitates and leads local Chapter **Gatherings** for Guests and Members.

That is where true change happens - through networks that foster connection, the sharing of ideas, and a positive culture of enthusiasm, encouragement, and celebration. During these Gatherings, women share their stories, exchange tips and tricks, provide nonjudgmental support, and have fun, all in the name of simplifying their journey toward nontoxic living.

Leading a Chapter doesn't mean you have to be an expert in healthier living. You may be in the early stages of your journey toward a nontoxic life, and that's okay. In fact, that's the point of Chapters. It is your dedication and desire for a better world, caring heart and leadership skills that we adore. With Savvy's support and the fellowship of a few other women in your community, you have everything you need to forge ahead.

Welcome aboard, Pioneer Girl.

Kristi Marsh  
Founder, Savvy Women's Alliance



## How To Use This Handbook

**Use the four steps to launch your chapter.** Each section starts with a checklist followed by suggested resources found in the back of this handbook.

### ★ Step One: Your Team

- Estimated time: 20 minutes per Ambassador and Co-Ambassador
- When: As soon as possible.
- **Celebrate:** Complete this checklist and we will activate your entrance into the Chapter Ambassador's Discussion Room (a supportive discussion thread) and you can join our monthly Chapter Ambassador Chapter Chats.

### ★ Step Two: Your Tools

- Estimated time: 1-hour brainstorming session with your team
- When: Within two weeks
- **Celebrate:** Complete this checklist and your Chapter will be ready to go live on our website.

### ★ Step Three: Your Gatherings

- Estimated time: 1-hour planning session with your team
- When: Schedule your Meet & Greet within 4-6 weeks.
- **Celebrate:** Complete this checklist and we can help promote your Launch (Introductory Meet & Greet) Gathering.

### ★ Step Four: Your Momentum

- Ongoing rhythm
- When: Plan out the next four months now, during your first 30 days. Your future self will thank you for this!
- **Celebrate:** You are no longer a single chapter but part of a powerful movement. When you reach 10 members, we would love to send each of your Ambassadors a Thank You Gift. At 25 members, we would love to plan a future visit from our Founder to meet your members.

## Step One: Your Team

Estimated Time: 20 minutes per person

Chapters with the most momentum have something in common: an enthusiastic team of 2-3 Co-Ambassadors who energize each other and divide tasks.

### ★ Who are your Chapter's Ambassadors?

Name	Phone	Email
1 _____		
2 _____		
3 _____		

### ★ Become a Member

- Each Ambassador should use the JOIN button located at the top of [www.savvywomensalliance.org](http://www.savvywomensalliance.org) to become a member.

### ★ Complete the Culture and Conflict Statement

- Each Ambassador needs to complete our nonprofit [Culture and Conflict Statement](#) found in Chapter Ambassador Dashboard.

### ★ Stay Connected

- Each Ambassador should connect with us on Facebook [@savvywomensalliance](#), Twitter [@savvywomenshq](#) & Instagram [savvywomenhq](#), if possible.

### ★ Review These Resources Together

We offer fantastic content in the back of this handbook that will help you going forward with your chapter:

- |                                  |                                   |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| ○ What We Ask Of Our Ambassadors | ○ What Makes Savvy Unique         |
| ○ Create a Safe Place to Share   | ○ Our Core Principles             |
| ○ Our Founder's Story            | ○ Nontoxic Living Is....          |
|                                  | ○ Your Family Tree & Member Perks |

**Finished With This Checklist?** Email your Co-Ambassador's information to us at [team@savvywomensalliance.org](mailto:team@savvywomensalliance.org) so we can include them in our communication and perks.

## Step Two: Your Tools

Estimated Time: 1-hour planning session with your team

We offer a variety of tools to create a strong chapter foundation. We are also *constantly* evolving and your feedback is encouraged. Walk through each of these tools:

### Locate These Tools On The Savvy Women's Alliance Homepage:

<https://www.savvywomensalliance.org/>

#### ★ New Member Dashboard

Your soon-to-be members will use this tool found at the very base of our homepage.

