

**INTRODUCTION TO STUDY MATERIALS**

These notes and questions have been put together to help individuals review the Spring 1990 draft of *A Guide to Service*, and to use when planning study and review groups. Under each section are brief summary notes, touching the major points of each chapter. Also included are questions you or your group may wish to ask yourselves about how N.A. services work today in your locale, and how they might work.

The WSC Ad Hoc Committee on N.A. Service would like to know what you think about *A Guide to Service*. Line-by-line criticism will not be particularly helpful. What we need most is your evaluation of the *ideas* presented in the *Guide*. Any comments you have will be considered by the committee, whether they be general remarks or specific suggestions about what you think should be changed. Any comments should be sent to us at the following address:

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We will release final approval forms of the Twelve Concepts and *A Guide to Service* after we have reviewed all the input. In April 1991, we will release a final form of the Twelve Concepts, to be approved at the 1992 meeting of the World Service Conference. In September 1991, we will release a final draft of the remainder of *A Guide to Service*, for approval in 1993.

**FOREWORD**

**Page 1.** This note alerts readers in each country that the *Guide* is meant to be adapted to meet local needs. It is not meant to be imposed upon local and national communities.

**WHAT IS THE N.A. SERVICE  
STRUCTURE?**

**Pages 2-4.** This short chapter serves both as an introduction to the *Guide*, and as a short reference to the service structure. It begins by talking in general terms about the nature of the service structure and the principles which underlie its activities: the Twelve Traditions and the Twelve Concepts.

Following are descriptions of each level of service, the roles of the participants in those levels, the primary responsibilities of each element of the structure, and the relationships between those elements.

## BACKGROUND ON THE TWELVE CONCEPTS

*This is the article which accompanied the original April 1989 release of the Twelve Principles for N.A. Service, now known as the Twelve Concepts. The terminology has been updated to reflect the current draft of the concepts.*

Narcotics Anonymous is changing. In fact, it may be that we are now facing some of the most important changes we have ever seen in our history. We have experienced an explosion of growth in the last decade, the proportions of which are difficult to clearly appreciate. We have gone from an estimated 2,000 groups in 1982 to perhaps 15,000 groups today in more than fifty countries. That is a quantum leap.

During this exciting period of rapid growth, our world services have gone through a total transformation. A World Service Conference that was, as the Eighties dawned, searching for a basic direction and struggling with serious disunity problems, began to get focused and unified. The early Eighties saw the approval of several new pieces of literature, including our Basic Text. The mid-Eighties saw a whole new level of unity, as world-level trusted servants geared up for the humbling tasks ahead of them. The entire decade saw our World Service Office grow from a small one- or two-person shipping and receiving operation, to a businesslike world service center employing a full time staff of over forty people, with branch offices in London and Toronto.

The Nineties have brought with them something that is not new for us, either as individuals or as a fellowship, but something that never really gets easier to face. We have come to another period in which our way of doing things and of looking at things has begun to be challenged by an ever-growing number of us. There have been several heated controversies around major projects undertaken by world services, and the service community itself has seemed to many to be mired in inefficiency and indirection.

This essay is an attempt to look frankly at these problems, to put forth some thoughts about what may be causing them, and to point to some possible solutions. The time has come for a good inventory of our world services--to take a good look at our development over the years, in an effort to see how we got where we are today, and where we may need to go from here.

To some degree, a close examination of N.A.'s history will involve taking a look at some aspects of A.A.'s history. Though we are a distinct, autonomous fellowship that has evolved in directions of our own, we were modeled after A.A. from the beginning; we adapted their steps, their traditions, and most of the basic elements of their recovery program to our needs. There are some interesting parallels between their development and ours that bear close examination. We'll start out with a look

at the basic outline of A.A.'s historical development, and then take a good look at our own.

A.A. started out in 1935 when one alcoholic sat in another's living room, carrying a message of hope. They had no idea of what was to come. There was no fellowship, no book, no steps or traditions. There was just one alcoholic talking "the language of the heart" to another--something later poignantly described in N.A.'s Basic Text in the words, "The heart of N.A. beats when two addicts share their recovery." In 1935, the heartbeat that we were to inherit some twenty years later was just beginning its very faint pulse.

As the heartbeat grew stronger, and a group of recovering people began to form, the organizational structure began to take shape. Its earliest elements were a book and something called "The Alcoholic Foundation." The pioneers of A.A. had a dream that if they put some structures in place that preserved their most fundamental principles, perhaps the gift they'd been given could be shared on a much broader scale.

New groups formed slowly at first, keeping in close touch with the founders of the movement and the New York headquarters. In the early Forties, after some significant media exposure, they began to experience the kind of explosive growth that N.A. saw in the Eighties. Their "Big Book," their founders, and the Alcoholic Foundation were clearly at the center of this growth.

By the late Forties, as the founders looked ahead to a day when they would be gone, they began to think seriously about adopting a new set of principles for the fellowship that would preserve unity over the long haul, without any specific individuals at the helm of the movement. That's when they began to draft the Twelve Traditions and introduce them to the fellowship.

The N.A. reader must really pause for a minute to appreciate the significance of that fact. Never has there been a time when our fellowship has had to function without the Twelve Traditions to guide us. A.A. existed for *fifteen years* before their traditions were developed and adopted. During that time, the founders themselves provided the guidance. The task of persuading the fellowship that such principles were necessary was a major one for A.A.'s founders. It was no small step to add the traditions--a new body of principles of such far-reaching importance--to a proven program that most members felt worked just fine without them. Ultimately, the fellowship trusted the vision of its leadership, and the traditions took their place alongside the steps to form the core of the overall program.

In the early Fifties, another change of really grand proportions took place: A.A.'s General Service Conference was formed. Prior to April 1951, the Alcoholic Foundation (now called the A.A. General Service Board), guided and influenced by A.A.'s founders, made the major decisions for the fellowship. The role of the founders was to be in touch with the fellowship at large and with the trustees of the General Service Board, guiding and advising both. When one of the founders

became gravely ill, it became apparent that something would need to be there to replace them. It would have to be something that could play that same role: to be in close touch with the trustees, who were managing the day-to-day world service operation, and with the A.A. groups, whom world services existed to serve. Their solution was to form the General Service Conference to play that role of leadership and mediation.

Once again, the fellowship had to be educated and persuaded that there was a need for this move. They had gone along just fine without a conference for twenty years. They didn't know the trustees, or even what they or the General Service Office did, really, but they trusted them just fine. Wouldn't this conference politicize the fellowship? How could such broad-based decision-making possibly work in a fellowship scattered all over the globe?

The conference plan devised by the founders was carefully designed to leave the groups free to do what they are designed to do--carry the message--and yet provide a means by which the groups could choose their own representatives to guide the trustees in the implementation of world service business. The Conference Charter was a sort of "constitution" which laid out a balanced plan by which the fellowship could delegate its own representatives, who were in touch with the rank and file concerns of the fellowship, to guide the trustees as they managed world services.

By the early Sixties, with a few years' experience in striking all the delicate balances necessary to have efficient operation of world services, it had become clear that yet another set of principles would need to be drafted and offered to the fellowship. This new body of principle, called "The Twelve Concepts for World Service," carefully mapped out all the principles related to the balance of authority and responsibility for getting the work of the world service community done.

Before we move on to look at how the same kinds of issues developed for N.A., let's look at a general pattern in A.A.'s growth. They started from a central point and spread outward. The control over their world services was centralized from the beginning, and, after twenty years of growth, they had to work hard to persuade the fellowship to take the reigns of "ultimate authority" over world service operations.

