



THE UNFORTUNATES

GROUP CHARTER

Version *1.0j*
March 25, 2021



VERSION HISTORY

The development and distribution of the Charter up to the final point of approval is to be controlled and tracked. Upon the two thirds (2/3) Steering Committee approval vote at any point in time, a panel of no less than four (4) Steering Committee Members is to maintain the Charter. Draft Versions of the charter will be tracked with alpha notations and Final Versions are given a final whole number numeric designation. The table below tracks the version number, the authors implementing the version, the revision date, the date of the Panel Approval, the date of the Steering Committee Approval, and a brief description of the reason for creating the revised version.

Version #	Implemented By	Revision Date	Panel Approved Date	Steering Committee Approval Date	Reason
1.0a	Christopher Chun	4/6/2017	4/6/17	4/6/17	Initial Charter
1.0b	Christopher Chun	4/20/2017	4/20/17	4/20/17	Added Chair Time Suggestions
1.0c	Christopher Chun	5/8/2017	5/11/17	5/11/17	Added Operations Section
1.0d	Christopher Chun	5/15/2017	5/18/17	5/18/17	Updated Section 2.4 – Meeting Format
1.0e	Christopher Chun	7/28/17	7/28/17	8/3/17	Updated with Panel edits. Panel Approval – Marilyn H. Jayson G. and Christopher C.
1.0f	Christopher Chun	10/12/17	10/12/17	10/12/17	Updated Meeting Format in 1.6 Tradition Four
1.0g	Christopher Chun	9/20/18	9/20/18	9/20/18	1.4 Group Conscience Meeting – Group and Steering Committee agreed to change Group Conscience Meeting to the 4 th Thursday of the month and update sole candidate verbiage.
1.0h	Christopher Chun	1/31/19	1/31/19	1/31/19	1.4 Added Mentorship clarification to Steering Committee Section and charted in Appendix B.
1.0i	Christopher Chun	4/24/19	NA	NA	1.6 removed introductions around the room from format. Was voted out prior to launching but was not caught in final draft.
1.0j	Tim St Clair	3/25/19	NA	NA	Removed "By Laws" references from page 1

STATEMENT of RESOLUTION

Statement of Intent to Carry the Message of The Unfortunates Group of Alcoholics Anonymous to North Dallas, Texas

WHEREAS, the Founding Members recognize the need in North Dallas for a Group to Unify around Alcoholics Anonymous as described in Tradition One (1) by placing Principles before Personalities in accordance with Tradition Twelve (12) as applied by the remaining Twelve (12) Traditions and Twelve (12) Concepts of Service; and

WHEREAS, each of the Founding Member's voluntarily endorsement of the creation and maintenance of the Charter thus establishing the Steering Committee; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of the Steering Committee is to increase the degree of consistency regarding the Three (3) Legacies of Unity, Recovery, and Service for the Group; and

WHEREAS, the Steering Committee is a life time legacy position outlined in the Charter; and

WHEREAS, the plans outlined in the Charter and Bylaws (a nonprofit organization stands by two documents, a charter and the bylaws. A charter explains the purpose for the nonprofit's existence and the bylaws are the rules and regulations the organization must abide by and from this point forward will be simply referred to as the Charter) are to facilitate the implementation and maintenance for the development of the Group ; and

WHEREAS, the Steering Committee, Group Officers, and the Group require a biennial Inventory by which an assessment of each level's achievement of the Charter's Primary Purpose outlined in Tradition Five (5).

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED the Steering Committee hereby expressly states the intention to pursue Charter Endorsement by its Founding Members; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Founding Members approve the Charter Endorsement.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Steering Committee abide by the responsibilities and guidance of the Three (3) Legacies of Unity, Recovery, and Service to maintain the Group direction towards adherence to the to the Program of Alcoholics Anonymous.

So be it certified by the Founding Members on this the sixth day of April in the year two thousand seventeen:

Kathy H.

Marilyn H.

Rennie C.

Bob S.

Chris C.

David B.

James H.

Jayson G.

Rob G.

Rusty W.

Tim S.

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INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE OF CHARTER

The Unfortunates Group Charter documents and tracks the necessary information required by the Steering Committee to guide the Group to the achievement of the Primary Purpose of carrying the A.A. Message to the suffering alcoholic as described in Tradition Five (5). The scope of this Charter includes all of the spiritual principles comprising the Three Legacies of Unity, Recovery, and Service documented through the Twelve (12) Traditions, Twelve (12) Steps, and Twelve (12) Concepts of Service. The objective is to ensure the Steering Committee has the authority and ability to answer *questions related to group practices, selecting a slate of candidates for office, and other group issues which are to be tackled first by the Steering Committee which goes to the Group for its members' group-conscience decision. The intended audience of this Charter is the Steering Committee, Group Officers, Group Service Committee, and the Group Conscience.

1.2 COMPOSITION AND RELATION

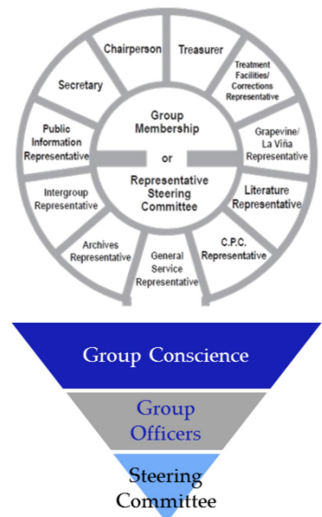
1.2.1 Group Conscience – shall be the Group Membership comprised of the Group Members as described in Section 3: Membership.

*What Do A.A. Group Members Do?

"I am responsible . . . when anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help; I want the hand of A.A. always to be there. And for that I am responsible."

In short, when newcomers walk into our meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous, we want A.A. to be there for them as it was for us— something we can do continuously only if we function as a group. But, for a group to function properly, all kinds of service must be performed. It is through the combined efforts and ongoing commitment of The Unfortunates Group Membership that:

- A meeting place is provided and maintained.
- Programs are arranged for the meetings.
- Seventh Tradition contributions are collected, and properly allocated and spent.
- A.A. Conference-approved literature is on hand.
- A.A. Grapevine and La Viña literature and lists of local group meetings are available.
- Refreshments are available.
- Assistance in finding A.A. meetings is given to alcoholics in the area.
- Calls for help are answered.
- Group problems are aired and resolved.
- Continuing contact is sustained with the rest of A.A.—locally, through the intergroup (central office), district and area's general service



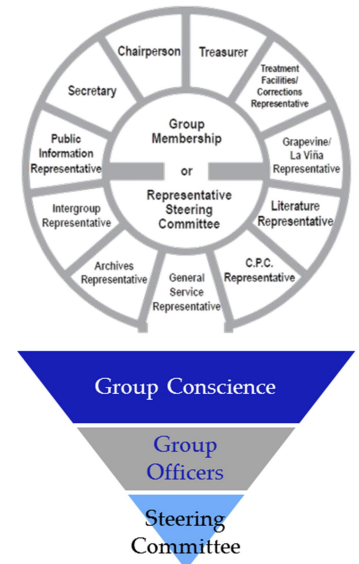
structure; and nationally and internationally, through the General Service Office in New York.

* *The AA Group (P-16) pg. 18: What do A.A. Members Do?*

1.2.2 Group Officers (G.O.) and Service Committee (S.C.) – shall be the Trusted Servants (Officers) of the Group.

*What Trusted Servants (Officers) Do We Need?

It takes member participation to ensure that group service work is done. Most of us agree that A.A. ought never be “organized.” However, without endangering our commitment to preserve our spiritual and democratic Fellowship, we can “create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.” (Tradition Nine) In A.A. groups, these trusted servants are sometimes called “officers” and usually are chosen by the group for limited terms of service. As Tradition Two reminds us, “Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.” Each group determines the minimum length of sobriety for A.A. members to be eligible for any position (or office).



The general guideline might be six months to a year of stable sobriety, or longer. These service positions may have titles. But titles in A.A. do not bring authority or honor; they describe services and responsibilities. And it has generally been found that giving members service positions solely to help them stay sober does not work; instead, the group’s welfare is of primary concern in choosing officers. At election time, a review of Traditions One and Two can be helpful.

Individual groups have many ways of making sure that the necessary services are performed with a minimum of organization. The chart on page 20 shows possibilities for service at the group level. Some groups have positions that do not appear on this chart, such as greeter, archivist, special needs representative, and liaison to a meeting facility. Following are the offices established by numerous groups in order to serve the group “at home” and in the community at large.

* *The AA Group (P-16) pg. 19: What Trusted Servants Do We Need?*

1.2.2.1 G.O. Chairperson:

Suggested sobriety – 2 years. Group chairpersons serve for a specified period of time (usually six months to a year). Experience suggests that they should have been sober awhile, at least a year; and ideally, they have held other group offices first. The chairperson coordinates activities with other group officers—and with those members who assume the responsibility for literature, hospitality, coffee making, programming individual meetings within the group, and other vital functions.

The more informed that chairpersons—and other group officers—are about A.A. as a whole, the better they function. By keeping Tradition One firmly in mind and encouraging members to become familiar with all the Traditions, they will help to ensure a healthy A.A. group.

1.2.2.2 G.O. Secretary:

Suggested sobriety – 6 months. Like chairpersons, secretaries need to be good all-around group servants. For groups that have no chairpersons, they may perform the tasks associated with that position. While each group has its own procedures, the secretary is generally expected to:

- Announce and/or mail information about important A.A. activities and events.
- Maintain minutes of business meetings.
- Maintain and update a strictly confidential file of names, addresses, and telephone numbers of group members (subject to each member's approval); and know which members are available to visit still-suffering alcoholics (Twelfth Step calls).
- Keep a record of members' sobriety dates, if the group so wishes.
- Maintain a bulletin board for posting A.A. announcements, bulletins and newsletters.
- Make certain that the General Service Office and other service entities are informed, in writing, of any changes of address, meeting place or group officers.
- Accept and assign calls for Twelfth Step help (unless there is a Twelfth Step chairperson for this task).
- Share with group members the mail from other groups and the intergroup (central office), unless this is done by the intergroup representative.

1.2.2.3 G.O. Treasurer:

Suggested sobriety – 2 years. A.A. groups are fully self-supporting through their members' contributions. Passing the basket at meetings usually covers the group's monetary needs, with enough left over so the group can do its fair share of supporting the local intergroup (central office), the general service district and area offices, and the General Service Office.

Group funds ordinarily are earmarked for expenses such as:

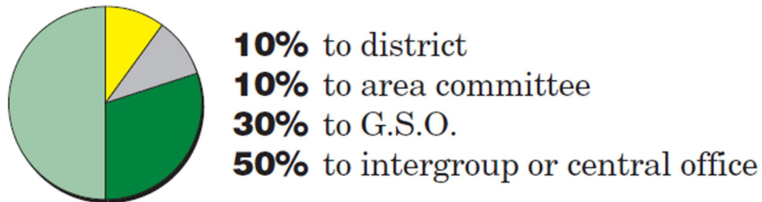
- Rent.
- A.A. literature.
- Local meeting lists, usually purchased from your nearest intergroup (central office), general service district or area committee.
- Coffee and refreshments.
- Support of all A.A. service entities, usually on a monthly or quarterly basis.

Treasurers generally maintain clear records (a ledger is helpful) and keep their groups informed about how much money is taken in and how it is spent. They may make periodic reports to the group and post financial statements quarterly. Problems can be avoided by keeping group funds in a separate group bank account that requires two signatures on each check. The flyer "The A.A. Group Treasurer" offers many other helpful suggestions.

A.A. experience clearly shows that it is not a good idea for a group to accumulate large funds in excess of what is needed for rent and other expenses. It is wise, though, to keep a prudent reserve in case an unforeseen need arises (an amount to be determined by the group conscience). Group troubles also may arise when

extra-large donations—in money, goods or services— are accepted from one member.

The Conference-approved pamphlet “Self-Support — Where Money and Spirituality Mix” makes suggestions as to how groups may support A.A. services and The Unfortunates division of residual assets will be as follows:



Additionally, G.S.O., area and sometimes district committees and your local intergroup accept contributions from individual A.A. members. A.A. members are free to contribute whatever they wish, within the limits set by A.A. service entities. The maximum individual contribution to the General Service Office is \$3,000 annually. Bequests or in-memoriam contributions of not more than \$5,000 are acceptable on a one-time basis, but only from A.A. members. Check with other A.A. service entities for the maximum yearly contributions they accept.