- Watch the [Tour of the Savvy Cafe video](#)
- Watch the [Set Up Your Profile video](#) and then set up your profile in the [Savvy Cafe](#).

#### ★ Chapter Ambassador Dashboard

The [Chapter Ambassador Dashboard](#) hosts a library of videos and documents. Locate it at the base of our homepage. We will refer to this as the Dashboard and you will use it often during your launch.

#### ★ Your Chapter Website Page

Think of your Chapter Website page as a front door: simple, welcoming and with the purpose of connecting potential members directly to your chapter.

- Find the **Chapter Locations** tab on our [homepage](#) menu bar. Browse the Chapters who are listed.
- Your Chapter Website page will be posted *after this checklist is completed*.
- Then, you can use the URL in emails, social media or anytime to direct those interested in being a guest or a member of your chapter.
- Encourage those interested to leave their email on the small form located at the bottom of the home page This is how we connect them to your chapter. A notification will be sent to you as well.
- Choose a banner to decorate your page from the [Chapter Banners](#) found in the Dashboard.
- Send the banner name and # you would like to personalize your Chapter page to [team@savvywomensalliance.org](mailto:team@savvywomensalliance.org).

Example: *Easton, MA would like banner number 1 Strawberries, please!*

## Locate These Tools In The Savvy Cafe (For Member's Only)

<https://cafe.savvywomensalliance.org/> Want a quick access to the Cafe? Top right corner of our homepage.

### ★ A Chapter Resources Page

Every chapter has a private Chapter Resources page in the Savvy Cafe. This is an online discussion room for members only. We like to think of this as your *online* living room where you can get to know each other, share ideas and talk about events.

- Watch the [Take a Peek At A Chapter Resource Page](#) video located in the Dashboard.
- Watch [Savvy Moderator Super Powers video](#) located in the Dashboard.
- Now, using the above videos and How To Set Up My Chapter resource page in the back of this handbook, you can personalize your Chapter Resource page:
  - Introduce yourself.
  - Add five local community resources.
  - Start a new discussion.
- Choose a team member who can update this 2 times each month and welcome new members.
- Participate in conversations often to create momentum and relationships.

### ★ More Love in the Savvy Cafe

Locate these discussion rooms created for you in the Savvy Cafe:

- **VIP Volunteers Lounge** Volunteers include Chapter Ambassadors, writers, board members and those who support our nonprofit through other tasks and projects.
- **Chapter Ambassador's Discussion Room** Of course we have an area for just us! Here is where most of our updates unfold, and we ask for your opinion and advice. Find the details of our next Chapter Ambassador Chats - monthly group calls to share updates, support, and discussions.(Hint: They are usually the first Wednesday of each month.)
- **Gathering Ideas:** Our little growing treasure of Gathering ideas and support! More on this soon!

## Two More Tools

### ★ Chapter Email Address

The primary way of communicating to your members is through your Chapter Resources page as members are notified within the week when you add discussion. In addition, you may want to use your Chapter group email to:

- Communicate to both Members *and* Guests.
  - Send a message that is time sensitive, such as an update about a Gathering.
  - Or share news and redirect them to the Savvy Cafe for discussion.
- Watch [How To Email Your Members and Guests](#) found in the Dashboard.

### ★ Chapter Roster

Your Chapter Roster is updated each week automatically on our end as Guest and Members join. We will send you the link to your roster when you complete this checklist.

#### **Finished With This Checklist?**

Congratulations! If your team has completed this checklist, then send us an email at [team@savvywomensalliance.org](mailto:team@savvywomensalliance.org) and say "Our Cafe Page Is Up and Ready!"

Then we will:

- Send the link to your chapter roster
- Send the chapter email address
- Add your chapter to the map on our homepage
- Add your front-door chapter website page to the front of our website!

## Step Three: Your Gatherings

Estimated Time: 1-hour planning session with your team.

Your Savvy Chapter's activities will evolve and reflect the personality, needs, and style of your members. [Start Your Gatherings](#) with activities that can range from discussions or workshops, speakers or book clubs, movies or field trips, or even DIY fun. No matter what type of Gatherings your Chapter plans, though, Savvy will be here to provide you with some structure and support, ensuring that each Gathering is a success. Given space and time to learn from each other, even a small group of enthusiastic women can create powerful and lasting change within their homes and their communities.