Now let's take a similar look at N.A.'s development. Without clear written documentation or a history book about N.A. to guide us, we'll need to do the best we can based upon first-hand accounts available to us.

We know that other organizations calling themselves "Narcotics Anonymous" had sprung up in different parts of the country before ours did. Documents dating back to the Forties, and some from the Fifties and Sixties, show that we weren't the first or only organization to use this name. We are the only one remaining, however. So, for our purposes, we are discussing the movement that began in 1953 as a small collection of addicts in Sun Valley, California, and grew to become the Narcotics Anonymous of today.

N.A. began in Sun Valley in much the same way as it has since begun in other places: addicts who had gotten clean in A.A. banded together, seeking a closer identification than they had found in a fellowship geared for alcoholics. They borrowed the basic elements of the A.A. fellowship and modified them so that they would apply to addiction, regardless of the particular drug involved.

The A.A. program incorporates three separate bodies of principle: the steps, the traditions, and the Twelve Concepts for World Service. They call them the "three legacies": the principles of recovery, unity, and service. Some N.A. members have asked, "Why did we only adopt two?" The simple answer is that the Twelve Concepts had not yet been written in 1953, when N.A. was founded. The General Service Conference was still meeting as an experiment, not yet given final approval by the A.A. Fellowship. When those things were finally adopted by A.A., Narcotics Anonymous was still in its infancy. The handful of early groups had no use for a body of principle outlining in intricate detail the many specific aspects of running A.A.'s world service operation. The Twelve Concepts went unneeded and unnoticed by N.A. for many years.

The very first pioneering N.A. groups in Southern California had no place to write to or call for guidance in developing their groups. When they stabilized, they decided to provide that kind of service to the N.A. groups that might form in other places. They put together a pamphlet called *Narcotics Anonymous* (now commonly called "The Little White Booklet"), established a P.O. box and a telephone number, and became the "World Service Office" of N.A.

Growth was slow throughout the Sixties and Seventies, but the pattern of growth was clear. Addicts in A.A. in various cities who were seeking a greater common identification started N.A. groups. The difference between these groups and those initial groups in California is that the newer groups had a P.O. box to write to, a booklet to read from at meetings, and a phone number to call to get some shared experience.

In the mid-Seventies, the World Service Conference began meeting on the West Coast, trying to contact and include the known N.A. groups in a world service movement. In the late Seventies--fully twenty-five years after the first N.A. meeting was held--something of monumental importance happened. Work began on our Basic Text.

Up to that period, most N.A. groups had stronger ties to the local A.A. community than they had to the larger N.A. community. The effort to come together to write a text for N.A. was the most serious attempt our fellowship had made yet to unite and act as an autonomous, separate whole.

The late Seventies and early Eighties were marked by an attempt on the part of the growing world service movement to contact and unite all the various scattered groups of N.A. that had formed across the U.S. and in a few other countries. There was no functioning office as we know it today, though there was a central shipping

operation for our few pamphlets. There was no service network to bind the groups together as there is today. Our book was written in workshops held in various places around the U.S., and all members were invited to participate. Central management was minimal. Every attempt was made to make the broadest-based decisions possible, involving every group--every *member*, if possible.

In addition to the collection of addicts in the first years of recovery and the few members with more clean time, surely a loving God showed up for these sessions, because by 1982 we had a Basic Text approved by our World Service Conference. Our book bears the earmarks of the process used to write it--it sometimes reads like the cut-and-paste patchwork that such sessions involved--but the heart, soul, and voice of addicts was captured on paper for other addicts to read and find hope from.

A remarkable period followed. The book sold in large numbers almost immediately, providing the needed funds to expand and develop the World Service Office. The accomplishments of growth and expansion that characterized the Eighties stand as an inspiring monument to what can happen when we band together, pool our efforts, and actively seek to carry our message to a world thirsting for it. During the winter of 1989, the millionth copy of our Basic Text was sold.

So there is very much to celebrate. If we are experiencing some growing pains as a world services community, it's no wonder! We've been reeling with such rapid growth that we haven't really had time to sit down and ask ourselves just how our basic structure must change to accommodate the new, more complex kinds of issues we face. Perhaps that level of complexity has finally grown beyond the capacity of our arrangement of service units to effectively address it.

That is why a growing number of people in world services have been raising the discussion about adopting something like A.A.'s Conference Charter and Twelve Concepts for World Service. As our own world services community has gotten ever more deeply bogged down in the growing workload, and as we have come under more criticism for a decline in our efficiency and the quality of our work, the need for change has become clearer.

In 1983, a compilation report on how N.A. service had developed to that time was presented to the World Service Conference. So clearly was it a stop-gap measure that the conference called it "The *Temporary* Working Guide to our Service Structure." The following year, the WSC Ad Hoc Committee on N.A. Service was formed--then called the Select Committee--to further examine our service structure and make specific recommendations for change. It was immediately obvious to the committee that the task put to them was a monumental one, and would not be accomplished in a single year.

In 1985, and again in 1987, review drafts of the committee's work were distributed within the fellowship. They contained discussions of the direction in which the committee was heading, and were intended as vehicles to spark further discussion and input toward a final draft.

Throughout this time, many members raised questions about those Twelve Concepts for World Service that our fellowship had not been ready for all those years ago. Would they now have more application to us, especially considering the degree to which our world services have evolved? As the committee has studied that question over the last couple of years, two things have become obvious. One is that those concepts were very specific to the A.A. structure. We are a different fellowship. There does not appear to be any way that we could simply adapt the language of the concepts to apply to N.A. as we did with the steps and traditions.

The second obvious thing about the concepts is that, in studying them, we see our current problems discussed in detail, with explicit solutions laid out in clear terms. Even though it isn't realistic to just take them as they are, neither is it wise to simply ignore them during this important period of growth and change for us.

By way of illustration, let's have a look at a few quotes selected from the book *Twelve Concepts for World Service* written by Bill Wilson and published by A.A. World Services, Inc. in 1961. Our quotes and page numbers are taken from the 1987-1988 edition. See if anything sounds familiar.

It is self-evident that the thousands of A.A. groups and the many thousands of A.A. members, scattered as they are all over the globe, cannot *of themselves* actually manage and conduct our manifold world services.... An ultimate authority and responsibility in the A.A. groups for world services--if that is all there were to it--could not amount to anything. Nothing could be accomplished on that basis alone. In order to get effective action, the groups must delegate the actual operational authority to chosen service representatives who are fully empowered to speak and act for them.... The principle of amply delegated authority and responsibility to "trusted servants" must be implicit from the top to the bottom of our active structure of service. This is the clear implication of A.A.'s Tradition Two. (p. 10)

We ought to trust our world servants... otherwise no effective leadership is possible.... Knowing that theirs is the ultimate authority, the groups are sometimes tempted to instruct their delegates exactly how to vote upon certain matters in the conference. Because they hold the ultimate authority, there is no doubt that the... groups have the *right* to do this. If they insist, they *can* give directives to their delegates on any and all A.A. matters.