Some members celebrate their A.A. anniversaries by sending a gratitude gift to the General Service Office for its world services. With this “Birthday Plan,” some members send one dollar for each year of sobriety, while others use the figure \$3.65, a penny a day, for each year. Other members give more, but not in excess of \$3,000 per year. For additional information, talk to your general service representative or contact G.S.O.

1.2.2.4 G.O. General Service Representative (G.S.R.):

Suggested sobriety – 2 years. Working via the district and area committees, the G.S.R. is the group’s link with the General Service Conference, through which U.S. and Canadian groups share their experience and voice A.A.’s collective conscience. Sometimes called “the guardians of the Traditions,” G.S.R.s become familiar with A.A.’s Third Legacy - our spiritual responsibility to give service freely. Usually elected to serve two-year terms, they:

- Represent the group at district meetings and area assemblies.
- Keep group members informed about general service activities in their local areas.
- Receive and share with their groups all mail from the General Service Office, including the newsletter *Box 4-5-9*, which is G.S.O.’s primary tool for communicating with the Fellowship.

G.S.R.s also may assist their groups in solving a variety of problems, especially those related to the Traditions. In serving their groups, they can draw on all the services offered by G.S.O. (The A.A. Group p-16 see pg. 33).

An alternate G.S.R. is elected at the same time in the event that the G.S.R. may be unable to attend all district and area meetings. Alternate G.S.R.s should be encouraged to share the responsibilities of the G.S.R. at the group, district and

area levels. (See *The A.A. Service Manual*, Chapter 2, "The Group and its G.S.R.," for further information.)

Financial Support: Current experience indicates that many groups provide financial support for their general service representatives to attend service functions.

1.2.2.5 G.O. Intergroup Representative:

Suggested sobriety – 1 year. In many locations where an intergroup (or central office association) has been formed, each group usually elects an intergroup representative, who participates in business meetings with other such representatives several times a year to share their groups' experience in carrying the A.A. message. The intergroup representative tries to keep the group well-informed about what the local intergroup is doing.

1.2.2.6 G.O. Literature representative:

Suggested sobriety – 6 months. The group's literature representative makes certain that A.A. Conference approved books and pamphlets, ordered from the General Service Office, or purchased from the local intergroup (central office), are on hand for meetings and properly displayed.

Group literature representatives can obtain information on their responsibilities by writing to the literature coordinator at G.S.O. Regular communications are sent to literature representatives from G.S.O. The A.A. Guideline for Literature Committees is also a valuable resource.

For A.A. literature and subscriptions to the A.A. newsletter *Box 4-5-9*, checks should be made out to A.A. World Services, Inc. Many A.A. groups purchase bulk subscriptions to *Box 4-5-9* (in units of 10) for distribution to their members, thus providing them regular communication with A.A. in the U.S., Canada and countries throughout the world.

1.2.2.7 G.O. Hospitality Chair

Suggested sobriety – 1 year. The Hospitality Chair ensures The Unfortunates Group maintains a welcoming atmosphere offering our members, especially newcomers, an environment based on our 12th Step. The Hospitality Chair will work in conjunction with the Newcomer Chair and Coffee Captain to provide the services needed to provide a hospitable location fostering camaraderie. The Hospitality Chair is to keep a watchful eye before and after the meeting for individuals in need.

1.2.2.7.1 G.O. Newcomer Chair:

Suggested sobriety – 1 year. The Newcomer Chair is responsible for The Unfortunates newcomer process:

- Each meeting is to have at minimum 4 (6 is preferred) Greeters who are dressed appropriately to publicly greet members (two women & two men).
 - First and foremost – members are not to interfere with the Greeters and their duties. If you are not new, please say hello and not begin conversation with the Greeters especially if they are engaged with a newcomer.

- Greeters are to welcome members as they arrive but their primary purpose is to seek out people they do not know and greet them and ask if this is their first time at The Unfortunates:
 - If not, welcome them and direct them into the meeting.
 - If it is, ask if it is their first AA Meeting.
 - If not, direct them to the coffee and refreshments and welcome them to The Unfortunates.
 - If it is an individual's first meeting, the Greeter is to welcome the newcomer and walk them into the meeting. The Greeter is to seek out an available member who is qualified to mentor the newcomer. The mentor must be a member of The Unfortunates, know the expectations of being a mentor, (i.e. be able to explain the meeting format, the Big Book, and what a Sponsor is), provide the newcomer with an information packet, a Big Book (The Unfortunates will provide a Big Book to all first time AA Newcomers free of charge), refreshments, explain the format of the meeting, and if the newcomer is open to it, introduce them to members of The Unfortunates.
 - If a member is mentoring a newcomer, other members are asked not to interrupt unless asked to join in the discussion.
- The Newcomer Chair is to ensure the Newcomer Packets and Big Books are in constant supply.
- The Newcomer Chair, in conjunction with the Hospitality Chair, is to keep a watchful eye before and after the meeting for individuals in need.

1.2.2.7.2 G.O. Coffee Captain:

Suggested sobriety – 1 year. The Coffee Captain is to ensure exceptional refreshments are ready and available 30 minutes prior to the meeting. The Coffee Captain is also responsible for the location clean up ensuring The Unfortunates are being respectful to our landlord. The Coffee Captain is to:

- Ensure the unlocking and locking of the location.
- Have at minimum 5 Coffee Workers
- Plan in advance what refreshments will be available for each meeting.
- Devise reasonable and appropriate storage for The Unfortunates meeting supplies.

****How Service Committee (S.C) Representatives Serve A.A.:**

The Group's relations with others in the community are based in Tradition Eleven (11): Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion.

A.A. service committees, composed mainly of representatives, or liaisons, from area groups, shoulder major responsibility for carrying the A.A. message into the community and around the world (see The A.A. Service Manual). Each of these committees may serve as a resource for the community through our Sixth Tradition of cooperation but not affiliation.

To assist service committees in their local efforts, their counterparts at A.A. World Services—the trustees' and General Service Conference committees—offer suggested guidelines to local committees when asked, with the help of the General Service Office.

*** The AA Group (P-16) pg. 25: How Service Committee Representatives Serve A.A.*

1.2.2.8 S.C. Corrections Liaison

Suggested sobriety – 1 year. Group Corrections representatives take part in local intergroup (central office), district or area Corrections committee meetings. They keep their home groups informed about local Twelfth-Step activities in nearby institutions and encourage group members to participate.

Corrections representatives, known in some areas as Hospitals and Institutions (H&I) representatives, take A.A. meetings into prisons and jails, where allowed by the correctional facility, to help alcoholic inmates recover and prepare for sober, fulfilling lives after release. As part of the temporary contact program known in some areas as Bridging the Gap, they may also serve as correspondents and as A.A. contacts when the inmates are released. The pamphlet “A.A. in Correctional Facilities” and the Corrections Workbook can be of help to A.A.s in corrections service work.

1.2.2.9 S.C. Treatment Liaison

Suggested sobriety – 1 year. Some groups have treatment representatives who serve as the group liaison with the local intergroup (central office), district or area treatment committee. They share this vital service work with home group members and encourage them to join in this responsibility.

Members of the Treatment committee, known in some areas as Hospitals and Institutions (H&I) representatives, work to help hospital and treatment center staffs better understand A.A., and to take the A.A. tools of recovery to alcoholics in treatment. As part of the Bridging the Gap program (Temporary Contact) Treatment committee members also may act as contacts when alcoholic patients are discharged.

The pamphlet “A.A. in Treatment Settings” and the Treatment Workbook can be of help to A.A.s in treatment service work.

1.2.2.10 S.C. Cooperation With The Professional Community and Public Information Liaison

Suggested sobriety – 1 year. Group Public Information representatives (P.I.) usually work with the local intergroup (central office), district or area P.I. committee to carry the A.A. message locally. They periodically inform their home groups of local activity and may arrange for group volunteers to participate in P.I. programs requested by schools, businesses, law-enforcement agencies and other organizations interested in the A.A. approach to recovery from alcoholism.

Most groups realize that alcoholics can't come to A.A. for help unless they know where we are. Using many suggested methods ranging from personal contact to public service announcements on radio and TV, groups and their members reach out, working within the framework of Tradition Eleven. Sometimes a small sign saying “A.A. meeting tonight” outside the meeting-place door points the way. And

from A.A.'s earliest days, radio announcements and small newspaper announcements of A.A. meetings have been used to attract alcoholics in need of help.

The Public Information Workbook offers suggested guidelines in furthering this vital group service activity. In addition, the Public Information Liaison will be responsible for The Unfortunate's website and any other public facing group information.

Group Cooperation with the Professional Community (C.P.C.) representatives, usually working with their local intergroup (central office), district or area C.P.C. committees, focus on cooperation but not affiliation with professionals in the community—educators, physicians, the clergy, court officials and others who often are in contact with active alcoholics. They keep their home groups informed of area C.P.C. activities and, when appropriate, arrange for group volunteers to join together in carrying the A.A. message at professional meetings, seminars, and more. (In some groups, the functions of the C.P.C. and Public Information representatives are combined.)

The C.P.C. Workbook and the pamphlets "If You Are a Professional, Alcoholics Anonymous Wants to Work with You," "Members of the Clergy Ask About A.A.," and other pertinent literature can be of assistance to C.P.C. representatives in reaching out to professionals.

1.2.3 Steering Committee – shall consist of the eleven (11) Founding Members who gathered on the sixth day of April in the year two thousand seventeen:

Kathy H.	Marilyn H.	Rennie C.
Bob S.	Chris C.	David B.
James H.	Jayson G.	Rob G.
Rusty W.	Tim S.	



*Why Have a Steering Committee?

Some groups have steering committees. At steering committee meetings, questions related to group practices, selecting a slate of candidates for office, and other group issues often are tackled first by the steering committee (or group service committee), which goes to the group for its members' group-conscience decision. In many cases, the officers and/or past officers make up the committee, which usually meets at regularly scheduled times.

The Steering Committee Members provide a cross-section of group experience and can share the workload more easily. In some groups, a rotating committee (with members rotated on and off periodically) serves the same purpose but this Charter outlines the use of a Steering Committee.

The Steering Committee Membership will remain in good standing as long as a lineage connection is maintained where Group and Business Meetings are regularly attended missing no more than one-third of both (i.e. 17 weekly meetings and 4 Group Conscience meetings).

Removal of any Member requires a two thirds (2/3) majority vote from the Steering Committee approving the dismissal. In such an event, the Steering Committee will seek out two or more individuals from the excused Member's downstream lineage. If no suitable candidates exist, then individuals will be sought out from the upstream lineage until contenders are identified. A vote will be held requiring a two thirds (2/3) majority vote from the Steering Committee approving the replacement. If a majority vote is not obtained, the Third Legacy Procedure outlined in the Service Manual will be enacted.

The benchmark for expansion shall be a 7:1 ratio of Group Members to Steering Committee Members. When expansion is warranted, the Steering Committee will seek out two or more individuals from the Member's downstream lineage. A vote will be held requiring a two thirds (2/3) majority vote from the Steering Committee approving the addition. If a majority vote is not obtained, the Third Legacy Procedure outlined in the Service Manual will be enacted.

In the event of a Steering Committee Member relapsing, a temporary replacement will be appointed. The Steering Committee will seek out two or more individuals from the absent Member's downstream lineage. If no suitable candidates exist, then individuals will be sought out from the upstream lineage until contenders are identified. A vote will be held requiring a two thirds (2/3) majority vote from the Steering Committee approving the temporary replacement. If a majority vote is not obtained, the Third Legacy Procedure outlined in the Service Manual will be enacted. Upon the return of the sober Steering Committee Member and the evidence of regular attendance at Group and Business Meetings, a reinstatement vote will take place. A two thirds (2/3) majority vote from the Steering Committee is required approving the return of the Member and the thanking of the temporary replacement. If a majority vote is not obtained, the 3rd Legacy Procedure outlined in the Service Manual will be enacted.

All Steering Committee Membership addition or replacement voting shall be conducted in a scheduled Steering Committee Meeting.

THE UNFORTUNATES GROUP OPERATIONS

The Unfortunates Group operations are based off the series of A.A. Grapevine articles in 1946 outlining the Twelve Suggested Points of A.A. Tradition which are the foundation of A.A.'s Twelve Traditions.