### ★ Discuss a Style

Ultimately, a Gathering should reflect a chapter's members. We suggest selecting one of these general Gathering styles to start:

- ❑ **Cozy:** A "Girls' Night Out" style to gather within someone's home. (Think casual book club with potluck appetizers.) This can be hosted by the Chapter Ambassador or another Chapter member. You can rotate hosting duties over the course of the year.
- ❑ **Inviting:** Use a local community space, such as a library, church or wellness center. This type of Gathering is an easy way to invite those who may be curious about getting involved but may not already know each other.
- ❑ **Work-Friendly:** Bring Savvy to work! Hosting on site can be as easy as hosting a lunch-hour brown bag Gathering, bringing in a guest speaker over breakfast, or going out for appetizers during happy hour.

### ★ How Many Should Attend?

You will be surprised at how many women in your community are curious about this topic but feel isolated in who they can discuss it with out loud. Savvy Chapters are a way to unite these women. It is okay to start with a small group of women as intimate settings create great conversation. They may be others, too, thers who hit the ground running, aiming for 20 or 30 members within the first year. Don't let chapter size weigh on you - it will *grow*.

★ **Gathering Topics**

- [Gathering #1: Meet & Greet](#)
- [Gathering #2: Book Club and Beyond](#)
- Future Gatherings can be based on your members' interest (harness that energy!) or in complement to our educational two-month themes. These are hyperlinked here and found in the resources in the back of this handbook.

We also have a growing library of Gathering Ideas in the Savvy Cafe. Here, we offer ideas by theme, discuss ideas for cozy chapter and larger chapters, provide links, videos and images!

★ **Identify the first four dates for your Gatherings. Start with dates that work for your team, knowing they can evolve in the future.**

---

---

---

---

★ **Choose a venue:**

Brainstorm list of some locations that you think might work. Whatever you choose, please refrain from using a location that will charge for space. Identifying, securing and confirming a location, or building a relationship with the location, is a great task to delegate to a supportive member.

Some chapters have used:

- libraries, churches, community centers, restaurants, coffee houses
- local farms, yoga studios, health centers
- Member homes

*Rockstar Chapter Tip: Depending on the topic, we have found that many women like local restaurants, cafes, etc. for a “night out feel,” combined with learning.*

## ★ Post Your First Three Events on Your Chapter Resource Page

Head to the Savvy Cafe > to your Chapter Page >

Click on Events > and then Post the Event Detail for Gatherings

All new members who arrive will see the excitement building.

All existing members will be notified within a week of all activity that you post.



## ★ Now, who to invite?

Brainstorm ideas with your team using these tips:

- Mix up circles. Future discussions will be richer if you have a cross section of acquaintances.
- Do NOT rule anyone out. It's hard! More often than not, the seed has been planted and they just need an inviting and welcoming place to learn. And an encouraging nudge to do it.
- The earliest adopters will be those who are passionate. They will quickly understand the place in the movement we fulfill. Those also bring to the group a diverse set of skills, wisdom and ideas. (All of us are learning. Always.)
- Announce broad and wide. Announce to the entire world! They won't all join, but those who are not interested may become your BEST source of new introductions.

- Invite genuinely. The world has a dozen invite tools, but THE most effective is to ask. Face-to-face with your words, from your heart. “Would you help me launch my chapter by attending?”
  
- Invite 2.5x the headcount you want to attend. Have a goal of 12? Personally invite 30+. The *no’s, not this time’s and on-the-day-of cancellation’s* are part of this world. After the first few Gatherings, momentum will build and it’s your members who will share forward.

***List those who come to mind when reviewing these tips:***


**★ Invitation Ideas**

Once you’ve chosen a venue, day and time, and it is posted in your Chapter Resource page, it is time to get the word out. Eventually your members will just use the Savvy Cafe, but when you are just launching we need to bring attention to your new chapter. Outside of the direct ask, here are ideas that have come from Chapter Ambassadors. Use what you are comfortable with:

- **Email in General:** A [sample email](#) in the Chapter Dashboard. Announce your new chapter to ALL your acquaintances, family, friends, etc. Don’t decide for them. They may or may not attend your Gathering, but they will know others who will be interested.
  