But good management seldom means the full exercise of a stated set of ultimate rights. For example, were the groups to carry their instruction of delegates to extremes, then we would be proceeding on the false theory that group opinion in most world service matters would somehow be much superior to conference opinion. Practically speaking, this could almost never be the case. There would be very few questions indeed that "instructed" delegates could better settle than a conference acting on the spot with full facts and debate to guide it. (pp. 13-14)

So long as our world services function reasonably well--and there should always be charity for occasional mistakes--then "trust" must be our watchword, otherwise we shall wind up leaderless. (p. 15)



If... the conference ever begins to refuse the trustees vote in it... we shall have thrown all past experience to the winds. The principle of allowing a proper voting participation would have to be painfully relearned.... Certainly our trustees... are no less conscientious, experienced, [or wise] than the delegates. Is there any good reason why their votes are undesirable? Clearly there is none. (pp. 20-21)

These quotes, and the entire text of the document they were drawn from, present a stark and challenging picture for us. Many of our most heated debates in world services today center around just such issues as these. Interestingly, A.A.'s evolution to the point at which these things were being written by its co-founder was from centralization to greater democratization. They were exploring the realistic parameters that should define their move toward fellowshipwide participation in services. Our evolution to the point at which these are our glaring world service issues is in the other direction. Our experiment with full "participatory democracy" is straining, and we're being forced to learn about trust and delegation.

The ad hoc committee's work is now nearing completion, and the recommendations we're making include a call for greater levels of just those things: trust and delegation. We have studied the N.A. structure with great scrutiny, and we have studied a great deal of source material, including the Twelve Concepts for World Service. We have completed work on a document called "The Twelve Concepts for N.A. Service," a document which forms the basis for the rest of our work on *A Guide to Service in Narcotics Anonymous*.

The Twelve Concepts of Service are not a simple restatement of A.A.'s concepts. They instead represent a concerted effort to glean the pertinent principles from A.A.'s experience, applying them to our own fellowship's needs. Rather than focusing solely on world service, N.A.'s Twelve Concepts are intended to apply to the entire service structure. And we have added concepts that have grown out of N.A.'s own experience.

These concepts, and our drafts of *A Guide to Service*, are presented to the fellowship in the hopes that we will all put aside our preconceived notions, and consider with an open mind just what kinds of changes the adoption of these documents would bring about. We are convinced that the changes would be forward-moving, positive ones that would stimulate the development of our fellowship in the direction it must go to effectively handle the challenges it now faces, and will face in the years to come.

**STUDY MATERIALS--  
TWELVE CONCEPTS FOR N.A. SERVICE**

1. The responsibility and authority for N.A. services rests ultimately with the N.A. groups.
2. The N.A. groups delegate to the service structure the responsibility to develop and maintain services on behalf of N.A. as a whole.
3. Each service responsibility must be matched by a carefully defined service authority.
4. For each responsibility, a single point of decision and accountability should be clearly defined.
5. Group conscience is the spiritual means by which a loving God influences our decisions.
6. Leadership qualities are highly valued, and should be carefully considered when selecting trusted servants.
7. Our service boards and committees ought to be given the ability to determine which decisions fall within their own defined authority and which will be brought back to the delegating body for further consultation.
8. All those entrusted with substantial responsibility for our services should take part in the decision-making processes affecting those services.
9. Our service boards and committees have the responsibility to carefully consider all viewpoints in their decision-making processes.
10. Any member of our service structure may, without fear of reprisal, make petition for the redress of a personal grievance.
11. At all levels, the N.A. service structure should take care never to accumulate funds beyond those sufficient to operate.
12. Our structure at all levels is one of service, never of government. No one element of our service structure should have unqualified authority over any other.

### FIRST CONCEPT (PP. 6-7)

**"The responsibility and authority for N.A. services rests ultimately with the N.A. groups."** "The First Concept is being applied to the fullest when groups are actively supportive of the service structure they have created, and when that structure is open and responsive to the guidance of the groups, both direct and indirect." (7.32-34)

#### Study and discussion questions

1. Do you feel your GSR is familiar enough with the service structure to make good decisions at area committee meetings? What does this have to do with the First Concept?
2. Does your group have any way of letting your area service committee know whether it's meeting your needs? How?
3. Does your group have any impact on World Service Conference decisions? How?
4. How does your group fulfill its responsibility to support the work of the service structure at the area level? The region? The world?

### SECOND CONCEPT (PP. 7-8)

**"The N.A. groups delegate to the service structure the responsibility to develop and maintain services on behalf of N.A. as a whole."** The First Concept affirms the ultimate service authority of the groups. Yet the affairs of the service structure are too complex for groups to become directly involved in them without diverting the groups from their own responsibilities. "How, then, can the groups give their attention to these responsibilities *and* carry the message to the addict who still suffers?" (7.41-8.1)

#### Study and discussion questions

1. Does your group have difficulty in discussing area, regional, and world service issues during your business meeting, in addition to the other issues your group needs to discuss to help carry the message?
2. What responsibilities does your group delegate to your GSR?
3. Can we trust other N.A. members enough to delegate the kind of responsibility described in this concept?
4. How can area, regional, and world services *serve* unless your group delegates responsibility to them?

### THIRD CONCEPT (PP. 8-9)

**"Each service responsibility must be matched by a carefully defined service authority."** "When we give responsibilities to our trusted servants, we also grant them the authority necessary to carry out those responsibilities.... We don't ask a member to chair a committee, and then expect that member to come back to ask our permission or guidance on every decision that must be made in carrying out the work.... We look carefully at the amount of responsibility we are placing on a given board, committee, or trusted servant, and then match it with the authority necessary to fulfill it." (8.33-34, 9.4-6, 8.34-36)

**Authority.** "By *authority*, we do not mean the power to tell someone else what to do.... By *authority*, rather, we mean permission to exercise judgment and take action to accomplish the service tasks for which one is responsible." (8.37, 8.41-9.2)

#### Study and discussion questions

1. What does your group expect its GSR to do? How much authority, if any, does your group delegate to its GSR?
2. What do the subcommittees of your area service committee do? Can they do that work without being delegated any authority?
3. What is "a carefully defined service authority"? How do you "match" that to the job you want done? How much delegated authority is too much? Too little?

### FOURTH CONCEPT (PP. 9-10)

**"For each responsibility, a single point of decision and accountability should be clearly defined."** "Consultation and careful consideration... [of] many perspectives... go into good decisions. But ultimately a decision must be made, and someone must be charged with the responsibility to make it." (10.7-10)

Why a *single* point? "Experience suggests that disharmony as well as a lack of accountability results when we expect two boards or committees, or two trusted servants, to have final say in a particular decision." (10.23-25)

**Accountability:** "The defined point of decision is also the point of accountability; if the delegating body needs to offer redirection for the project, those directions can be given straight to whatever single point of decision has been defined." (10.15-18)

#### Study and discussion questions

1. What is "a single point of decision and accountability"?
2. Look again at Concepts One, Two, and Three. How would you define a "single point of decision and accountability" for a particular field of service--say, phonline administration--including in your definition the process for delegating the responsibility, and the process for maintaining the accountability?
3. If no single point of *decision* is defined for a service job--say, coordination of H&I panels--is it possible to hold anyone *accountable* for that job?

### FIFTH CONCEPT (PP. 10-12)

**"Group conscience is the spiritual means by which a loving God influences our decisions."** People living spiritually-oriented lives usually pray and meditate before making major decisions. When addicts who have experienced recovery--whose *individual* consciences have been revived in the course of working the steps--come together to consider questions, they generate a *group* conscience. With a properly aligned conscience, good decisions can be made. "The exercise of group conscience is the act by which our members bring their spiritual recovery directly to bear in resolving issues affecting N.A. services. As such, it is a subject which must necessarily command our most intent consideration." (10.36-39)

"Group conscience is not a decision-making mechanism." (11.19) It's important to *say* that because, functionally, the two are separate acts; in order to be accomplished at all, they must be accomplished separately. With individuals, it's *prayer* first, then the *decision*. First, we look inward, and get ourselves turned in the right direction; then, we look forward and chart our course--but the two acts are distinct from one another. If we tell ourselves that "decision-making" and "prayer" are interchangeable terms for the same act, we may lose our ability to do either very well. The same applies to our understanding of the "group conscience" concept and collective decision-making in Narcotics Anonymous.