Problem Solving vs. Stewardship

Problem Solving

The term problem-solving is used in many disciplines, sometimes with different perspectives, and often with different terminologies. Problems can also be classified into two different types (ill-defined and well-defined) from which appropriate solutions are to be made. Ill-defined problems are those that do not have clear goals, solution paths, or expected solution. Well-defined problems have specific goals, clearly defined solution paths, and clear expected solutions. These problems also allow for more initial planning than ill-defined problems. Being able to solve problems sometimes involves dealing with pragmatics (logic) and semantics (interpretation of the problem). The ability to understand what the goal of the problem is and what rules could be applied represent the key to solving the problem. Sometimes the problem requires some abstract thinking and coming up with a creative solution.

Stewardship

stew·ard·ship

noun \ 'stü-ərd-, ship, 'styü-; 'st(y)ürd-\

1. the activity or job of protecting and being responsible for something
2. the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care

"We sometimes congratulate ourselves on the Traditions as though they were a list of virtues singular to us. Actually, they are a collection of the lessons of our past experience during the early days of A.A." Bill W.

We are responsible for protecting A.A. through stewardship and not from creative new ways of resolving issues. Traditions are not about protecting Members from A.A. but rather protecting A.A. from Members. We are to protect A.A. from ourselves and not others. We are to be the guardians of A.A. where Principles come before the personalities.

tra·di·tion

noun \trə-'di-shən\

1. a way of thinking, behaving, or doing something that has been used by the people in a particular group, family, society, etc., for a long time
2. an inherited, established, or customary pattern of thought, action, or behavior

When faced with difficulty we create a well-informed Group Conscience based on the Principles that apply and not opinions of what should be done from each individual point of view. Then we can let God express his will by means of the consensus in a well-informed Group Conscience and not an emotionally driven decision of an uninformed group. The Unfortunate's Servants are the guardians of A.A. through stewardship...not problem solving.

prin·ci·ple

'prinsəpəl/

noun: principle; plural noun: principles

1. a fundamental truth or proposition that serves as the foundation for a system of belief or behavior or for a chain of reasoning.

per·son·al·i·ty

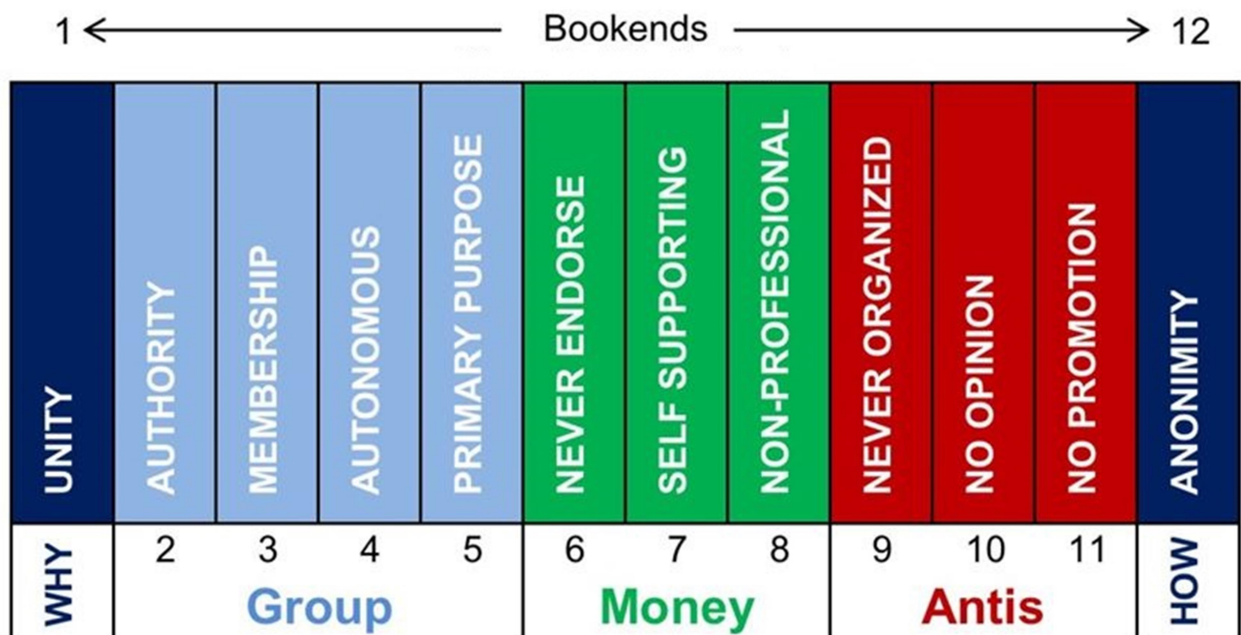
ˌpɜrsəˈnælɪtē/

noun: personality; plural noun: personalities

1. the combination of characteristics or qualities that form an individual's distinctive character.

Tradition One and Twelve outline the why and how for the group's operations which support the remaining ten Traditions which are assembled into the three sections the Group, Money, and Antis.

12 Traditions Overview



1.3 UNITY (TRADITION ONE)

“Each member of Alcoholics Anonymous is but a small part of a great whole. A.A. must continue to live or most of us will surely die. Hence our common welfare comes first. But individual welfare follows close afterward.”

Tradition One tells us why we have Traditions at all – because we want to protect A.A. (A.A. is defined as being the recovery program on the title page of the Alcoholics Anonymous book as being “The story of how many thousands of men and women have recovered from alcoholism”). Its summary on the scroll defines it as the goal of all the Traditions: A.A. Unity (as described on pg. 17, “The tremendous fact for every one of us is that we have discovered a common solution. We have a way out on which we can absolutely agree, and upon which we can join in brotherly and harmonious action. This is the great news this book carries to those who suffer from alcoholism.”). Without A.A. most of us will die. The most important thing in A.A., therefore, is not the newcomer; it is the group. The newcomer is important, but not as important as the group. We will ensure the

existence of the A.A. group by putting aside our personal desires and putting the group first in some key areas. It is the other Traditions which define for us what those key areas are and how Unity is to be achieved. It is worth noting they do so based upon the assumption that A.A. members are full of greed, pride, arrogance, self-centeredness and all the rest of the defects of character. The Traditions are intended to contain those tendencies. If they required us first to become uniformly good, pleasant, selfless individuals in order to be effective they would be doomed to failure (Although we hope that some of us will gradually become better people through practice of the Steps).

A.A. Grapevine, December, 1947

"Each member of Alcoholics Anonymous is but a small part of a great whole. A.A. must continue to live or most of us will surely die. Hence our common welfare comes first. But individual welfare follows close afterward."

Our whole A.A. program is securely founded on the principle of humility--that is to say, perspective. Which implies, among other things, that we relate ourselves rightly to God and to our fellows; that we each see ourselves as we really are--"a small part of a great whole." Seeing our fellows thus, we shall enjoy group harmony. That is why A.A. Tradition can confidently state, "Our common welfare comes first."

"Does this mean," some will ask, "that in A.A. the individual doesn't count too much? Is he to be swallowed up, dominated by the group?"

No, it doesn't seem to work out that way. Perhaps there is no society on earth more solicitous of personal welfare, more careful to grant the individual the greatest possible liberty of belief and action. Alcoholics Anonymous has no "musts." Few A.A. groups impose penalties on anyone for non-conformity. We do suggest, but we don't discipline. Instead, compliance or non-compliance with any principle of A.A. is a matter for the conscience of the individual; he is the judge of his own conduct. Those words of old time, "Judge not," we observe most literally.

"But," some will argue, "if A.A. has no authority to govern its individual members or groups, how shall it ever be sure that the common welfare does come first? How is it possible to be governed without a government? If everyone can do as he pleases, how can you have aught but anarchy?"

The answer seems to be that we A.A.s cannot really do as we please, though there is no constituted human authority to restrain us. Actually, our common welfare is protected by powerful safeguards. The moment any action seriously threatens the common welfare, group opinion mobilizes to remind us; our conscience begins to complain. If one persists, he may become so disturbed as to get drunk; alcohol gives him a beating. Group opinion shows him that he is off the beam, his own conscience tells him that he is dead wrong, and, if he goes too far, Barleycorn brings him real conviction.

So it is we learn that in matters deeply affecting the group as a whole, "our common welfare comes first." Rebellion ceases and cooperation begins because it must; we have disciplined ourselves.

Eventually, of course, we cooperate because we really wish to; we see that without substantial unity there can be no A.A., and that without A.A. there can be little lasting recovery for anyone. We gladly set aside personal ambitions whenever these might harm A.A. We humbly confess that we are but "a small part of a great whole."

Bill W.

The A.A. Grapevine, December, 1947

1.4 AUTHORITY (TRADITION TWO)

"For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority – A loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience."

Conscious vs. Conscience

Conscious

con·scious

'känCHəs/

adjective: conscious

1. aware of and responding to one's surroundings.
2. having knowledge of something; aware.

Conscience

con·science

'känCHəns/

noun: conscience; plural noun: consciences

1. an inner voice viewed as acting as a guide to the rightness or wrongness of one's behavior.

What is an Informed A.A. Group Conscience?

P-16 The AA Group Pamphlet:

The group conscience is the collective conscience of the group membership and thus represents substantial unanimity on an issue before definitive action is taken. This is achieved by the group members through the sharing of full information, individual points of view, and the practice of A.A. principles. To be fully informed requires a willingness to listen to minority opinions with an open mind. On sensitive issues, the group works slowly—discouraging formal motions until a clear sense of its collective view emerges. Placing principles before personalities, the membership is wary of dominant opinions. Its voice is heard when a well-informed group arrives at a decision. The result rests on more than a "yes" or "no" count—precisely because it is the spiritual expression of the group conscience. The term "informed group conscience" implies that pertinent information has been studied and all views have been heard before the group votes.

There are two ways:

1. The competitive way permits the person with the loudest voice to push his ideas across, take a vote and come up with a 'majority' decision. This is not an informed group conscience.
2. In the cooperative way, group members come together in mutual trust to arrive at a group decision, not one individual's personal triumph.

This reminds us that Concept One states "The final responsibility for AA World Services should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole fellowship." No one person or group should make our decisions for us, no matter how persuasive they may be.

Steps to Achieving an Informed Group Conscience

GATHER KNOWLEDGE: The GSR or other chairperson of the group informs himself/herself about the topic to be discussed. Then:

PRESENT TOPIC/ISSUE: Present the information on the topic to the home group, giving enough background material so all participants are informed on both sides of the topic. The chairperson should be as unbiased as possible on the topic.

SHARING: (from the Service Manual) In a sharing session, everyone has a chance to use their experience, strength and hope to contribute ideas and opinions about the welfare of A.A. It can be set up anywhere for any group of people. Its format is aimed at drawing out the ideas of even the shyest participant, and keeps the more articulate from dominating the meeting. Each person offers an opinion, and never needs to defend it. The chairperson or leader functions more as a timekeeper than as a participant. Here is how it works:

Let's say that the topic is "How can we get more A.A.s interested in general service?"

The leader, armed with a loud bell and a watch or stopwatch, reads the question and explains the rules. Each person present may talk for a specified time (a minute and a half or two minutes is typical—whatever the group agrees upon). Usually no one is permitted to speak twice on the same subject until all who wish to have spoken. The leader continues until the topic has been fully explored. A member takes down the essence of the meeting; these notes will provide good ideas for use by committee officers and members and by G.S.R.s.

CONSENSUS: Continue the process until substantial group unanimity is achieved. This is usually considered 2/3 of the participants. More than one sharing session may be needed. Remember, you are striving for a group conscience, not a "popular vote." Be patient and practice AA principles as the process continues.

Group Conscience Meetings to be held the fourth Thursday of the month with Steering Committee meeting as needed.

The Steering Committee:

The A.A. Group pamphlet - Some groups have steering committees. At steering committee meetings, questions related to group practices, selecting a slate of candidates for office, and other group issues often are tackled first by the steering committee (or group service committee), which goes to the group for its members' group-conscience decision. In many cases, the officers and/or past officers make up the committee, which usually meets at regularly scheduled times.

For a small group, a steering committee composed of three to five members has been found to work well. For larger groups, 12 or more members provide a better cross-section of group experience and can share the workload more easily. In some groups, a rotating committee (with members rotated on and off periodically) serves the same purpose as a steering committee.

The Unfortunates' utilizes the Steering Committee comprised of 11 founding members (not a rotating committee of members revolving on and off periodically) to ensure continuity from Group Conscience Panel year to year. The Steering Committee Membership will be assigned to mentor the Group Officers and Service Committee Chair as laid out in Section 1.2.2 (Mentor assignments are charted in Appendix B). The Steering Committee will grow in accordance with the growth of the group and maintain a 1:7 ratio Steering Committee Member: Group Members. The Group Membership will be derived from The Unfortunate's phone list which is to be maintained by the Group's Secretary. Once Group Membership warrants the addition of another Steering Committee Member, the Steering Committee will perform a review of the phone list information and the results will be provided during the next Conscience Meeting of The Unfortunate's. If the review warrants the addition of Steering Committee Member/s, the Steering Committee will provide a lineage candidate or slate of candidates to be voted upon at the A.A. Group Conscience Meeting.