- **Press Release** There is a [sample press release](#) in the Chapter Dashboard. Feel free to announce your launch loudly through your community papers!

- **Postcards** If you would like, use branded postcards to hand out in person. Email us at [team@savvywomensalliance.org](mailto:team@savvywomensalliance.org) and we will send you a package. Some chapters have printed stickers listing upcoming Gathering dates and placed them on the postcards.
- **Social Media Venues** We are very protective of our nonprofit status and branding. ***Please take extra care to review and follow these items, linked here and found in the Chapter Dashboard.***
  - [Social Media Guidelines](#) and
  - [Guidelines and How To Create a Facebook Event](#)
  - Using social media venues are good for creating awareness, but not as effective as securing the RSVPs. Keep bringing them back to the link of your homepage. “That’s great! Come on over to LINK to RSVP.” This is where the connection is created.
  - *Facebook:* Create a Facebook event page from your personal account, but not a “group” or “page.” Have your team share it forward to their friends as well.
  - *Meetup:* You can also use your local Meetup.com page to create buzz outside of your circle of friends. There is a minimal yearly charge for utilizing this option.

### **Finished With This Checklist?**

Congratulations! If your team has completed this checklist, has their dates under Events in the Savvy Cafe, and has reviewed our Social Media Policy, then send us an email at [team@savvywomensalliance.org](mailto:team@savvywomensalliance.org) and say “Let’s Do This!” Send us a description of your Meet & Greet Launch.

We can help promote it through possible local supporter and through our online reach.

Remember, your future members are paying to be a member. We provide much support to them but what they really enjoy are Gatherings that they can look forward to on their calendars.

## Step Four: Your Momentum

### ★ Monthly

- Join our Monthly Chapter Chats for Chapter Ambassador where we share updates and support.
- Host a status meeting with the team to plan events and review the roster.
- Send an email to your Guests and Members with a short announcement and lead them to the Cafe.
- After each Gathering, continue the conversation with ideas in your Resource page.
- Upload photos onto your Resource page.

### ★ Grow

- Identify Members who can share tasks and roles
- Volunteer for roles offered year-round for Savvy Women's Alliance
- Become a Savvy Sister and mentor neighboring chapters that are launching
- Collaborate with nearby Chapters for a Multi-Chapter event.
- Activate more publicity and press in the area.

### ★ Upcoming Events

- Charitable Mission month
- National Conference
- Regional Events

We have only just begun. We recognize that no matter where we are on our journeys, we are all learning. When you are ready to take on another role - whether in our organization or as a leader elsewhere, let us know. We love to mentor and assist women in developing skills as writers, speakers, community advocates, or connect them to their state movement-makers and issues.

The ONLY thing that holds the Savvy Women's Alliance back is simply good old-fashioned human resources! If you have a skill, or an idea that you would like to see implemented, then

contact us. Your chapter might become a test chapter, or you can help us develop a needed tool.

**Finished?** Well, there isn't a an actual finish to your momentum! But we do believe in celebration.

- When you hit 10 members, we will celebrate by sending you a Thank You Gift!
- When you hit 25 members, let's plan a future visit and Gathering - our Founder would love to meet your members!



## RESOURCES SECTION

The following section contains fabulous content and resources for your launch and going forward. Feel free to use this rich and descriptive wording when describing the Savvy Women's Alliance and growing your chapter:

- What We Ask Of Our Ambassadors
- Create a Safe Place to Share
- Our Founder's Story
- What Makes Savvy Unique
- Our Core Principles
- Nontoxic Living Is....
- Set Up Your Chapter Resource Page
- Questions We Hear Often + Member Perks
- Gathering #1: Meet & Greet
- Gathering #2: Book Club and Beyond

## What We Ask Of You

- Create a welcoming educational culture online and in person
- Grow your chapter
- Generate consistent momentum through regularly scheduled Gatherings
- Help us grow by sharing forward our blogs, announcements and tools.