#### **Study and discussion questions**

1. Read N.A.'s Twelfth Tradition. How does the Fifth Concept fulfill the Twelfth Tradition?
2. Read N.A.'s Second Tradition. How does the Fifth Concept fulfill the Second Tradition? Is there a conflict between the Second Tradition and the Fifth Concept?
3. What do we mean when we say that N.A. is a spiritual society? How does a "spiritual society" approach the decision-making process?
4. Should the statement, "Group conscience is not, in itself, a decision-making mechanism" be stated as part of the wording of the Fifth Concept itself?

### SIXTH CONCEPT (PP. 12-13)

**"Leadership qualities are highly valued, and should be carefully considered when selecting trusted servants."** "No group or society can function well without able leadership. N.A. is no exception... Our service structure can only be as good as the individuals who serve in it." (12.6-7, 13.12-13.)

#### Study and discussion questions

1. Read N.A.'s Second Tradition. Does N.A. have leaders? Does a fellowship that makes collective decisions *need* leaders?
2. Can a group function without leaders? Can a committee?
3. What is the difference in style between leaders who *serve* and leaders who *govern*?
4. The essay on this concept says that "N.A. leadership begins at the group level, where many thousands of group service representatives are chosen every year.... If we are vigilant in choosing stable, qualified leaders at this level of service, the remainder of the structure will almost certainly be sound." (12.13-14, 15-16.) Discuss this. What responsibility does this place on the group?
5. Discuss how the value of leadership is affected by the Twelfth Tradition.

### SEVENTH CONCEPT (P. 13)

**"Our service boards and committees ought to be given the ability to determine which decisions fall within their own defined authority and which will be brought back to the delegating body for further consultation."**

"Concept Three calls for the delegation of authority in a measure that matches the delegation of responsibility, and Concept Four notes that the final point of delegated authority should be singular. The Seventh Concept places the responsibility on each service entity to determine whether or not a specific decision or action falls within one's own sphere of authority as established under those two concepts." (13.23-38.)

#### Study and discussion questions

1. Look again at Concepts Three and Four. Could an area service committee effectively delegate authority to one of its subcommittees, and still expect the subcommittee's leaders to consult the ASC before they made decisions?
2. Does your area committee give its officers and subcommittees the ability to make the kinds of decisions described in the Seventh Concept? Why, or why not? Have your area's arrangements helped its trusted servants serve more effectively, or less effectively?
3. Is it reasonable to trust N.A.'s trusted servants with this kind of authority? Is it *wise* to give them this much discretion?

### **EIGHTH CONCEPT (PP. 14-15)**

**"All those entrusted with substantial responsibility for our services should take part in the decision-making processes affecting those services."** "Our service boards and committees represent the best cross-section of N.A. perspective and experience. Each participant's contribution to the discussion is important. Clearly, GSRs should participate fully in area committee discussions. The general officers and subcommittee chairs on that area committee bring a different experience base, and therefore a different perspective to the team. It's the conscience, the perspective, and the voice of all these servants together that make for the strongest decision-making process available to us." (14.20-26.)

"The Eighth Concept, with its emphasis on equalizing the relative weight of each voice on the team, puts the spiritual principle of anonymity into practice. Though we don't *all* participate in *every* decision, we all have the right to participate in the decision-making process in proportion to the level of responsibility we bear." (15.1-4.)

#### **Study and discussion questions**

1. Who votes at meetings of your area service committee? GSRs? Officers and subcommittee chairs? Anyone attending? Why?
2. Who votes at your group's business meetings? Members? Group officers? Why?
3. Let's say that your group delegates responsibility for area services to your ASC, and also grants the ASC authority to make the decisions involved in carrying those services out. Would the vote of one class of trusted servant bear more weight in the ASC than the vote of another?
4. Why would it be important to include *all* ASC members in discussion and voting on ASC business? Practically speaking? Spiritually speaking?

### **NINTH CONCEPT (P. 15)**

**"Our service boards and committees have the responsibility to carefully consider all viewpoints in their decision-making processes."** "This concept acknowledges that all sides of an issue ought to be carefully considered by a service body before a decision is made." (15.7-8.)

"Members may at times feel that decisions made by those with delegated authority have the potential to be harmful to the fellowship, or are not consistent with the spirit of our steps, traditions, or concepts for service. Voicing dissent at such times is not simply the right of those members, it is their responsibility." (15.15-18.)

"This concept encourages us to continue to consult group conscience when the wisdom of a decision is questioned. On the other hand, once thorough debate has been held, and a decision still stands, the time comes for all to accept and cooperate with the final decision." (15.27-30.)

#### **Study and discussion questions**

1. Why is it important to make sure *all* viewpoints are considered when making service decisions?
2. How do you know when it's time to speak up against the decision of the majority in your group?
3. When is it time to accept that the group has made a decision you wouldn't have chosen yourself, and surrender to the group conscience?



### **TENTH CONCEPT (PP. 15-16)**

**"Any member of our service structure may, without fear of reprisal, make petition for the redress of a personal grievance."** "The Tenth Concept provides an important safeguard in the overall design of our services." (15.39-40.)

"The Tenth Concept is designed especially to protect those who exercise the Ninth Concept. Together, the Ninth and Tenth Concepts support an atmosphere in which all participants in a service board or committee feel free to express themselves frankly on the matters at hand." (16.3-6.)

"This concept is applied in various ways, depending upon the particular kind of service body in which the issue arises. An area or regional committee might consider such a matter during its sharing session." (16.15-17.)

#### **Study and discussion questions**

1. Do you always feel free to speak your conscience at meetings of your area service committee? Do you know of anyone, in your area or elsewhere, who has been afraid to speak freely?
2. How do you know, personally, when you have a personal grievance that should be discussed with your group? Assuming your motives are sound, how would you like the group to handle such a grievance?
3. Look at the description of the sharing session (pp. 50-52) in the chapter on area services. Talk about how the sharing session could be used to consider a personal grievance.

### ELEVENTH CONCEPT (PP. 16-18)

**"At all levels, the N.A. service structure should take care never to accumulate funds beyond those sufficient to operate."** N.A. is a spiritual, "non-material" program. "The essential act that defines N.A. is one addict freely helping another apply the principles of recovery, asking nothing in return... N.A. groups, as the primary vehicles for carrying this message, function best when they are not diverted by conflicts over money... Groups that do not take on the distraction of managing large sums of money can give their full attention to freely giving away the spiritual message of N.A." (16.31-33, 36-37, 39-41.) This concept is not a statement that no money is needed, but merely of *prudence*.

Supporting other levels of service should be a priority, as well as funding our own projects, so that the N.A. message can be carried in every way possible. "We set budgets that are appropriate to the size and nature of the tasks at our level of service, we establish a modest reserve so that those services are not interrupted if unforeseen financial problems arise, and we pass some along to other levels of service." (18.13-16.)

#### Study and discussion questions

1. Where does the money for area services come from? Regional services? The World Service Conference? The World Service Office? Where should it come from?
2. Does your area committee have a list of budget priorities? How does it decide which projects will be funded, and which will not?
3. Rank the following group budget priorities:
  - \* N.A. literature;
  - \* refreshments;
  - \* meeting-hall rent;
  - \* group reserve; and,
  - \* service donations.

Why did you list them in the order you did? Does your group have standing budget priorities, or does it handle such questions from month-to-month?