*At steering committee meetings, questions related to group practices, selecting a slate of candidates for office, and other group issues often are tackled first by the steering committee which goes to the group for its members' group-conscience decision.

** The AA Group pg. 24 Why have a Steering Committee*

**Under Tradition Two, the group conscience is the final authority of A.A. Nevertheless the A.A. groups have recognized the group conscience of A.A. as a totality has certain limitations. It cannot act directly in many service matters, because it cannot be sufficiently informed about the problems in hand. It is also true that during a time of great disturbance the group conscience is not always the best possible guide because such an upset may prevent it from functioning efficiently or wisely. When, therefore, the group conscience cannot or should not act directly, who does act for it?

The second Part of Tradition Two provides us with the answer when it describes A.A. leaders as "trusted servants." These servants must always be in readiness to do for the group what the group obviously cannot or should not do for themselves. Consequently the servants are bound to use their own information and judgment, sometimes to the point of disagreeing with uniformed or biased group opinion.

*** Concept V: Right of Appeal*

***A leader in A.A. service is therefore a man (or woman) who can personally put principles, plans and policies into such dedicated and effective action that the rest of us want to back him up and help him with his job. When a leader power-drives us badly, we rebel; but when he too meekly becomes an order-taker and he exercises no judgment of his own – well, he really isn't a leader at all.

Good leadership originates plans, policies, and ideas for the improvement of our Fellowship and its services. But in new and important matters, it will nevertheless consult widely before taking decisions and actions. Good leadership will also remember that a fine plan or idea can come from anybody, anywhere. Consequently, good leadership will often discard its own cherished plans for others that are better, and it will give credit to the source.

**** Concept IX: Good Leadership*

Group Officers and Service Committee:

***What Trusted Servants (Officers) Do We Need?**

It takes member participation to ensure that group service work is done. Most of us agree that A.A. ought never be “organized.” However, without endangering our commitment to preserve our spiritual and democratic Fellowship, we can “create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.” (Tradition Nine) In A.A. groups, these trusted servants are sometimes called “officers” and usually are chosen by the group for limited terms of service. As Tradition Two reminds us, “Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.” Each group determines the minimum length of sobriety for A.A. members to be eligible for any position (or office). The general guideline might be stable sobriety of six months to a year, or longer. These service positions may have titles. But titles in A.A. do not bring authority or honor; they describe services and responsibilities. And it has generally been found that giving members service positions solely to help them stay sober does not work; instead, the group's welfare is of primary concern in choosing officers. At election time, a review of Traditions One and Two can be helpful.

** The AA Group: p-16*

The Steering Committee will also provide The Unfortunate's Conscience with the candidates for office for annual elections for both Group Officers and Service Committee Members.

A.A. Grapevine, January 1948

Sooner or later, every AA comes to depend upon a Power greater than himself. He finds that the God of his understanding is not only a source of strength, but also a source of positive direction. Realizing that some fraction of that infinite resource is now available, his life takes on an entirely different complexion. He experiences a new inner security together with such a sense of destiny and purpose as he has never known before. As each day passes, our AA reviews his mistakes and vicissitudes. He learns from daily experience what his remaining character defects are and becomes ever more willing that they be removed. In this fashion he improves his conscious contact with God.

Every AA group follows this same cycle of development. We are coming to realize that each group, as well as each individual, is a special entity, not

quite like any other. Though AA groups are basically the same, each group does have its own special atmosphere, its own peculiar state of development. We believe that every AA group has a conscience. It is the collective conscience of its own membership. Daily experience informs and instructs his conscience. The group begins to recognize its own defects of character and, one by one, these are removed or lessened. As this process continues, the group becomes better able to receive right direction for its own affairs. Trial and error produces group experience and out of corrected experience comes custom. When a customary way of doing things is definitely proved to be best, then that custom forms into AA Tradition. The Greater Power is then working through a clear group conscience.

We humbly hope and believe that our growing AA Tradition will prove to be the will of God for us.

Many people are coming to think that Alcoholics Anonymous is, to some extent, a new form of human society. In our discussion of the First Tradition, it was emphasized that we have, in AA, no coercive human authority. Because each AA, of necessity, has a sensitive and responsive conscience, and because alcohol will discipline him severely if he back slides, we are finding we have little need for manmade rules or regulations. Despite the fact that we do veer off at times on tangents, we are becoming more able to depend absolutely on the long-term stability of the AA group itself. With respect to its own affairs, the collective conscience of the group will, given time, almost surely demonstrate its perfect dependability. The group conscience will, in the end, prove a far more infallible guide for group affairs than the decision of any individual member, however good or wise he may be. This is a striking and almost unbelievable fact about Alcoholics Anonymous. Hence we can safely dispense with those exhortations and punishments seemingly so necessary to other societies. And we need not depend overmuch on inspired leaders. Because our active leadership of service can be truly rotating, we enjoy a kind of democracy rarely possible elsewhere. In this respect, we may be, to a large degree, unique.

Therefore we of Alcoholics Anonymous are certain that there is but one ultimate authority, "a loving God as he may express himself in our group conscience."

Bill W.

The A.A. Grapevine, January, 1948

1.5 MEMBERSHIP (TRADITION THREE)

"Our membership ought to include all who suffer alcoholism. Hence we may refuse none who wish to recover. Nor ought A.A. membership ever depend upon money or conformity. Any two or three alcoholics gathered together for sobriety may call themselves an A.A. group, provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation."

Problems Other Than Alcohol P - 35

By Bill W.

(co-founder, Alcoholics Anonymous)

Perhaps there is no suffering more horrible than drug addiction, especially that kind which is produced by morphine, heroin, and other narcotics. Such drugs twist the mind, and the awful process of withdrawal racks the sufferer's body. Compared with the addict and his woes, we alcoholics are pikers. Barbiturates, carried to extremes, can be almost as bad. In A.A. we have members who have made great recoveries from both the bottle and the needle. We also have a great many others who were — or still are — victimized by “goofballs” and even by the new tranquilizers.

Consequently, this problem of drug addiction in its several forms lies close to us all. It stirs our deepest interest and sympathy. In the world around us, we see legions of men and women who are trying to cure or escape their problems by this means. Many A.A.'s, especially those who have suffered these particular addictions, are now asking, “What can we do about drugs — within our Fellowship, and without?” takers are already afloat — projects which use A.A.'s Twelve Steps and in which A.A. members are active — there has arisen a whole series of questions as to how these efforts, already meeting with not a little success, can be rightly related to the A.A. groups and to A.A. as a whole. Specifically, here is a list of questions: (1) Can a nonalcoholic pill or drug addict become an A.A. member? (2) Can such a person be brought, as a visitor, to an open A.A. meeting for help and inspiration? (3) Can a pill or drug taker, who also has a genuine alcoholic history, become a member of A.A.? (4) Can A.A.'s who have suffered both alcoholism and addiction form themselves into special-purpose groups to help other A.A.'s who are having drug trouble? (5) Could such a special-purpose group call itself an A.A. group? (6) Could such a group also include nonalcoholic drug users? (7) If so, should these nonalcoholic pill or drug users be led to believe that they have become A.A. members? (8) Is there any objection if A.A.'s who have had the dual problem join outside groups, such as Narcotics Anonymous?

While some of these questions almost answer themselves, others do not. But all of them, I think, can readily be resolved to the satisfaction of everyone if we have a good look at the A.A. Traditions which apply and another look at our long experience with the special-purpose groups in which A.A.'s are active today — both within and without our Society.

Now there are certain things that A.A. cannot do for anybody, regardless of what our several desires or sympathies may be.

Our first duty, as a society, is to insure our own survival. Therefore, we have to avoid distractions and multipurpose activity. An A.A. group, as such, cannot take on all the personal problems of its members, let alone the problems of the whole world. Sobriety — freedom from alcohol — through the teaching and practice of the Twelve Steps is the sole purpose of an A.A. group. Groups have repeatedly tried other activities, and they have always failed. It has also been learned that there is no possible way to make nonalcoholics into A.A. members. We have to confine our membership to alcoholics, and we have to confine our A.A. groups to a single purpose. If we don't stick to these principles, we shall almost surely collapse. And if we collapse, we cannot help anyone. Therefore, I see no way of making nonalcoholic addicts into A.A. members. Experience says loudly that we can admit no exceptions, even though drug users and alcoholics happen to be first cousins of

a sort. If we persist in trying this, I'm afraid it will be hard on the drug user himself, as well as on A.A. We must accept the fact that no nonalcoholic, whatever his affliction, can be converted into an alcoholic A.A. member.

A.A. Grapevine, February, 1948

This is a sweeping statement indeed; it takes in a lot of territory. Some people might think it too idealistic to be practical. It tells every alcoholic in the world that he may become, and remain, a member of Alcoholics Anonymous so long as he says so. In short, Alcoholics Anonymous has no membership rule.

Why is this so? Our answer is simple and practical. Even in self-protection, we do not wish to erect the slightest barrier between ourselves and the brother alcoholic who still suffers. We know that society has been demanding that he conform to its laws and conventions. But the essence of his alcoholic malady is the fact that he has been unable or unwilling to conform either to the laws of man or God. If he is anything, the sick alcoholic is a rebellious nonconformist. How well we understand that; every member of Alcoholics Anonymous was once a rebel himself. Hence we cannot offer to meet him at any half-way mark. We must enter the dark cave where he is and show him that we understand. We realize that he is altogether too weak and confused to jump hurdles. If we raise obstacles, he might stay away and perish. He might be denied his priceless opportunity.

So when he asks, "Are there any conditions?" we joyfully reply, "No, not a one." When skeptically he comes back saying, "But certainly there must be things that I have to do and believe," we quickly answer, "In Alcoholics Anonymous there are no musts." Cynically, perhaps, he then inquires, "What is this all going to cost me?" We are able to laugh and say, "Nothing at all, there are no fees and dues." Thus, in a brief hour, is our friend disarmed of his suspicion and rebellion. His eyes begin to open on a new world of friendship and understanding. Bankrupt idealist that he has been, his ideal is no longer a dream. After years of lonely search it now stands revealed. The reality of Alcoholics Anonymous bursts upon him. For Alcoholics Anonymous is saying, "We have something priceless to give, if only you will receive." That is all. But to our new friend, it is everything. Without more ado, he becomes one of us.

Our membership tradition does contain, however, one vitally important qualification. That qualification relates to the use of our name, Alcoholics Anonymous. We believe that any two or three alcoholics gathered together for sobriety may call themselves an A.A. group provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation. Here our purpose is clear and unequivocal. For obvious reasons we wish the name Alcoholics Anonymous to be used only in connection with straight A.A. activities. One can think of no A.A. member who would like, for example, to see the formation of "dry" A.A. groups, "wet" A.A. groups, Republican A.A. groups, Communist A.A. groups. Few, if any, would wish our groups to be designated by religious denominations. We cannot lend the A.A. name, even indirectly to other activities, however

worthy. If we do so we shall become hopelessly compromised and divided. We think that A.A. should offer its experience to the whole world for whatever use can be made of it. But not its name. Nothing could be more certain.

Let us of A.A. therefore resolve that we shall always be inclusive, and never exclusive, offering all we have to all men save our title. May all barriers be thus leveled, may our unity thus be preserved. And may God grant us a long life --and a useful one!

Bill W.

The A.A. Grapevine, February, 1948

1.6 AUTONOMOUS (TRADITION FOUR)

"With respect to its own affairs, each A.A. group should be responsible to no other authority than its own conscience. But when its plans concern the welfare of neighboring groups also, those groups ought to be consulted. And no group, regional committee, or individual should ever take any action that might greatly affect A.A. as a whole without conferring with the trustees of The Alcoholic Foundation. On such issues our common welfare is paramount."

Grapevine, March, 1948

This Tradition, Number 4, is a specific application of general principles already outlined in Traditions 1 and 2.