As an Ambassador, we ask you to embrace, uphold, and proliferate these values:

**Stories Matter** Facts, figures, academics, and science exist, but in this day and age, we are craving the nurturing of the human factor. For Savvy, a crucial component of who we are is the story behind each member. What is she curious about and why? What drove her to join Savvy? What is she seeking as part of this community? Listening to these answers is crucial to embracing change. Your chapter members will learn that not only do their stories matter but sharing our stories becomes one of the most powerful tools we have in encouraging change.

**Listening First and Welcoming Always** Listening will become your most important job as a Savvy Ambassador. Practicing active listening may be a challenge, especially when Savvy tends to attract passionate, creative and social women! With an open mind, open heart, and open ears, you will create an atmosphere where others feel valued. This culture you create will encourage trusted relationships and open conversations, regardless of members' background or knowledge of environmental health.

**Keep it Educational** The main purpose of any Chapter gathering or event should be about connection and education. We want to support businesses who are advancing the movement, both locally and nationally, but we don't want gatherings to be "sales-y" in nature. We respect women's options and choices and ask you, as an Ambassador, to keep our values as the primary objective.

**Celebration of Growth** Moving toward a nontoxic life will require that your members make little changes. There will be times when members take two steps forward and perhaps even one step back, but Savvy and its Chapter Ambassadors encourage all members to be better tomorrow than we were yesterday. All wins, both big and small, deserve celebration because celebrating is not only fun, it's also an effective way to give women that extra oomph they need to keep going on their journey.

**Health Matters** Our health is our most essential resource to protect and revere. You and your members deserve the healthiest life possible for yourselves, your families, your communities, and your planet. The driving force behind Savvy's decision-making is to promote health, safety, and transparency in any way we can.

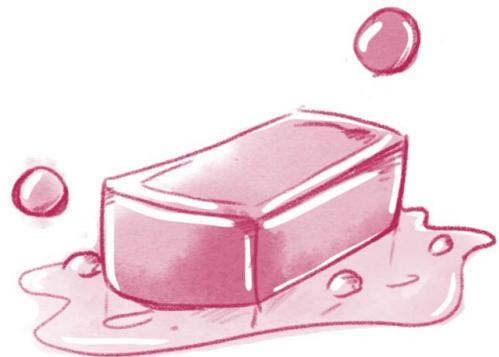
## Creating that Safe Space to Share

It's no fun when a discussion turns aggressive, sales, judgy or spammy.

Savvy's Guidelines for Engagement are pretty basic:

- Ideas are fantastic, being salesy is not. We will have a directory for recommended businesses coming soon.
- Offering insight, tips and experience is fabulous. Attacking others is not.
- Take turns, say "thank you" - and yes - you can talk to strangers.
- If you read or hear something that makes you uncomfortable, please let us know.
- Yes, we do have playground moderators watching in the Savvy Cafe conversations for anything that doesn't align with our mission. If we don't catch it quickly, feel free to point it out to us.

We hate to be a downer but to encourage a growing welcoming community, two warnings followed by a nonrefundable membership removal is our policy.



## Our Founder's Story

Diagnosed with aggressive breast cancer at age thirty-five, with three young children at home, Kristi Marsh became aware of the links between harmful chemicals in food and products and cancer, reproductive harm, hormone disruption, developmental problems, infertility, and a host of other possible health impacts.

After enduring chemotherapy, Kristi Marsh skyrocketed to become one of our generation's leading advocates on the swelling topic of personal environmental health. She founded the organization Choose Wiser, authored the book *Little Changes*, and has spoken at numerous events from the Senate building in Washington D.C. to the Sustainable Cosmetics Summit.

"As I learned and made changes in my own home and with my family, I wanted to take it to another level," said Marsh. "I wanted to take action to eliminate these chemicals for good, but I needed support in figuring out how to do that. This is why I launched Savvy Women's Alliance. We ensure that every woman who wants to learn, participate, and make a difference - whether a beginner or passionate change maker - has a home to do just that."