### TWELFTH CONCEPT (PP. 18-19)

**"Our structure at all levels is one of service, never of government. No one element of our service structure should have unqualified authority over any other."** "The area committee has the authority to develop and implement an approach to H&I, for example, without asking every member of every group in the area for his input on just exactly how to do that... On the other hand, if the area committee claimed authority to tell the groups how to conduct group meetings, the area would then be attempting to *govern*." (18.33-35, 19.2-3.)

"But there's another side to the Twelfth Concept... The groups cannot get their full measure of service if they constantly 'pull rank' on the committee, giving it explicit instructions on every detail of its work... Even *ultimate* authority... must be tempered--'qualified,' if you will--by trust and common sense." (19.18, 21-23, 24-25, 25-26.)

#### Study and discussion questions

1. What's the difference between *serving* and *governing*?
2. Does an ASC chairperson, responsible to enforce rules of order at area committee meetings, *govern* the area committee?
3. N.A. groups bear *ultimate* responsibility and authority for N.A. services. Should groups exercise *unqualified* authority over their area committee? How would this affect the delivery of services? Would this give the area's trusted servants the room they need to make timely, effective service decisions? If not, where would you draw the line between the exercise of *ultimate* authority and *unqualified* authority?

"No element of the service structure has the authority to govern another; all, rather, serve together as a team, striving toward a common goal, that no addict seeking recovery need die without having the chance to find a new way of life." (19.27-29.)

## **SPECIAL WORKERS AND THE EIGHTH CONCEPT**

Conspicuously absent in the current drafts of the Twelve Concepts and *A Guide to Service* are references to special workers and their role in our service structure. This omission warrants further explanation, especially since the first draft of the Twelve Principles of Service mentioned them repeatedly.

After hearing input from other world-level trusted servants at a session in Albuquerque, New Mexico, the ad hoc committee was unable to reach any sort of consensus on the appropriate role of the special worker in the N.A. service structure, particularly with regard to decision-making. The basic question we are faced with is, do the Twelve Concepts imply that special workers with significant responsibilities ought to take part in the decision-making process at their level of service, or does the nature of the employer/employee relationship preclude such participation? Discussions of this issue within the WSC Ad Hoc Committee on N.A. Service have run the gamut of possibilities, from full participation of special workers as voting conference participants, to *no* participation whatsoever in decision-making processes, to allowing a degree of participation equivalent in some way to the degree of responsibility each special worker is charged with, to simply leaving the decision to the best judgment of each individual service committee faced with the issue.

Discussions have been extensive, but the committee has still been unable to reach a consensus all of its members could support. Since our current work on *A Guide to Service* and the Twelve Concepts stands independent of any decision to be made regarding the role of special workers, all references to special workers have been dropped from the drafts for the time being.

We hope to gain whatever additional guidance may be available on this subject from the World Service Conference and from the fellowship at large. However, the committee expects that we will all have to spend more time actually utilizing special workers, gaining more experience and perspective as we go, before a conclusion to this discussion will be possible.

## STUDY MATERIALS-- DEVELOPING N.A. COMMUNITIES

This chapter was created in recognition of the fact that a majority of the *Guide* is aimed at well-developed, rather than developing, national N.A. communities. This chapter addresses the development of a national community in three stages, from the first group, to the first service committee, to the formation of a national coalition of local N.A. groups and committees.

**Note:** While most of the groups reviewing the Spring 1990 *Guide* draft are located in the United States, the groups who will need this chapter most are those *outside* North America. We encourage American readers to keep this in mind as they review this chapter and prepare their comments for the WSC Ad Hoc Committee on N.A. Service.

Readers who are members of relatively young national communities are especially encouraged to share their remarks concerning this chapter. Do we hit the mark? Given all the other material in the rest of the *Guide*--including the chapter beginning on page 68, "National Services"--is there anything else that should be included in *this* chapter?

### THE FIRST GROUP, PAGE 20

Members of the first group in a new N.A. country, lacking support or advice from other experienced N.A. members locally, are encouraged to write N.A. World Services for direct assistance and for instructions on how to contact experienced N.A. members in neighboring countries.

### INITIAL N.A. SERVICE DEVELOPMENT-- FUNCTION, NOT FORM, PAGES 20-21

This section looks at the primary functions of an area service committee--literature, public information, phonelines or central contact points, H&I, and internal support--but in the special context of a new, still-developing national N.A. community. Emphasis is placed on the *functions* that must be fulfilled, and *form* is deliberately de-emphasized. The importance of this has been borne out time and again in conversations with those having first-hand exposure to the needs of developing national communities.

## THE NATIONAL COMMUNITY GROWS, PAGES 21-22

Again, the emphasis is on function, not form, and the basic question is, "how does N.A. [in a given country] combine its experience and strength, maintain its unity, and carry its message further?" The basic functions which need to be accounted for are:

**1. Assemblies**, to provide for contact and consultation among GSRs; if some sort of national committee has been established, these assemblies would also provide the committee with direction.

**2. Central service coordination**, handling translations and new literature, and responding to requests for information or other services from nationally-organized agencies. GSRs can either divide the work at hand among themselves, or create a national committee.

**3. Relations with N.A. worldwide**, providing for broad exposure of the entire national community to contacts with N.A. in other nations and with world services.

"The regional-type services described elsewhere in the *Guide*--or the most important of them, anyway--don't have to be administered by a regional service committee. And a national N.A. community doesn't need to wait until it can support a fully-staffed national office before it can start addressing the needs of groups nationwide. Remember, it's the *function* that's important, *not the form*, so keep your priorities in order. It works--but not overnight."

## STUDY MATERIALS-- THE N.A. GROUP

### INTRODUCTION, P. 23

Group autonomy is cited as a guiding principle for groups. "In N.A., we encourage *unity*, not *uniformity*."

The tone of the group chapter is deliberately non-directive. Given some basic criteria, the N.A. group is perfectly capable of making its own decisions for itself. This chapter offers successful experience, not instruction.

**Question:** Does your group do things differently than other groups in your area? If it does, why do you think it's important?

### WHAT IS AN N.A. GROUP?, PP. 23-24

First are six points describing what N.A. groups are. These points are based on those traditions most relevant to the identity of a Narcotics Anonymous group.

**Question:** These identifying points talk about N.A. being for addicts. Is it necessary for Narcotics Anonymous to highlight, from time to time, its focus on *drug* addiction?

*Groups* and *meetings*--is there a difference? **Question:** Do you think it matters?

Some groups host a single weekly meeting, some host more than one.

**Questions:** What could be the benefits to your group of sponsoring more than one meeting? What could be the benefits to your N.A. community? To addicts in your neighborhood? What could be the drawbacks? Do multi-meeting groups compromise our tradition of group autonomy?

N.A. groups, being the foundation of the N.A. service structure, "are responsible for making decisions fundamentally affecting the identity of Narcotics Anonymous."

**Questions:** What decisions of this sort does the *Guide* mention? Do N.A. groups take those kinds of decisions today?

The importance of group registration. **Questions:** How would your group benefit by being registered? How does N.A. as a whole benefit by your group being registered?

Specialized groups provide additional identification, but same focus: recovery. All N.A. meetings are open to any addict who wishes to attend. **Questions:** Does your community have any meetings like this? Do you think these types of meetings are useful?

### **WHAT IS A "HOME GROUP"?, PP. 24-25**

Basic definition of the "home group" concept. Not universal, and not required--but many communities find "home groups" useful. **Questions:** Are there "home groups" in your area? Do you think "home groups" are of benefit to personal recovery? To a group's ability to carry the message?