Tradition 1 states, *"Each member of Alcoholics Anonymous is but a small part of a great whole. A.A. must continue to live or most of us will surely die. Hence our common welfare comes first. But individual welfare follows close afterward."*

Tradition 2 states, *"For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority--a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience."*

With these concepts in mind, let us look more closely at Tradition 4. The first sentence of Tradition 4 guarantees each A.A. group local autonomy. With respect to its own affairs, the group may make any decisions, adopt any attitudes that it likes. No over-all or intergroup authority should challenge this primary privilege. We feel this ought to be so, even though the group might sometimes act with complete indifference to our tradition. For example, an A.A. group could, if it wished, hire a paid preacher and support him out of the proceeds of a group night club. Though such an absurd procedure would be miles outside our tradition, the group's "right to be wrong" would be held inviolate. We are sure that each group can be granted, and safely granted, these most extreme privileges. We know that our familiar process of trial and error would summarily eliminate both the preacher and the night club. Those severe growing pains which invariably follow any radical departure from A.A. tradition can be absolutely relied upon to bring an erring group back into line. An A.A. group need not be coerced by any human government over and above its own members. Their own experience, plus A.A. opinion in surrounding groups, plus God's prompting in their group conscience would be sufficient. Much travail has already taught us this. Hence we may confidently say to each group, "You should be responsible to no other authority than your own conscience."

Yet please note one important qualification. It will be seen that such extreme liberty of thought and action applies only *to the group's own affairs*. Rightly enough, this Tradition goes on to say, *"But when its plans concern the welfare of neighboring groups also, these groups ought to be consulted."* Obviously, if any individual, group or regional committee could take an action which might seriously affect the welfare of Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole, or seriously disturb surrounding groups, that would not be liberty at all. It would be sheer license; it would be anarchy, not democracy.

Therefore, we A.A.s have universally adopted the principle of consultation. This means that if a single A.A. group wishes to take any action which might affect surrounding groups, it consults them. Or, if there be one, it confers with the intergroup committee for the area. Likewise, if a group or regional committee wishes to take any action that might affect A.A. as a whole, it consults the trustees of The Alcoholic Foundation, who are, in effect, our over-all General Service Committee. For instance, no group or intergroup could feel free to initiate, without consultation, any publicity that might affect A.A. as a whole. Nor could it assume to represent the whole of Alcoholics Anonymous by printing and distributing anything purporting to be A.A. standard literature. This same principle would naturally apply to all similar situations. Though there is no formal compulsion to do so, all undertakings of this general character are customarily checked with our A.A. General Headquarters.

This idea is clearly summarized in the last sentence of Tradition 4, which observes, *"On such issues our common welfare is paramount."*

Bill W.

The A.A. Grapevine, March, 1948

THE UNFORTUNATE'S MEETING FORMAT

OPENING OF MEETING

Thursday Night Literature Study

Welcome The Unfortunates' Thursday Night Literature Study. Let us begin with a moment of silence followed by the Serenity Prayer.

INTRODUCTIONS

1. I am _____ and I am an alcoholic and my co-chair this evening is:
 2. Let the co-chair introduce himself/herself.
 3. Is there anyone visiting who would like to be recognized?
 4. Is this anyone's first A.A. meeting? (If yes, ask for their name and welcome them to the Group.)
-

5. Is there anyone who would like to receive a newcomer chip? (If yes, have them come up to the front for the chip and ask for their name and welcome them to the Group.)
 6. Is there anyone with 1, 2, 3, 6, or 9 months of continuous sobriety who would like to receive a chip? (If yes, then welcome them to the Unfortunates by inviting them to come up for the chip, ask for their name, and introduce them to the Group.)
 7. Is there anyone celebrating an annual anniversary this week? (If yes, have them come up, receive their chip, and they are to return to their seat... no speeches).
 8. Will the members who have worked all 12 Steps, who have a Sponsor, and are ready to work with others please raise their hands? If you are looking for a Sponsor, please see these people after the meeting.
-

BEGINNING OF THE MEETING

1. This is the first paragraph from the Forward to the First Edition from Alcoholics Anonymous:
 - a. *We, of Alcoholics Anonymous, are more than one hundred men and women who have recovered from a seemingly hopeless state of mind and body. To show other alcoholics precisely how we have recovered is the main purpose of this book. For them, we hope these pages will prove so convincing that no further authentication will be necessary. We think this account of our experiences will help everyone to better understand the alcoholic. Many do not comprehend the alcoholic. Many do not comprehend that the alcoholic is a very sick person. And besides, we are sure that our way of living has its advantages for all.*
 2. Tonight's meeting we will be studying _____.
 3. As the Co-Chairs for this evening, we will be facilitating the discussion. Questions regarding the information being reviewed are more than welcomed and are actually encouraged to ensure the information is thoroughly covered. Please frame any comments into the form of a question. Please limit your questions to the topic being discussed. Co-Chairs may terminate questions of an inappropriate nature. This is not an act of censorship. It is an effort to keep the meeting focused on the topic being discussed.
-

CLOSING OF MEETING

(5 minutes before the close of the meeting)

1. Sorry but that is all time we have this evening.

2. We are going to pass a basket in observance of the Seventh Tradition which states that an A.A. Group should be self-supporting declining outside contributions. The A.A. General Service Office's suggestion of \$2.00 goes to paying for rent, coffee and refreshment, literature, and the Big Books this group provides to the newcomers.
 3. As the baskets are being passed we have a few announcements:
 4. <Insert Group announcements here.>
 5. Are there any other announcements?
 6. Please join us in closing the meeting with the Lord's Prayer and as a reminder we DO NOT chant at the end of the prayer.
-

1.7 PRIMARY PURPOSE (TRADITION FIVE)

"Each Alcoholics Anonymous group ought to be a spiritual entity having but one primary purpose -- that of carrying its message to the alcoholic who still suffers."

The Washingtonians

April 2, 1840 nearly 100 years before the advent of Alcoholics Anonymous, six good drinking buddies were gathered at Chase's Tavern on Liberty Street in Baltimore, Md.

The more they drank, the more their discussion centered on temperance, which was one of the most popular topics of the day. This meeting and subsequent discussions led to the formation and brief, spectacular life of the Washingtonian movement, which grew in membership to over 400,000 "reformed drunkards" and then destroyed itself overnight and dropped out of sight.

The story of the Washingtonian movement brings sharply into focus the importance of the Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous as guidelines of group behavior designed to protect us against a similar fate. To take our Traditions for granted or to ignore them should at least justify a check mark on the debit side of our inventory charts.

Until the time of this meeting at Chase's Tavern, it was the prevailing opinion that nothing could be done to help the drunkard. (The terms "alcoholic" and "alcoholism" were not yet in general use.) The few occasions when drunkards did reform, did not erase the general pessimism over the possibility of rehabilitating drunks. Since alcohol was assumed to be the cause of alcoholism, many temperance movements of that day were aimed solely at keeping the nonalcoholic from becoming alcoholic. The rallying cry was: "Keep the temperate people temperate; the drunkards will soon die and the land be free!"

On April 5, 1840, our six good drinking buddies once again gathered at this same tavern around another jug of spirits and were liberally toasting the great advantages of temperance and condemning the curse of drink. Although a number of active temperance groups were already in existence, none were acceptable to our friends. Good drunks that they were, they decided to form a

group of their own. They elected officers and drew up a pledge of total abstinence:

"We, whose names are annexed, desirous of forming for our mutual benefit and to guard against a pernicious practice which is injurious to our health, standing, and families, do pledge ourselves as gentlemen that we will not drink any spirituous or malt liquors, vine or cider."

They chose the name Washington Temperance Society in honor of George Washington, and a membership fee of twenty-five cents was established, together with monthly dues of twelve and a half cents. With fond embraces they parted, each agreeing to bring one new member to the next meeting at the tavern. And they stayed sober!

In response to membership growth and at the frantic urging of the tavern owner, the group eventually rented its own hall and decided to meet weekly. At these meetings, a unique format developed. Each speaker told his own story: "what I used to be like - what happened - and what I am like now." The idea was greeted with explosive acceptance. It gave new impact to the entire temperance movement. Total abstinence had created the miracle of the man at the podium!

In November 1840, the group held its first public meeting. Newspaper editors were liberal with coverage, complete with names of members. The audience was standing-room-only. Both alcoholics and nonalcoholics - all who pledged themselves to total abstinence were welcomed into the group. Five months later, Washingtonian membership claimed over 1,000 "reformed drunkards" and 5,000 members who were not sure whether they were drunkards or not, but were also pledged to total abstinence, plus thousands of temperance advocates who welcomed the Washingtonians crusade.

In less than four years from the first meeting of our alcoholic friends at Chase's Tavern, Washingtonian membership hit its peak. At that point, it is commonly computed, the movement included at least 100,000 "reformed common drunkards," 300,000 "common tipplers" who also became total abstainers, and untold thousands who were simply enthusiastic temperance advocates.

And then came oblivion.

By 1848, all that remained of the organization's spectacular power as a method of treatment was its Home for the Fallen in Boston. That institution has undergone a number of changes in name and policy, now functions as the Washingtonian Hospital, and engages in the treatment of alcoholism by modern medical and social techniques. Otherwise the movement destroyed itself completely and dropped out of sight. With it went the hope it had held out for thousands of drunks of that day.

Against this brief background, it is possible to make a limited comparison between the Washingtonian movement and Alcoholics Anonymous and to reflect on the possibility of AA's suffering a similar fate. The similarities between the earlier movement and AA might be listed as follows:

1. Alcoholics helping each other.
2. Weekly meetings.

3. The sharing of experiences.
4. Constant availability of fellowship with the group or its members.
5. Reliance upon a Higher Power.
6. Total abstention from alcohol.

Although it is obvious that this program of the Washingtonians was incomplete and possessed only limited opportunity for personality change, as compared with AA's Twelve Steps, it did provide the tools for at least short-lived sobriety for thousands of drunks. But it failed to provide any standards at all that were comparable to AA's Twelve Traditions. Because there were no such safeguards for the movement as a whole, it died. Most of the Washingtonians' problems lay in areas now covered in our Traditions:

1. The AA Preamble and Tradition Five advise us to protect our singleness of purpose; Tradition One cautions us to protect our unity. Without these guidelines, the Washingtonian movement developed into a three-headed monster. First was the program of reclaiming suffering alcoholics. Second was the call to the general public for temperance through moral suasion. Third was the call for temperance through legal suasion. Influential men controlled the action of each head, and it was not long until the heads were fighting each other.
2. The carnival tactics for promotion and the lack of any spiritual principle of anonymity created an atmosphere for spectacular growth -but also led to battles among personalities competing for prestige and power. One hundred years later, AA adopted Traditions Eleven and Twelve, which guide us to base our public-relations policy on attraction rather than promotion; always to maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, broadcasting, and films; and to regard anonymity as our "spiritual foundation . . . ever reminding us to place principles before personalities."
3. Nothing can divide and destroy groups more quickly than theological and political controversy. Tradition Ten states that AA "has no opinion on outside issues" and that "the AA name ought never be drawn into public controversy." Without this Tradition the Washingtonians walked right into a oblivion. A few key church leaders heard Washingtonian reformed drunks proclaiming among other things, they were living Christ's program - not just giving it lip service, like a lot of pastors they knew. In retaliation, the Rev. Hiram Mattison, minister of the Methodist Episcopal church of Watertown, N.Y., fired this theological blockbuster: "No Christian is at liberty to select or adopt any general system, organization, agencies, or means for moral reformation of mankind, except those prescribed and recognized by Jesus Christ." He added that his church had been chosen, together with his gospel, as the system of truth and the only system to reform mankind. It was war! Other churches reacted in the same way and finally closed their doors to Washingtonians.
4. As if that were not enough, some of the Washingtonians' oratorical circuit riders turned professional, having no Eighth Tradition to guide them. So their one-drunk-to-another message lost a great deal of its impact.

A final destructive note came when influential leaders of nonalcoholic groups decided that the need for ex-drunks to reform other drunks was past, and that emphasis should be placed instead on the importance of laws to promote temperance.

In doing the research and writing this article for the Grapevine, my thoughts have kept returning to this question: After the movement destroyed itself, what happened to all the thousands of alcoholics who had found sobriety through the Washingtonians?

During the early days of the AA program, especially prior to the adoption of our Twelve Traditions, AA did suffer some of the same symptoms that destroyed the Washingtonians. The fact that we survived those hazards is one of AA's many miracles.