From young breast cancer survivor and mainstream mom to national protector-and-educator of women's "eco- health," Kristi Marsh's background makes her uniquely positioned to passionately captivate audiences by sharing what we need to know and what we can do about products we smother on our skin, foods we devour, and the surroundings in which we immerse ourselves.

The Savvy Women's Alliance will tip the scales of the environmental health movement. By reaching deep into the curious mainstream and offering the structure for a welcoming community and the tools needed to make change, Kristi continues to shift healthy and nontoxic living to a new norm.

## What Makes the Savvy Women's Alliance Unique?

Savvy is unique in that it embraces a hybrid strategy of combining online communities with local on-the-ground chapters. Savvy recognizes that true change happens in a personal community network that fosters connection, sharing of local ideas through a positive culture of enthusiasm, encouragement and the celebration of little and big steps. When we unite through a whole-focus structure, we become powerful agents of change in our homes, schools and community.

We believe:

- We have the right to pursue and place health of individuals, family, home, workplace, and planet as a guiding value.
- We have the right to know what's in the products we bring into our homes and put in, on, and around our bodies and those of our children.
- We have the right to learn in a safe, intimate space, on our own time, with like-minded women, without aggressive, vulgar, attacking, negative or salesy influence.
- We have the right to a transparent relationship between consumer and business with respect to ingredients, screening processes, and supply chains.
- We often use the new and evolving tools, databases and apps for product research, but a core essence of women's learning curve is to seek coveted personal recommendations.
- We are an essential player in creating a safer world, and when united, our power - through the pocketbook, voting or education, growing leadership - contributes to a massive shift towards a safer culture for generations to come.
- We recognize that true changes are activated when there is a personal community network, infused with connection, sharing of local ideas, leadership, enthusiasm and encouragement. When women unite through a community, local businesses and initiatives flourish.
- We are part of a crucial generation who bears the honor of shifting the nontoxic movement to the new norm for future generations.

## What are the Savvy Women's Alliance's Core Principles?

**COMMUNITY:** Use virtual and real communities to make the topics of nontoxic living simplified, discussionable, shareable, and provide a welcoming intimate environment to learn.

**EDUCATION:** Create and disseminate educational tools based on appropriate learning curve stages, unfolding science, and evolving needs of the members.

**UNITY:** Reach the tipping point of environmental health movement, which lies in numbers, by unifying women at all levels of awareness, to create a powerful, actionable army.

**ACTION:** Unite women with sister nonprofits and better-for-us businesses through collaboration, so that we may use our strength to not just better our own homes and health but to create lasting change.

**EQUALITY:** Use our growing strength to contribute to closing the gap for those who do not have the resources to care for their families, ability to learn, or who are urgently affected by toxic chemicals through an annual campaign at national and local level.



## Nontoxic Living Is...

We understand how day-to-day choices can impact our air, water and the soil we grow our food in. Now, unfolding in our generation, is the growing understanding of how our *environment interacts with the health of our beautiful bodies*. *This is the essence of 'nontoxic living'*. It is also a massive topic that can fill books, make up entire college majors *and* continues to unfold daily.

Yet, at the heart of it all, five core beliefs guide everything we offer:

**The products we bring into our homes, schools, and communities can impact the health of our bodies.** Not just our health, but our children's, as well as the air, water and soil around us. The good news? Our informed choices and decisions have an incredible impact on our surroundings.

**Despite what we were raised to believe, what is on the shelf is not always safe.** This is a heart-breaking moment for most. Yes, products with harmful ingredients can be found everywhere: in cosmetics, personal care products, cleaning products, and even in our food. Surprisingly, it is perfectly allowable in our country. Savvy simplifies learning about these harmful ingredients and explains how to make better choices.

**Gratefully, not all chemicals or ingredients are toxic. (Whew!)** However, Savvy is concerned with those that are harmful. Chemicals come in many forms. Sometimes created in a lab, sometimes created by Mother Nature. Sometimes present in hefty doses, sometimes in inconceivably small amounts. Regardless of their origin or their amount, we believe harmful chemicals don't belong in products, in our homes, or in our bodies.