### **WHO CAN BE A MEMBER?, P. 25**

Any drug addict can be a member of N.A., and, if he desires, of any N.A. group he chooses.

### **WHAT ARE "OPEN" AND "CLOSED" MEETINGS?, P. 25-26**

"Closed" meetings are for addicts only, or those who think they might have a drug problem. **Question:** Why do you think "closed" meetings are the norm in many places?

"Open" meetings are open to anyone who wishes to attend.

**Question:** Can you think of ways in which open meetings might help your group develop closer ties with the surrounding community?

### **WHERE CAN WE HOLD N.A. MEETINGS?, PP. 26-27**

The section offers criteria to consider when deciding where to hold N.A. meetings.

Considerations for meeting attendance by addicts with additional needs are highlighted. **Question:** Has your group spent time talking about how to make your meetings more accessible to those with additional needs?

**Questions:** In your community, have there been meetings held in members' homes, or in treatment centers, clubhouses, etc.? What kinds of problems have you encountered with any of these locations?

### **WHAT KIND OF MEETING FORMAT CAN WE USE?, P. 27**

This section lists a variety of the most commonly used formats.

### **DEVELOPING YOUR FORMAT, P. 28**

**Questions:** What are the needs of your individual group? What sort of format works best for you? As meetings in your community have grown, have meeting formats changed?



### WHAT KINDS OF LITERATURE SHOULD WE USE?, P. 28

Criteria to consider in deciding what kinds of literature to read in a recovery meeting, and what sorts of material to make available on the literature table at a meeting. **Question:** What literature do you have at your meeting?

### WHAT IS A GROUP BUSINESS MEETING?, PP. 28-29

Questions a group might ask itself in considering how to run a meeting that more effectively carries the N.A. recovery message.

Business meetings are usually held before or after the regular recovery meeting. **Questions:** When does your group hold its business meetings? How often does it hold them? How does your group conduct its business? Would changes in the style of your business meeting help your group function better?

### HOW DOES THE WORK GET DONE?, PP. 29-30

Setting up chairs, making refreshments... all the things a group does in hosting a meeting. Who handles it? Officers, and *everyone*, even new members--that's part of how a group stays self-supporting.

### HOW DO WE CHOOSE GROUP OFFICERS?, P. 30

A few criteria for group members to consider in selecting trusted servants. **Question:** How does your group choose group officers?

### WHAT OFFICERS DOES A GROUP NEED?, PP. 30-33

Job descriptions for group secretary, treasurer, GSR, and alternate GSR.

**Questions:** What is a *regional assembly*? (Look ahead to the description of the regional assembly, which appears on pages 63 and 64.) Would your GSR's participation in such a regional assembly keep your group in more direct contact with N.A. services nationwide?

### WHAT ABOUT ROTATION?, P. 33

**Questions:** Is rotation important? What about the balance provided by long-term involvement?

### WHAT RESPONSIBILITIES DOES AN N.A. GROUP HAVE?, P. 33

An N.A. group is responsible to carry the message in its meetings, and to take part in the continuing evolution of N.A. as a whole. **Question:** How does *your* group fulfill these responsibilities?

### **HOW CAN OUR GROUP SUPPORT OTHER N.A. SERVICES?, P. 34**

Groups support other N.A. services by sending stable, active GSRs into the service structure, and by providing service funds. **Questions:** Is too much money in the group treasury a dangerous thing? How much is too much?

A plan for group financial support of N.A. services is described, one that differs from our current plan. Today, our service literature suggests that groups give all their extra funds to their area committee; if the area committee has any extra, they give it to the region, and the region to the world. *A Guide to Service* suggests that groups contribute funds directly to each level of service. **Questions:** What advantages could this have? What disadvantages?

### **HOW CAN OUR GROUP BETTER SERVE OUR COMMUNITY?, PP. 34-35**

The N.A. group is part of the larger community around it. As a member of the community, it has certain responsibilities. **Question:** How does your group serve the community?

### **HOW CAN OUR GROUP SOLVE ITS PROBLEMS?, P. 35**

A group's most effective problem-solving tool can be found in the revived conscience of recovering group members--in its group conscience. Other sources of information that can serve to better inform that group conscience are cited.

**Questions:** What kinds of problems has your group encountered? How does it solve them?

## STUDY MATERIALS— THE AREA SERVICE COMMITTEE

### INTRODUCTION, PP. 37-38

The kinds of work done by area committees.

The division of labor between the group and the area committee helps each be more effective at what it does best.

For newly formed area committees: *easy does it.*

### THE AREA COMMITTEE AND OTHER N.A. SERVICES, P. 38

Relationships between the group and the area, and between the area and regional, national, and world services.

### AREA COMMITTEE PARTICIPANTS, P. 38

Three groups of participants: GSRs, officers, and subcommittee chairpersons.

**Questions:** What does the Eighth Concept for N.A. Service say about the participation of GSRs, officers, and subcommittee chairpersons in the area committee? How does your area define participation? What are the benefits of full participation for all these members? What are the drawbacks?

### GENERAL OFFICERS, PP. 39-41

Job descriptions for area chairperson, vice chairperson, secretary, treasurer, and *regional committee members*, or RCMs.

RCMs serve a function similar to that fulfilled today by area service representatives. The name has been changed because the focus of the RCM's responsibilities has been shifted. The *Guide* does not portray them primarily as representing the area in voting matters, but as participants in the regional service resource team.

**Questions:** How are RCMs the same as today's ASRs? How are they different? How is the regional committee itself, as described in *A Guide to Service*, different than today's RSC? (You may want to hold off on lengthy discussion of this subject until you get into the chapter on the regional committee itself.)

## **SUBCOMMITTEES, PP. 41-45**

The range of subcommittee services offered by well-developed area committees is described. Newer areas will probably not be able to offer the full range of services described.

Note that no area subcommittees are described for policy or literature review. Pages 45 through 47 provide a fuller discussion of area committee policy and guidelines. A different literature development process, at least for N.A. in the United States, is detailed in the *Guide* addendum on American national services, which begins on page 83. Groups and members will still be involved in the process, but in a different way. **Questions:** Does your ASC have a policy subcommittee? A literature review subcommittee? What purpose do they serve? How would the work they do today be addressed if your area no longer had them?

Under outreach subcommittees, reference is made to addicts and groups who "are isolated by factors other than geography--social, economic, and cultural factors, for instance." **Questions:** Do you know of addicts or groups who are isolated from the rest of your N.A. community by such factors? How might your community reach out to them more effectively?

Under the discussion of meeting lists, mention is made of excluding certain N.A. meetings from the list. **Questions:** Has your area ever done such a thing? Why, or why not? What criteria has it used in making its decision?

## **ELECTIONS AND ROTATION, P. 45**

Generally describes ASC officer and subcommittee chairperson election. Also discusses the practice of rotation, the reasons behind it, and the need to counterbalance rotation with continuity. **Questions:** Does your area practice rotation? Why, or why not? How does your area maintain continuity of service experience in the ASC and its subcommittees?

## **AREA COMMITTEE POLICY AND GUIDELINES, PP. 45-47**

Area committees can get bogged down in policy and guidelines discussions, and become distracted from the work at hand. This section describes tools to help manage those discussions effectively.

The Twelve Concepts: tailor-made resources for policy questions.

Reflection on N.A.'s primary purpose.

The log of area policy actions--so that, once a policy decision is made, it doesn't have to be made again later.

**Questions:** Has your area been sidetracked by policy questions from time to time? How could the tools described here help put your area back on line?