The Unfortunates' is a spiritual entity having but one primary purpose -- that of carrying its message to the alcoholic who still suffers. The message carried is defined by what is written on the paper cover of the Third Edition Big Book which states, "Pages 1 through 164 remains unchanged. This is the A.A. message." In an effort to fulfill our primary purpose, The Unfortunate's will provide a Big Book free of charge as part of our newcomer welcoming process. Incorporated in the Newcomer Chair position will be the responsibility of ensuring The Unfortunates' meetings focus on the welcoming newcomer process. This position will be tasked with identifying at minimum four (4) regular group members, ideally two men and two women, who will arrive 20 minutes prior to the meeting to greet members as they arrive. The main focus of the greeters is to identify meeting attendees who are not recognized. After greeting these individuals, if this is the person's first A.A. meeting, the Greeter is to connect the newcomer with a Group Member who is to be their Newcomer Chair responsible for providing a Big Book, the review of what's in the newcomer packet, an overview of meeting, and a cup of coffee, etc. Group Members are to be reminded to not interfere with the newcomers when they are with a Greeter or Newcomer Chair.

Bob Bacon - Delegate, Northeast Ohio April, 1976

My name is Bob Bacon. I am powerless over alcohol and very grateful to be alive and a part of this conference.

Are we, in the content of our A.A. meetings, getting away from A.A. basics? I believe we are. Alcoholics Anonymous is growing at a faster rate than at any time since the 1940's, and I suspect we were not ready for such growth. Have we gotten a little complacent and smug in our well-being? People today are coming to Alcoholics Anonymous in far better shape physically and mentally than most of us here did.

We need to show them how we learned to stay sober. If our meetings consist mostly of drinking experiences, our ideas and opinions, we are not doing our jobs. Dr. Bob said our program when boiled down, is love and service. We need to show all the newcomers that we love them as we were loved and we have a way of life we wish to share. If our meetings are nothing but drunk-a-logs and meaningless

chatter, we are not showing them "How It Works". In A.A. meetings, we reach out with love and told people, "These are the Steps we took" and "We had to go to any lengths". Is that what the newcomer is hearing in our meetings today?

To me, it is vital to the survival of our Fellowship that we make certain the people coming to us for help are made aware of the Big Book, the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions as possibly their only hope for survival from alcoholism. If we fail to guide them to our program of recovery, our Fellowship will not survive. Our future is dependent upon a continuing stream of recovered alcoholics.

In today's frustrating world, our Program works better than ever. Are we doing a good enough job sharing this with the thousands of people coming to us now? Shouldn't we be giving these people all Three Legacies of Recovery, Unity and Service? We have to tell them more than, "Don't drink and go to meetings". If all we talk about is our drinking, our ideas, our opinions, my day or the way I do it, we are not carrying the message--we are carrying the illness. We should be talking about recovery. I don't believe we are.

Are we stressing the real value of the Big Book? You can go to meetings in my area where you can't find a Big Book. Lately, when I am asked to lead a meeting, I have to take my Big Book with me. I don't want to lead a meeting that doesn't have a Big Book.

We hear many people lead meetings and never mention the Steps or the Big Book. Is it because nobody told them how very important the Big Book is? Do we forget to tell the newcomer that what is in the Big Book can save his or her life? Our total Program is in the Big Book and only in the Big Book. Shouldn't we be telling people that? We hear a lot of ridiculous things like, "There are no musts in A.A." My Big Book read different. People say that it is an individual program that we can take the Steps any way we want to. Dr. Bob said, and I quote, "There is no such thing as an individual interpretation of the Twelve Steps." If we are not honest with the new people and tell them how important each Step is, who will tell them? Some people seem to think the Steps are a necessary evil instead of a lifesaving prescription for happiness.

In 1965 at Maple Leaf Gardens in Toronto, most of us stood with Bill and said, "I am responsible. When anyone, anywhere reaches out for help, I want the hand of A.A. always to be there and for that I am responsible." Being at that Convention is the reason I am standing here now. We are the guardians of this Fellowship, and maybe we need to do a better job of sharing what it is all about. Are we still responsible?

A.A. Grapevine, April, 1948

Says the old proverb, *"Shoemaker, stick to thy last."* Trite, yes. But very true for us of A.A. How well we need to heed the principle that it is better to do one thing supremely well than many things badly.

** "Shoemaker, stick to thy last." - "A 'last' is a block or form shaped like a human foot and used in making or repairing shoes. " The phrase*

means, "Stick with what you know," or "Don't try to talk about or do tasks when you don't know what you're talking about or what you are doing." Like if a cobbler or shoemaker started trying to talk about neurosurgery.

Ultracrepidarianism(a person can be an **ultracrepidate**) is the habit of giving opinions and advice on matters outside of one's knowledge. The term draws from a famous comment purportedly made by Apelles, a famous Greek artist, to a shoemaker who presumed to criticize his painting. The Latin phrase "Sutor, ne ultra crepidam", as set down by Pliny and later altered by other Latin writers to "Ne ultra crepidam judicaret", can be taken to mean that a shoemaker ought not to judge beyond his own soles. That is to say, critics should only comment on things they know something about. The saying remains popular in several languages, as in the English, "A cobbler should stick to his last".

Because it has now become plain enough that only a recovered alcoholic can do much for a sick alcoholic, a tremendous responsibility has descended upon us all, an obligation so great that it amounts to a sacred trust. For to our kind, those who suffer alcoholism, recovery is a matter of life or death. So the society of Alcoholics Anonymous cannot, it dare not ever be diverted from its primary purpose.

Temptation to do otherwise will come aplenty. Seeing fine works afoot in the field of alcohol, we shall be sorely tempted to loan out the name and credit of Alcoholics Anonymous to them; as a movement we shall be beset to finance and endorse other causes. Should our present success continue, people will commence to assert that A.A. is a brand new way of life, maybe a new religion, capable of saving the world. We shall be told it is our bounden duty to show modern society how it ought to live.

Oh, how very attractive these projects and ideas can be! How flattering to imagine that we might be chosen to demonstrate that olden mystic promise: "The first shall be last and the last shall be first." Fantastic, you say. Yet some of our well-wishers have begun to say such things.

Fortunately most of us are convinced that these are perilous speculations, alluring ingredients of that new heady wine we are now being offered, each bottle marked "Success"!

Of this subtle vintage may we never drink too deeply. May we never forget that we live by the *Grace of God -- on borrowed time; that anonymity is better than acclaim; that for us as a movement poverty is better than wealth.

And may we reflect with ever deepening conviction that we shall never be at our best except when we hew only to the primary spiritual aim of A.A. -- "That of carrying its message to the alcoholic who still suffers alcoholism."

Bill W.
The A.A. Grapevine, April, 1948

1.8 NEVER ENDORSE (TRADITION SIX)

"Problems of money, property, and authority may easily divert us from our primary spiritual aim. We think, therefore, that any considerable property of genuine use to AA should be separately incorporated and managed, thus dividing the material from the spiritual. An AA group, as such, should never go into business. Secondary aids to AA, such as clubs or hospitals which require much property and administration, ought to be incorporated and so set apart that, if necessary, they can be freely discarded by the groups. Hence such facilities ought not to use the AA name. Their management should be sole responsibility of those people who financially support them. For clubs, AA managers are usually preferred. But hospitals, as well as other places of recuperation, ought to be well outside AA -- and medically supervised. While an AA group may cooperate with anyone, such cooperation ought never go so far as affiliation or endorsement, actual or implied. An AA group can bind itself to no one."

A.A. Grapevine, May 1948

The sixth of our 12 Points of A.A. Tradition is deemed so important that it states at length the relation of the A.A. movement to money and property.

Too detailed to print here, this Tradition declares in substance that the accumulation of money, property and the unwanted personal authority so often generated by material wealth comprise a cluster of serious hazards against which an A.A. group must ever be on guard.

Tradition 6 also enjoins the group never to go into business nor ever to lend the A.A. name or money credit to any "outside" enterprise, no matter how good. Strongly expressed is the opinion that even clubs should not bear the A.A. name; that they ought to be separately incorporated and managed by those individual A.A.s who need or want clubs enough to financially support them.

We would thus divide the spiritual from the material, confine the A.A. movement to its sole aim and insure (however wealthy as individuals we may become) that A.A. itself shall always remain poor. We dare not risk the distractions of corporate wealth. Years of experience have proven these principles beyond doubt. They have become certainties, absolute verities for us.

Thank God, we A.A.s have never yet been caught in the kind of religious or political disputes which embroil the world of today. But we ought to face the fact that we have often quarreled violently about money, property and the administration thereof. Money, in quantity, has always been a baleful influence in group life. Let a well-meaning donor present an A.A. group with a sizeable sum and we break loose. Nor does trouble abate until that group, as such, somehow disposes of its bank roll. This experience is practically universal. "But," say our friends, "isn't this a confession of weakness? Other organizations do a lot of good with money. Why not A.A.?"

Of course, we of A.A. would be the first to say that many a fine enterprise does a lot of good with a lot of money. To these efforts, money is usually primary; it is their life blood. But money is not the life blood of A.A. With us, it is very secondary. Even in small quantities, it is scarcely more than a necessary nuisance, something we wish we could do without entirely. Why is that so?

We explain this easily enough; we don't need money. The core of our A.A. procedure is "one alcoholic talking to another," whether that be sitting on a curbstone, in a home, or at a meeting. It's the message, not the place; it's the talk, not the alms. That does our work. Just places to meet and talk, that's about all A.A. needs. Beyond these, a few small offices, a few secretaries at their desks, a few dollars apiece a year, easily met by voluntary contributions. Trivial indeed, our expenses!

Nowadays, the A.A. group answers its well-wishers saying, "Our expenses are trifling. As good earners, we can easily pay them. As we neither need nor want money, why risk its hazards? We'd rather stay poor. Thanks just the same!"

Bill W.

The A.A. Grapevine, May, 1948

1.9 SELF SUPPORTING (TRADITION SEVEN)

"The A.A. Groups themselves ought to be fully supported by the voluntary contribution of their own members. We think that each group should soon achieve its ideal: that any public solicitation of funds using the name of Alcoholics Anonymous is highly dangerous, whether by groups, clubs, hospitals or other outside agencies; that acceptance of large gifts from any source, or of contributions carrying any obligation whatever, is unwise. Then too, we view with much concern those A.A. treasuries which continue, beyond prudent reserves, to accumulate funds for no stated A.A. purpose. Experience has often warned us that nothing can so surely destroy our spiritual heritage as futile disputes over property, money, and authority."

"We cannot skimp" - With the realization that A.A. must steer clear of outside contributions in order to maintain its autonomy and independence came the understanding that the money necessary for A.A.'s survival would have to come from individual A.A. members and groups. As Bill W. put it in 1957, "Our spiritual way of life is safe for future generations if, as a Society, we resist the temptation to receive money from the outside world. But this leaves us with a responsibility — one that every member ought to understand. We cannot skimp when the treasurer of our group passes the hat. Our groups, our areas, and A.A. as a whole will not function unless our services are sufficient and their bills are paid. "When we meet and defeat the temptation to take large gifts, we are only being prudent. But when we are generous with the hat we give a token that we are grateful for our blessings and evidence that we are eager to share what we have found with all those who still suffer." (The Language of the Heart, p. 221)

The Unfortunate's will maintain a prudent reserve of 6 months operating expenses which will be determined by the Steering Committee and approved yearly at group elections. The prudent reserve will be held in a separate non-interest bearing bank account until needed. The operating funds will be maintained in a non-interest bearing checking account which is not to exceed \$3000.00. Funds in excess of \$3000.00 will be divided up into the distribution plan per the Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix (F-3) pamphlet which will be reviewed yearly by the Steering Committee and approved yearly at group elections. The signers on the Group's bank accounts will be the Group Treasurer (rotating with annual elections)

and a member of the Steering Committee (who will rotate every four years to ensure continuity and will be appointed by the Steering Committee and approved at that year's elections).

A.A. Grapevine, June, 1948

Our growth continuing, the combined income of Alcoholics Anonymous members will soon reach the astounding total of \$250,000,000, a quarter of billion dollars yearly. This is the direct result of A.A. membership. Sober we now have it, drunk we would not.

By contrast, our overall A.A. expenses are trifling.

For instance, the A.A. General Office now costs us \$1.50 per member a year. As a fact, the New York office asks the groups for this sum twice a year because not all of them contribute. Even so, the sum per member is exceedingly small. If an A.A. happens to live in a large metropolitan center where an intergroup office is absolutely essential to handle heavy inquiries and hospital arrangements he contributes (or probably should contribute) about \$5.00 annually. To pay the rent of his own group meeting place, and maybe coffee and doughnuts, he might drop \$25.00 a year in the hat. Or, if he belongs to a club it could be \$50.00. In case he takes *The A.A. Grapevine* he squanders an extra \$2.50!