**We celebrate movement forward.** We acknowledge that sometimes there *isn't* a perfect product option, free from all ingredients that are questionable. Sometimes we strive to identify an alternative product, which is a better option than the one you might be using now. It's not a this-or-that choice, but a presentation of alternatives that look more like stairsteps.

**We have the right to know and understand.** We have the right to life, and to protect our health. We have the right to learn what is in our products, how to protect our health, and how to actively support organizations looking out for us, as well as become advocates for protective legislation

## Personalize Your Chapter's Savvy Cafe Resource Page

Your Chapter's Resource page is waiting for you in the Savvy Cafe.

1. Go to [savvywomensalliance.org](http://savvywomensalliance.org) and click on Savvy Cafe/Members in the top right corner.
2. Sign into the Savvy Cafe
3. Scroll down to Chapters
4. Click on your Chapter

### Turn your Chapter Resource page into a treasure for your members.

As a team, populate content to set the stage. We like to envision someone who is new to town is a new member - what would they be seeking? What would they be looking for? Would they feel welcome here?

#### ★ Add your introduction

Introduce yourself, who you are and what started you on your journey towards non toxic living. Think of your introduction as a welcome to new members to your chapter.

#### ★ Add replies directly to the Local Resources thread:

Local resources (i.e. farm-to-table restaurants, where you can find farmer's markets, shops that sell locally sourced or upcycled products, etc.)

#### ★ Use the "Start a new topic" button:

Find this on the right hand side of your chapter page.

- Recent news, updates or new tools from Savvy Women's Alliance
- Start a thread to recap and continue conversations after a Gathering (others will be jealous they didn't attend and look forward to the next!)
- Book recommendations
- Movie recommendations
- Local events
- Favorite blog posts

## Gathering #1 Meet & Greet Launch

How do we prepare for your guests who will be coming from a range of experiences along the nontoxic living spectrum? From skeptical, curious, enthusiastic, passionate? Set a welcoming and inclusive tone and embrace these diverse perspectives all in one event.

Here are our top tips to achieve success in your first gathering.

### Build in Buffer Time

**Welcome!** Many women believe in arriving fashionably late, so build in a buffer for social time. Give your members 15-20 minutes to chat, grab a drink, and just be social. This time helps build connections among women and should not be overlooked.

### Kick Things Off

**Now it's your turn to shine.** Here are a few points we suggest you incorporate into any opening remarks:

- Thank your attendees for coming.
- Remind them that everyone is welcome, even (or especially) if they are different points in their journey. Let them know it's perfectly fine if they are just curious and want to learn.
- Let your members know that this first Gathering will be, above all, about getting to know each other, making connections, and learning about Savvy.
- Share your story of why you're interested in nontoxic living, what drove you to become a Chapter Ambassador, why are you are interested in Savvy, what you're hoping to learn etc. Doing this will not only help foster connections with other members, it will encourage them to share their stories as well.

### Let Them Take Over

**Now it's time to listen.** Encourage members to share their story, discuss their interests and curiosities, and support each other. Demonstrate your interest by asking follow-up questions or encouraging discussion among members.

*You'll probably find, especially if some of the women don't know each other, that sharing stories will likely take up a significant portion of the gathering.* That's ok! Sharing stories and making connections is what Savvy is all about, and this first gathering should focus on just that. Just try to corral the conversation in a way that stays focused on story-sharing and doesn't veer too far off Savvy-related topics.

### Brainstorm Future Gathering Topics

**Facilitate an open brainstorming discussion around future gathering ideas.** There's no bad ideas or wrong answers here. The goal really is creating a sense of involvement and

crowd-wisdom. While we strongly recommend that your second gathering be a book club discussion (see the next section of the checklist for details) this is a great interactive activity.

- Create a list of topics and/or activities to look forward to.
- To help facilitate this conversation, come armed with your own ideas to help get the conversation started if need be.
- Poster size brainstorming is visual and fun! Take a picture and upload it to Cafe page!
- Also, jot down ideas that may come up during the story-sharing portion of the evening and encourage members to elaborate when you get to the brainstorming session.