Remarks on area guidelines, sample guidelines, and ad hoc committees established to adapt the samples to the area's own needs. **Questions:** Does your area committee have guidelines? Does it need them?

### **AREA INVENTORY, PP. 47-48**

Annually, many areas take time "to stop, consider their actions and attitudes, and rededicate themselves to their ideals." This section describes particular questions for an area inventory, how to prepare for the inventory, and how to "make amends" if the inventory calls for them. **Questions:** Does your area service committee do an annual inventory? Would an annual inventory help your area committee serve more effectively?

### **PARTICIPATION, PP. 48-49**

Dealing with lagging participation in area services--reasons for it, and ways to more effectively draw N.A. members into service. **Question:** How well-supported are your area committee's services?

The second complete paragraph on page 49 (beginning with line 9) acknowledges that some groups will not be interested in supporting area services, but asserts that the area committee has a responsibility to serve such groups anyway. **Questions:** Does your area have groups that send neither GSRs nor money to the ASC? How has your ASC dealt with these groups?

### **AREA BUDGETING, P. 49**

Basic remarks on a useful tool in administering area services.

### **OTHER FUNDING CONSIDERATIONS, PP. 49-50**

Area committees can support regional and national services with their surplus funds, in addition to funds contributed by groups for those services.

Maintaining a single account for all area money. **Questions:** Is this how your area handles its money? If not, do you think this method would serve your area better? Why, or why not?

Discussion of fundraising vs. group contributions--not black and white, but not completely grey, either. **Questions:** Does your area raise funds for service through dances, raffles, or other activities? How has this affected your area?

### **THE MONTHLY MEETING, P. 50**

A general description of the meeting format. (A sample format appears on page 75.)

### THE SHARING SESSION, PP. 50-52

Open forum, brainstorming--whatever you call it, it's a more relaxed way of dealing with general issues than the more formal part of an area business meeting. The sharing session is a time when a group conscience can be formed that will later inform the committee's vote on particular motions.

**Questions:** Does your area have a sharing session? Do the groups in your area need an opportunity to discuss challenges and solutions they've encountered? How do you think a sharing session would benefit your area committee?

### AREA COMMITTEES IN RURAL AREAS, P. 52

Area committees in rural districts function differently than big city areas. How? **Discuss.**

### LEARNING DAYS, WORKSHOPS, PP. 52-53

Tools for increasing local members' awareness of N.A. services.

### GROWING AREA COMMITTEES, P. 53

Sometimes an area committee grows to the point where it needs to divide in order to function effectively. **Questions:** How do you know when your area has reached that point? Is there such a thing as a "bad" reason for an area division?

### CREATING NEW AREA COMMITTEES, PP. 54-55

When forming a new area committee where no committee has served before, it's *first things first*. **Question:** What was it like when your area first formed?

## STUDY MATERIALS-- THE REGIONAL SERVICE COMMITTEE

### INTRODUCTION, P. 57

The regional committee is described as "a service *resource* group rather than a service *delivery* group," composed primarily of RCMs (regional committee members). Other participants are sometimes added to the committee.

The model for regional services described here differs in many ways from the model currently in place in many regions. Some regions act like large areas, duplicating services provided more effectively by area committees.

This chapter describes the regional service committee as having a function distinct from that of the area committee. Rather than providing direct services like phonelines, H&I meetings, and the like, the "new region" brings together the most experienced area-level trusted servants to form a service resource that all the groups and areas can tap. Keep this new regional service model in mind as you read and discuss your way through the rest of this chapter.

### HOW THE REGIONAL COMMITTEE WORKS, PP. 57-58

Regional committees usually have no standing subcommittees; the kind of work they do is done best by all their members together. Regional officers are elected each year from among the current RCMs, and continue to serve as RCMs. **Question:** How do you think this arrangement would work in your region? Does your region *need* subcommittees?

### REGIONAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS, PP. 58-59

**Questions:** What would an RCM do? How would she link her area to other areas? To the region? How does she link national services to her area and groups?

### REGIONAL RESOURCE ASSIGNMENTS, P. 59

RCMs are assigned particular fields of service--P.I., H&I, and the like--with which to familiarize themselves. They serve as resources to the region's areas in their special fields. **Questions:** Would resource assignments serve a useful function in your region? How would this differ from the current structure in your region?

### CONFERENCE DELEGATE, PP. 59-60

The conference delegate described in the *Guide* is similar to today's regional service representative, or RSR. The name has been changed for the same reason the *Guide* talks about RCMs instead of ASRs--the delegate is primarily a participant in the National Service Conference, responsible to act in the best interests of N.A. as a whole, rather than being primarily a representative of his region's interests. **Questions:** What does a conference delegate do? How does your region currently view the responsibility of the RSR?

### THE SHARING SESSION, PP. 60-61

"Following reports from the RCMs and the conference delegate, much of the region's meeting time is spent in a sharing session." **Questions:** Does your region currently allow for a free exchange of experience like this? How do you think having a sharing session would affect your regional service committee?

### SERVICE SEMINARS, PP. 61-62

One of the primary "products" of the regional resource team, the service seminar provides a way for RCMs to share the region's experience in different fields of service with all the areas and groups served by the committee.

### CONVENTIONS, P. 62

Basic remarks.

### ACTIVITIES, P. 63

Basic remarks.

### REGIONAL FINANCES, P. 63

Basic remarks on handling money.

### THE REGIONAL ASSEMBLY, P. 63-64

The assembly is something new in the *Guide*. Rather than encourage every group to review and vote on an agenda book for the conference, or suggest that ASRs get together by themselves to review conference ideas, the regional assembly draws together the representatives of every group in the region, not only to discuss national service affairs with their conference delegate, but to elect the conference delegate themselves. **Questions:** Do you think your current RSR has a good "feel"



for what the members and groups in your region think? Would a regional assembly promote unity in your region?

### **ELECTING CONFERENCE DELEGATES, PP. 64**

GSRs and RCMs elect the region's conference delegate and alternate. *This entire section appears in italics, with a footnote referring to the WSC '90 report of the WSC Ad Hoc Committee on N.A. Service.*

### **ROTATION OF DELEGATES, P. 64**

Basic remarks.

### **DIVIDING REGIONS, PP. 64-65**

This section reminds the reader that the process used to divide regions needs to be carefully thought out, and the discussions should involve all those who would be affected by such a division.

**STUDY MATERIALS--  
LOCAL SERVICE CENTERS**

**Pages 66-67.** This very brief chapter summarizes the functions of local service centers and their relation to the local service structure. It also describes some of the challenges involved in opening and maintaining a local office. The reason the chapter is so short is because these challenges are so substantial. The ad hoc committee felt it was better to briefly outline local office operations, and suggest that readers contact their national office for more detailed information and qualified advice.

**STUDY MATERIALS--  
NATIONAL SERVICES**

**Pages 68-71.** This chapter provides only an outline of the national level of service--what it does, and what it looks like, generally. The range of services to be provided by different national N.A. communities will vary greatly. The complexity of the national service structure will also vary from country to country. This chapter describes the basic services most national communities will probably want to provide for their groups, and the basic elements which will probably be found in most national service structures. Because of the great variation which will be found between nations, it would not be practical to go into any detail than the common denominators mentioned in the chapter.

## STUDY MATERIALS-- NATIONAL SERVICES IN THE UNITED STATES

**Pages 83-95.** Because of the length of this chapter and the depth of detail contained in it, we'll not be going through it section by section. Instead, we'll do a quick overview of the plan for U.S. national services.