So, the A.A. member who really meets his group responsibilities finds himself liable for about \$5.00 a month on the average. Yet his own personal income may be anywhere between \$200. and \$2,000. a month -- the direct result of not drinking.

"But", some will contend, "our friends want to give us money to furnish that new club house. We are a new small group. Most of us are still pretty broke. What then?"

I am sure that myriads of the A.A. voices would now answer the new group saying, "Yes, we know just how you feel. We once solicited money ourselves. We even solicited publicly. We thought we could do a lot of good with other peoples' money. But we found that kind of money too hot to handle. It aroused unbelievable controversy. It simply wasn't worth it. Besides, it set a precedent which has tempted many people to use the valuable name of Alcoholics Anonymous for other than A.A. purposes. While there may be little harm in a small friendly loan which your group really means to repay, we really beg you to think hard before you ask the most willing friend to make a large donation. You can, and you soon will, pay your own way. For each of you these overhead expenses will never amount to more than the price of one bottle of good whiskey a month. You will be everlastingly thankful if you pay this small obligation yourselves.

When reflecting on these things, why should not each of us tell himself, "Yes, we A.A.s were once a burden on everybody. We were 'takers.' Now that we are sober, and by the Grace of God have become responsible citizens of the world, why shouldn't we now about face and become 'thankful givers'! Yes, it is high time we did!"

Bill W.

The AA Grapevine, June, 1948

1.10 NON-PROFESSIONAL (TRADITION EIGHT)

"Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever non-professional. We define professionalism as the occupation of counseling alcoholics for fees or hire. But we may employ alcoholics where they are going to perform those services for which we might otherwise have to engage non-alcoholics. Such special services may be well recompensed. But our usual A.A. "12th Step" work is never to be paid for."

A.A. Grapevine, June, 1948

Throughout the world A.A.s are "12th stepping" with thousands of new prospects a month. Between one and two thousand of these stick on our first presentation; past experience shows that most of the remainder will come back to us later on. Almost entirely unorganized, and completely non-professional, this mighty spiritual current is now flowing from alcoholics who are well to those who are sick. One alcoholic talking to another; that's all.

Could this vast and vital face-to-face effort ever be professionalized or even organized? Most emphatically, it could not. The few efforts to professionalize straight "12th Step" work have always failed quickly. Today, no A.A. will tolerate the idea of paid "A.A. Therapists" or "organizers". Nor does any A.A. like to be told just how he must handle that new prospect of his. No, this great life-giving stream can never be dammed up by paid do-gooders or professionals. Alcoholics Anonymous is never going to cut its own life lines. To a man, we are sure of that.

But what about those who serve us full time in other capacities -- are cooks, caretakers and paid Intergroup secretaries "A.A. professionals"?

Because our thinking about these people is still unclear, we often feel and act as though they were such. The impression of professionalism subtly attaches to them, so we frequently hear they are "making money out of A.A.", or that they are "professionalizing" A.A. Seemingly, if they do take our A.A. dollars they don't quite belong with us A.A.s any more. We sometimes go further; we underpay them on the theory they ought to be glad to "cook" for A.A. cheap.

Now isn't this carrying our fears of professionalism rather far? If these fears ever got too strong, none but a saint or an incompetent could work for Alcoholics Anonymous. Our supply of saints being quite small, we would certainly wind up with less competent workers than we need.

We are beginning to see that our few paid workers are performing only those service tasks that our volunteers cannot consistently handle. Primarily these folks are not doing 12th Step work. They are just making more and better 12th Step work possible. Secretaries at their desks are valuable points of contact, information and public relations. That is what they are paid for, and nothing else. They help carry the good news of A.A. to the outside world and bring our prospects face to face with us. That's not "A.A. therapy"; it's just a lot of very necessary but often thankless work.

So, where needed, let's revise our attitude toward those who labor at our special services. Let us treat them as A.A. associates, and not as hired help; let's recompense them fairly and, above all, let's absolve them from the label of professionalism.

Let us also distinguish clearly between "organizing the A.A. movement" and setting up, in a reasonably business-like manner, its few essential services of contact and propagation. Once we do that, all will be well. The million or so brother alcoholics who are still sick will then continue to get the break we 60,000 A.A.s have already had.

Let's give our "service desks" the hand they so well deserve.

Bill W.

The A.A. Grapevine, July, 1948

1.11 NEVER ORGANIZED (TRADITION NINE)

"Each A.A. Group needs the least possible organization. Rotating leadership is the best. The small group may elect its secretary, the large group its rotating committee and the groups of a large Metropolitan area their central or intergroup committee, which often employs a full-time secretary. The Trustees of The Alcoholic Foundation are, in effect, our A.A. General Service Committee. They are the custodians of our A.A. Tradition and the receivers of voluntary A.A. contributions by which we maintain our A.A. General Service Office in New York. They are authorized by the groups to handle our over-all public relations and they guarantee the integrity of our principal newspaper, "The A.A. Grapevine." All such representatives are to be guided in the spirit of service, for true leaders in A.A. are but trusted and experienced servants of the whole. They derive no real authority from their titles; they do not govern. Universal respect is the key to their usefulness."

Tradition 9 is concerned with the organization of AA. It is about authority.

This says in the group there should be least possible organization. First, the word 'organization' is not referring to the format of a meeting. It is true every single group in AA has to have a set format for people to follow in order to fulfil Tradition 5 set up in Tradition 4 otherwise it cannot work. Tradition 9 is talking about how the group organizes itself i.e. who has authority to govern the group to achieve Tradition 2. It is saying there should be as little formal management structure as possible that is separate from the group conscience.

However, the Tradition does tell us that no group can get away without some organization apart from the group conscience, that is, it must give its officers some authority to organize things. Tradition 9 tells us that once the format has been set, we should give individuals as little freedom as possible to make their own decisions. However, it acknowledges that we must give our elected officers some leeway to organize within that set framework. For example, we give our secretary the authority to choose speakers without the group conscience having to make a decision to approve every choice made; and the coffee-makers decide what refreshments to serve. Once we elect people, we place our trust in them to do the job in the spirit of the group conscience. However, if other members of the group

feel that the jobs are not done properly, they can appeal (Concept V) to the group conscience. Sometimes as a result of this, service officers are replaced.

This tradition contains a further safeguard in stating the principle of rotation, which ensures that Group Officers and Service Committee Members go before they are removed. It is dangerous for people to be elected to positions of authority for too long, for the temptation to abuse trust is great. So after a set period of time officers step down and rotate or move back into the body of the group conscience. That applies to AA group officers and service committee members alike.

The last section of this tradition makes it clear also that elected officers cannot demand to be trusted simply by virtue of their position. Respect is earned by the conduct of an individual. So there is no moral obligation, for example, for groups to do as the General Service Board members tell us. In fact, it is the other way round; the GSR should listen to us.

Tradition 9 defines upper and lower limits of organization for a group: even the smallest group has to elect a secretary and the larger groups may elect service committees, for example a steering committee. In Great Britain, for example, there are no groups large enough to justify paying anybody for work and very few groups have their own committee to deal with Intergroup work, most finding a single representative sufficient. So in the Great Britain, even the largest groups are well within the limits of organization defined by this tradition.

While the AA group should have the "least possible organization", Tradition 9 in its condensed form says that AA, as such, should have no organization. The phrase "AA, as such" means the same as "AA as a whole". What it means is that there is no central office to organize AA, and no AA group can be told what to do by any of the service committees. Every group is autonomous. So the fellowship as a whole should not be organized by any central authority, such as the General Service Board. The Board is just a service committee that handles particular functions that a group on its own couldn't do (for example our all-over public relations). In fact the authority should run the other way around.

AA does not just consist of AA groups. There is a different classification of AA meeting: these are service committees and service boards. In countries that follow that in the "The AA Service Manual and 12 Concepts for World Service by Bill W.", they have committees called Intergroup, District, Area, Region and Conference. Not all countries follow this manual and Great Britain, for instance, has no Area or District.

It is Tradition 9 that creates the idea of a service committee that is distinct from a group. It tells us that all of these service committees should serve the AA groups. The Intergroup is directly answerable to the groups it serves because the groups send representatives to it. Similarly the Region and Area should be directly answerable to all the groups in it by allowing any Group Service Representatives to participate and vote. The GSRs also elect the delegates for Conference and so each delegate is directly accountable to the groups. As a sub-committee of conference, the General Service Board, should be directly answerable to conference. We often hear mention of the inverted triangle of authority with the groups at the top and the Board at the tip underneath. Tradition 9 is the tradition that actually inverts the triangle for us, by making all service committees

answerable to the groups, or rather their representative, most commonly the General Service Representative.

This is where the 12 Concepts come in. They explain how the service committees should be set up so that they are answerable to all the groups they serve through the 'collective conscience' of those groups. They were defined in the book called The AA Service Manual and 12 Concepts for World Service by Bill W also known as the World Service Manual.

A.A. Grapevine, August 1948

The least possible organization, that's our universal ideal. No fees, no dues, no rules imposed on anybody, one alcoholic bringing recovery to the next; that's the substance of what we most desire, isn't it?

But how shall this simple ideal best be realized? Often a question, that.

We have, for example, the kind of A.A. who is for simplicity. Terrified of anything organized, he tells us that A.A. is getting too complicated. He thinks money only makes trouble, committees only make dissension, elections only make politics, paid workers only make professionals and that clubs only coddle slipees. Says he, let's get back to coffee and cakes by cozy firesides. If any alcoholics stray our way, let's look after them. But that's enough. Simplicity is our answer.

Quite opposed to such halcyon simplicity is the A.A. promotor. Left to himself he would "bang the cannon and twang the lyre" at every crossroad of the world. Millions for drunks, great A.A. hospitals, batteries of paid organizers and publicity experts wielding all the latest paraphernalia of sound and script; such would be our promoters dream. "Yes sir," he would bark "My two year plan calls for one million A.A. members by 1950!"

For one, I'm glad we have both conservatives and enthusiasts. They teach us much. The conservative will surely see to it that the A.A. movement never gets over organized. But the promoter will continue to remind us of our terrific obligation to the newcomer and to those hundreds of thousands of alcoholics still waiting all over the world to hear of A.A.

We shall, naturally, take the firm and safe middle course. A.A. has always violently resisted the idea of any general organization. Yet, paradoxically, we have ever stoutly insisted upon organizing certain *special services*; mostly those absolutely necessary to effective and plentiful 12th Step work.

If, for instance, an A.A. group elects a secretary or rotating committee, if an area forms an intergroup committee, if we set up a Foundation, a General Office or a *Grapevine*, then we are organized for service. The A.A. book and pamphlets, our meeting places and clubs, our dinners and regional assemblies -- these are services too. Nor can we secure good hospital connections, properly sponsor new prospects and obtain good public relations just by chance. People have to be appointed to look after these things, sometimes paid people. Special services are performed.

But by none of these special services, has our spiritual or social activity, the great current of A.A. ever been really organized or professionalized. Yet our recovery program has been enormously aided. While important, these service activities, are very small by contrast with our main effort.

As such facts and distinctions become clear, we shall easily lay aside our fears of blighting organization or hazardous wealth. As a movement, we shall remain comfortably poor; for our service expenses are trifling.

With such assurances, we shall without doubt, continue to improve and extend our vital lifelines of special service; to better carry out our A.A. message to others; to make for ourselves a finer greater society, and, God willing, to assure Alcoholics Anonymous a long life and perfect unity.

Bill W.

The A.A. Grapevine, August, 1948

1.12 NO OPINION (TRADITION TEN)

"No A.A. Group or member should ever, in such a way as to implicate A.A., express any opinion on outside controversial issues -- particularly those of politics, alcohol reform, or sectarian religion. The Alcoholics Anonymous Groups oppose no one. Concerning such matters they can express no views whatever."

The Washingtonian Society, a movement among alcoholics of a century age, almost discovered the answer to alcoholism. At first the society was composed entirely of alcoholics trying to help each other. The early members foresaw that they should dedicate themselves to this sole aim. In many respects, the Washingtonians were akin to AA of today. Their membership passed the hundred-thousand mark. Had they been left to themselves, and had they stuck to their one goal, they might have found the rest of the answer. But this didn't happen. Instead, the Washingtonians permitted politicians and reformers, both alcoholic and non-alcoholic, to use the society for their own purposes. Abolition of slavery, for example, was a stormy political issue then. Soon Washingtonian speakers violently and publicly took sides on this question. Maybe the society could have survived the Abolition controversy, but it didn't have a chance from the moment it determined to reform America's drinking habits. When the Washingtonians became crusaders, within a very few years they had completely lost their effectiveness in helping alcoholics.