### **Bonus: Have time for another activity?**

While your first round of attendees are there - start a discussion around your community resources. Pose the question:

*If someone was new to town, what local services and resources would we recommend?*

Brainstorm number #2! Of course the ideas will go onto your Savvy Cafe page, but the guests will LOVE you for this conversation.

### **Plan for the Future**

**Share or make a plan for when you'll meet next.** Dates for subsequent gatherings will depend on your members and their schedules, but you can help get on calendars early and make it easier on yourself by setting dates for not only the second gathering, but perhaps the third, fourth, and fifth as well. We encourage Gatherings to be scheduled at the same time every month (e.g., second Thursday of the month, or the 25th of every month, etc.)

### **Make Your Members "Official" and Wrap Up Housekeeping items as you wrap up your first gathering:**

**Sign up! Now for the magic moment:** Encourage everyone who shows up to your first gathering to sign up as a member. Perhaps have a laptop available for them to use so they can easily sign-up before leaving the gathering. Remind them that even though annual dues are \$36 a year, as a first-time members, they will receive a Little Changes book - a value of \$18.99.

**Celebrate your first gathering with a group photo!** Savvy LOVES seeing pictures of its Chapters in action, and having a photo for your chapter discussion page will help encourage other women to join in the future. After all, this IS a historic moment.

**But maybe they are not sure...** Encourage them to stay connected with your chapter, even as a guest, by leaving their email on the form on our homepage. ([www.savvywomensalliance.org](http://www.savvywomensalliance.org)) This way they will be connected with your chapter email and roster for 90 days as a guest. They won't receive a Little Changes or have access to the Savvy Cafe, but it is a start!

## Follow-Up

**How was it?** We'd love to hear how it went - what topics were discussed, what questions you have, feedback on the activities or speakers, any challenges you faced. In addition, send us your pictures from the gathering

## Create the Buzz

**Take all that excitement and update your Chapter Discussion page.** That photo? Perfect! It's your founding group and its historical!

## Next...

**See you soon!** Quickly send out an email mentioning the high points of the evening, thanking everyone ...and mentioning that you just posted photos! Everyone who couldn't attend will feel a little bit excited for the next one. Remind them of the dates/times/locations of future gatherings.

## **Gathering #2 Level the Playing Field With a Book Club-Like Event.**

We strongly recommend that your second gathering is a book club discussion of Little Changes. We believe so strongly in this that we will send every new Savvy member a complimentary copy!

### **Why a book club? There is a method to our madness.**

As you may have witnessed, because of the immensity of the topic, everyone comes to the circle with a variety of interests and experience. Hosting a book club brings a commonality to the conversation. Again, we are welcoming those who are not ready to change, skeptical, curious, enthusiastic and passionate! We even the playing field and knowledge by centering this gathering around a book.

- Be prepared for "Sorry, I didn't read the book in time." If you hear this from guest please give them a wholehearted ***It is okay- just come!***
- Use the discussion questions at the end of the book to spur conversation. It doesn't have to be rigid, but they can be used to guide the evening.
- A book that everyone loves makes for a boring book club. It's okay if everyone doesn't love the book or the writing! Differences in opinion generate provoking conversation.

### **Basic Gathering Formats**

**Welcome.** Warmly welcome new members and encourage them to share a little bit about themselves and their story

**Celebrate.** Go around the room and invite all members to discuss a little change they've made since the last gathering. These can be straightforward changes, such as swapping out a cleaning product, or something less tangible, such as educating themselves about a chemical they used to know nothing about. Take the time to celebrate and congratulate each member on their little change and encourage dialogue between women so they can learn from each other.

**Share.** Provide any updates from Savvy - new tools, conversations, favorite blog posts, publicity, new chapters in the area...

**Activity/discussion topic.** Just encourage open discussion and the sharing of ideas. For future gatherings, this may be the time when you do an activity (e.g., create your own, remember to take pictures!

### **Wrap-up:**

- Let Savvy know how your gathering went.
- Upload pictures!

- Email your members including the logistics for the next gathering and/or update your chapter's homepage, sharing with a Communications Buddy anytime you can.
-