The lesson to be learned from the Washingtonians was not overlooked by Alcoholics Anonymous. As we surveyed the wreck of that movement, early AA member resolved to keep our society out of public controversy. Thus was laid the cornerstone for Tradition 10.

Definitions:

Opinion

/ə'pɪnjən/

noun

1. judgment or belief not founded on certainty or proof
2. a personal view, attitude, or appraisal
3. evaluation, impression, or estimation of the value or worth of a person or thing

Public

[puhb-lik]

adjective

1. of, relating to, or affecting a population or a community as a whole:

2. done, made, acting, etc., for the community as a whole:

Controversy

[kon-truh-vur-see]

1. a prolonged public dispute, debate, or contention; disputation concerning a matter of opinion.
2. contention, strife, or argument.

A.A. Grapevine, September 1948

To most of us, Alcoholics Anonymous has become as solid as the Rock of Gibraltar. We like to believe that it will soon be as well-known and just as enduring as that historic landmark. We enjoy this pleasant conviction because nothing has yet occurred to disturb it; we reason that we must hang together or die. Hence we take for granted our continued unity as a movement.

But should we? Though God has bestowed upon us great favors, and though we are bound by stronger ties of love and necessity than most societies, is it prudent to suppose that automatically these great gifts and attributes shall be ours forever. If we are worthy, we shall probably continue to enjoy them. So the real question is, how shall we always be worthy of our present blessings?

Seen from this point of view, our A.A. Traditions are those attitudes and practices by which we may deserve, as a movement, a long life and a useful one. To this end, none could be more vital than our 10th Tradition, for it deals with the subject of controversy -- serious controversy.

On the other side of the world, millions have not long since died in religious dissension. Other millions have died in political controversy. The end is not yet. Nearly everybody in the world has turned reformer. Each group, society and nation is saying to the other, "You must do as we say, or else". Political controversy and reform by compulsion has reached an all-time high. And eternal, seemingly, are the flames of religious dissension.

Being like other men and women, how can we expect to remain forever immune from these perils? Probably we shall not. At length, we must meet them all. We cannot flee from them, nor ought we try. If these challenges do come, we shall, I am sure, go out to meet them gladly and unafraid. That will be the acid test of our worth.

Our best defense? This surely lies in the formation of a Tradition respecting serious controversy so powerful that neither the weakness of persons nor the strain and strife of our troubled times can harm Alcoholics Anonymous. We know that A.A. must continue to live, or else many of us and many of our brother alcoholics throughout the world will surely resume the hopeless journey to oblivion. That must never be.

As though by some deep and compelling instinct we have thus far avoided serious controversies. Save minor and healthy growing pains, we are at peace among ourselves. And because we have thus far adhered to our sole aim, the whole world regards us favorably.

May God grant us the wisdom and fortitude ever to sustain an unbreakable unity.

Bill W.

The A.A. Grapevine, February, 1953

1.13 NO PROMOTION (TRADITION ELEVEN)

"Our relations with the general public should be characterized by personal anonymity. We think A.A. ought to avoid sensational advertising. Our names and pictures as A.A. members ought not be broadcast, filmed, or publicly printed. Our public relations should be guided by the principle of attraction rather than promotion. There is never need to praise ourselves. We feel it better to let our friends recommend us."

Why?

Many recovering members have the attitude "When I was drinking, everybody knew I was the town drunk, why should I hide my identity now that I am recovering?"

The answer is, for the good of the fellowship. The example is given of a famous athlete or television personality -- a role model for youth -- who gets into recovery and announces to the entire world that A.A. has saved his life. What happens if that person relapses? The kids say, "Well, so much for A.A.!" (Pass It On page 314)

In 1960, Bill Wilson declined to have his picture on the cover of Time magazine. Wilson sought at all times to "set the best possible example for anonymity".

But Tradition 11 was also developed by the founders of the 12 step programs in order to avoid other potentially damaging situations to AA. Through years what promotion has done to AA as a whole has allowed outsiders to change our message, so many changes insiders now hear a different message.

Slowly we have replaced "we get better" with "things get better," we have allowed outside institutions to tell us it does not matter which 12 step program you go to they are all the same.

By trying to save the world, we are not adhering to our singleness of purpose -- one AA helping another AA. Our hearts are in the right place, but as a whole we are doing more harm than good.

AA's early success rate was around 75 percent. Today's rate has dropped drastically from all the promotion by treatment centers and courts sending people to AA.

A.A. Grapevine, October, 1948

Providence has been looking after the public relations of Alcoholics Anonymous. It can scarcely have been otherwise. Though more than a dozen years old, hardly a syllable of criticism or ridicule has ever been spoken of A.A. Somehow we have been spared all the pains of medical or religious controversy and we have good friends both wet and dry, right and left. Like most societies, we are sometimes scandalous -- but never yet in public. From all over the world, naught comes but keen sympathy and downright admiration. Our friends of the press and radio have outdone themselves. Anyone can see that we are in a fair way to be spoiled. Our reputation is already so much better than our actual character!

Surely these phenomenal blessings must have a deep purpose. Who doubts that this purpose wishes to let every alcoholic in the world know that A.A. is truly for him, can he only want his liberation enough. Hence, our messages through public channels have never been seriously discolored, nor has the searing breath of prejudice ever issued from anywhere.

Good public relations are A.A. lifelines reaching out to the brother alcoholic who still does not know us. For years to come, our growth is sure to depend upon the strength and number of these lifelines. One serious public relations calamity could always turn thousands away from us to perish -- a matter of life and death indeed!

The future poses no greater problem or challenge to A.A. than how best to preserve a friendly and vital relation to all the world about us. Success will heavily rest upon right principles, a wise vigilance and the deepest personal responsibility on the part of every man jack of us. Nothing less will do. Else our brother may again turn his face to the wall because we did not care enough.

So, the 11th Tradition stands sentinel over the lifelines, announcing that there is no need for self-praise, that it is better to let our friends recommend us, and that our whole public relations policy, contrary to usual customs, should be based upon the principle of *attraction* rather than promotion. Shot in the arm methods are not for us -- no press agents, no promotional devices, no big names. The hazards are too great. Immediate results will always be illusive because easy shortcuts to notoriety can generate permanent and smothering liabilities.

More and more, therefore, are we emphasizing the principle of personal anonymity as it applies to our public relations. We ask of each other the highest degree of personal responsibility in this respect. As a movement, we have been, before now, tempted to exploit the names of our well known public characters. We have rationalized that other societies, even the best, do the same. As individuals, we have sometimes believed that the public use of our names could demonstrate our personal courage in the face of stigma; so lending power and conviction to news stories and magazine articles.

But these are not the allures they once were. Vividly, we are becoming aware that no member ought to describe himself in full view of the general public as an A.A., even for the most worthy purpose, lest a perilous precedent be set which would tempt others to do likewise for purposes not so worthy.

We see that on breaking anonymity by press, radio or pictures, anyone of us could easily transfer the valuable name of Alcoholics Anonymous over onto any enterprise or into the midst of any controversy.

So, it is becoming our code that there are things that no A.A. ever does, lest he divert A.A. from its sole purpose and injure our public relations. And thereby the chances of those sick ones yet to come.

To the million alcoholics who have not yet heard our A.A. story we should ever say, "Greetings and welcome. Be assured that we shall never weaken the lifelines which we float out to you. In our public relations, we shall, God willing, keep the faith."

Bill W.

The A.A. Grapevine, October, 1948

1.14 ANONIMITY (TRADITION TWELVE)

"And finally, we of Alcoholics Anonymous believe that the principle of anonymity has an immense spiritual significance. It reminds us that we are to place principles before personalities; that we are actually to practice a genuine humility. This to the end that our great blessings may never spoil us; that we shall forever live in thankful contemplation of Him who presides over us all."

A.A. Grapevine, November 1948

"We of Alcoholics Anonymous believe that the principle of Anonymity has an immense spiritual significance. It reminds us that we are to place principles before personalities; that we are actually to practice a genuine humility. This to the end that our great blessings may never spoil us; that we shall forever live in thankful contemplation of Him Who presides over us all."

ONE may say that anonymity is the spiritual base, the sure key to all the rest of our Traditions. It has come to stand for prudence and, most importantly, for self-effacement. True consideration for the newcomer if he desires to be nameless; vital protection against misuse of the name Alcoholics Anonymous at the public level; and to each of us a constant reminder that principles come before personal interest -- such is the wide scope of this all embracing principle. In it we see the cornerstone of our security as a movement; at a deeper spiritual level it points us to still greater self-renunciation.

A GLANCE at the 12 Traditions will instantly assure anyone that "giving up" is the essential idea of them all. In each Tradition, the individual or the group is asked to give up something for our general welfare.

Tradition One asks us to place the common good ahead of personal desire.

Tradition Two asks us to listen to God as He may speak in the Group Conscience.

Tradition Three requires that we exclude no alcoholic from A.A. membership.

Tradition Four implies that we abandon all idea of centralized human authority or government. But each group is enjoined to consult widely in matters affecting us all.

Tradition Five restricts the A.A. group to a single purpose, i.e. carrying our message to other alcoholics.

Tradition Six points at the corroding influence of money, property and personal authority; it begs that we keep these influences at a minimum by separate incorporation and management of our special services. It also warns against the natural temptation to make alliances or give endorsements.

Tradition Seven states that we had best pay our own bills; that large contributions or those carrying obligations ought not be received; that public solicitation using the name Alcoholics Anonymous is positively dangerous.

Tradition Eight forswears professionalizing our Twelfth Step work but it does guarantee our few paid service workers an unquestioned amateur status.

Tradition Nine asks that we give up all idea of expensive organization; enough is needed to permit effective work by our special services--and no more. This Tradition breathes democracy; our leadership is one of service and it is rotating; our few titles never clothe their holders with arbitrary personal authority; they hold authorizations to serve, never to govern.

Tradition Ten is an emphatic restraint of serious controversy; it implores each of us to take care against committing A.A. to the fires of reform, political or religious dissension.

Tradition Eleven asks, in our public relations, that we be alert against sensationalism and it declares there is never need to praise ourselves. Personal anonymity at the level of press, radio and film is urgently required, thus avoiding the pitfall of vanity, and the temptation through broken anonymity to link A.A. to other causes.

Tradition Twelve, in its mood of humble anonymity, plainly enough comprehends the preceding eleven. The "Twelve Points of Tradition" are little else than a specific application of the spirit of the "Twelve Steps of Recovery" to our group life and to our relations with society in general. The Recovery Steps would make each individual A.A. whole and one with God; the Twelve Points of Tradition would make us one with each other and whole with the world about us. Unity is our aim.

Our A.A. Traditions are, we trust, securely anchored in those wise precepts: charity, gratitude and humility. Nor have we forgotten prudence. May these virtues ever stand clear before us in our meditations; may Alcoholics Anonymous serve God in happy unison for so long as He may need us.

Bill W.

The A.A. Grapevine, November, 1948

PROJECT CHARTER APPROVAL

The undersigned acknowledge they have reviewed the project charter and authorize The Unfortunates Group Charter. Changes to this Charter will be coordinated with and approved by the undersigned or their designated representatives of the Steering Committee.

Signature: _____ Date: _____
Print Name: _____
Title: _____
Role: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____
Print Name: _____
Title: _____
Role: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____
Print Name: _____
Title: _____
Role: _____

APPENDIX A: REFERENCES

The following table summarizes the documents referenced in this document.

Document Name and Version	Description
 en_bm-31.pdf	2016-2018 World Service Manual Combined with the Twelve Concepts for World Service
 p-16_theaagroup.pdf	The A.A. Group... Where It All Begins
 f-3_selfsupport.pdf	Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix

APPENDIX B: Steering Committee/Group Officer and Service Committee Mentorship Assignments:

The following table illustrates the mentoring alignment –



Mentor Assignments 2019

Position	Mentor	Chair
GSR	Paul	Charlie
Intergroup	Kathy	Stuart
Group Chair	Rennie	John M
Secretary	Marilyn	Joe P
Treasurer	Chris	John R
Literature	David	Matt C
Newcomer	Lacey Kyle	TBD
Coffee		Nick C
Hospitality		Tracy F
Corrections	Melissa	Debbie
Treatment	James	Ashley
CPCPI	Tim	Cris