### WHO ARE THE PRIMARY PARTICIPANTS?

**Trustees**, as members of the National Service Board are called. The number of trustees may not exceed half the number of delegates, up to a maximum of thirty trustees. For instance, if there are 48 delegates, there may be up to 24 trustees, though there may be less. If there are 60 delegates, there may be up to 30 trustees. If, however, there are 70 delegates, there may *not* be 35 trustees, but only 30. (See below, "Why the 2/3s Delegates to 1/3 Trustees Ratio?," for an explanation of this feature.) Two nonaddict trustees are elected to two-year terms by the National Service Board. The remaining trustees--addict or nonaddict--are directly elected by the National Service Conference to four-year terms. Trustees may serve no more than two terms consecutively.

**Conference delegates**, elected to two-year terms by each region's assembly of GSRs and regional committee members. We've suggested that assemblies not elect delegates to serve more than two terms consecutively.

### WHAT ARE THE ELEMENTS OF THE U.S. NATIONAL SERVICE SYSTEM?

**Regional assemblies.** At least once a year, each regional committee hosts an assembly of all GSRs in the region to discuss national service affairs and elect a conference delegate.

**National Service Conference annual meeting.** The annual gathering of conference delegates and trustees to review national service affairs, establish priorities for the work of the National Service Board, and elect new NSB members.

**National Service Board.** The board is delegated the responsibility and authority to administer the hands-on work of national services between NSC meetings--developing, publishing, and distributing N.A. literature, providing assistance to local service committees, and administering N.A.'s national public relations. The National Service Board is a nonprofit corporation. To handle the details of each particular kind of work involved in administering national services, the NSB forms *trustee committees* and *subsidiary corporations*, all directly accountable to the National Service Board, and, through the NSB, to the National Service Conference. NSB committees are the Committee on the Conference and

Forums, the Literature Committee, the Public Information Committee, the Hospitals and Institutions Committee, and the Budget and Finance Committee. Trustee subcorporations are the National Convention Corporation, the National Service Office Corporation, and the National Magazine Corporation. Special workers employed by the National Service Office and the other subcorporations provide administrative support for NSB operations.

**Delegate review panels.** Each conference delegate serves on a review panel, whose job is to provide the National Service Conference with independent review of the activities of each trustee committee and subcorporation.

### **HOW MUCH AUTHORITY DOES THE NATIONAL SERVICE BOARD HAVE?**

The conference delegates *substantial* authority to the trustees. The National Service Board is given the responsibility to administer all our national service affairs between meetings of the National Service Conference, and the conference delegates them broad authority to fulfill that responsibility. (See the Second, Third, Fourth, Sixth, and Seventh Concepts for more background on this.)

It is expected that, in accordance with the Seventh Concept, the NSB will not take action on matters of policy, finance, or N.A. tradition likely to seriously affect the national fellowship community without first consulting the National Service Conference.

The system is also modelled so that the conference has regular, effective means of its own to regulate the National Service Board's activities.

### **HOW ARE NATIONAL SERVICE BOARD ACTIVITIES REGULATED?**

**Election of trustees.** All but two members of the National Service Board, both non-addicts, are elected directly by the National Service Conference. A conference nominations panel individually screens trustee candidates before their names are placed on the ballot, providing conference participants with recommendations on each.

**Conference advisory actions,** motions which establish particular priorities for what the National Service Board is to do.

**Recall of trustees.** The conference may recall trustees individually, or may recall the entire National Service Board.

**Delegate review panels,** via reports on NSB activities

### **WHY THE 2/3S DELEGATES TO 1/3 TRUSTEES RATIO?**

Each of the three means at the conference's disposal for regulating the National Service Board--trustee election, passage of advisory actions, and trustee recall--require a vote of 2/3s of the National Service Conference. *All* conference members--

-trustees and delegates--are eligible to vote on *all* items of conference business. The structure has been designed so that, in all cases, if the fellowship's delegates need to assert their authority over the trustees, they will be able to do so.

### **HOW IS NEW N.A. LITERATURE DEVELOPED? APPROVED?**

Rather than spreading the responsibility out among the entire fellowship, we've assigned it specifically to the NSB Literature Committee. (See the essay on the Fourth Concept for discussion of the rationale behind this.)

Once a new, revised, or translated literary item is completed by the NSB Literature Committee, it is submitted for the acceptance of the National Service Board. At that point, the board must consider whether to ask for a direct ballot of the nation's N.A. groups, to consult with the National Service Conference, or to publish the piece on its own authority.

Book-length pieces are always submitted for the groups' approval, while booklets and pamphlets are usually submitted to the conference for its consent prior to publication; only rarely does the board decide to publish an item on its own authority.

### **HOW DOES THE U.S. RELATE WITH N.A. WORLD SERVICES?**

The WSC Ad Hoc Committee on N.A. Service has not yet achieved a consensus on how an N.A. world service body should be configured; because of that, we cannot describe exactly how we imagine American national services relating to N.A. World Services. But we have agreed on the general aims such a body would pursue.

**First**, it would coordinate assistance for emerging N.A. communities, either by linking those young communities with more mature ones, by coordinating development workshops, or by making translation and production services for N.A. literature available to those communities not capable of supporting their own.

**Second**, as the agency charged with holding N.A.'s registered trademarks and copyrights in trust for the entire fellowship, it would safeguard the integrity of the N.A. message, both in the course of reviewing translations of existing N.A. materials, and in reviewing new materials developed by autonomous national communities.

And **third**, it would serve as a liaison between N.A. as a whole and other international organizations, whether they be professional, voluntary, business, government, or press agencies.

Our committee is also agreed on a proposition designed to protect our fellowship's identity: "Any proposed change in our fellowship's name, Narcotics Anonymous, or in N.A.'s Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, or Twelve Concepts for Service must first be approved by a three-quarters majority of all N.A. groups registered with all of N.A.'s various national service offices."

**SPECIAL REPORT:**  
**Conference proceedings related to "A Guide to Service"**

**December 1989; updated June 1990**

Over the past year, I've received correspondence from various area and regional committees, asking questions with regard to the work of the WSC Ad Hoc Committee on N.A. Service. Most of the questions pertain to the formation of the ad hoc committee (formerly the Select Committee) and to the direction of the committee's work. I asked the staff of the World Service Office to draft a brief history of the formation of the ad hoc committee and the nature of its project.

The information contained in this history was taken from past WSC minutes, ad hoc committee minutes, and ad hoc committee reports. Some of the personal observations contained in this history are from an office staff member who had been involved with the ad hoc committee since its inception. As with all personal observations, there may be some who disagree with the observer's perceptions. I ask you to receive this report in the spirit in which it is intended: one of providing pertinent information.

Having been an RSR alternate when the Select Committee presented its first report to the conference, I am somewhat familiar with the history of the committee's work. I have reviewed past WSC minutes, and I believe that the information presented here is fair and accurate.

*Bob Hunter, Chairperson,  
World Service Conference,  
December 1989*

**HISTORY**

**1982 WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE**

Several important events occurred during this conference. First, the WSC adopted pages 1-15 of the green-covered service manual describing group, area, and regional services. The conference postponed the proposed restructuring of world services outlined in that manual. That plan would have made the WSO board a committee of the World Service Committee.

A special committee hammered out an agreement on behalf of the WSC, allowing for more direct selection of members to the WSO board and the World

Service Board of Trustees. The committee also recommended that certain specific changes be made in the WSO bylaws.

A motion was adopted to withdraw the service manual currently in print, replacing it with the original manual approved by WSC'79 as amended by subsequent WSC action.

Finally, a motion was adopted requesting that the outgoing WSC Administrative Committee "investigate the A.A. service structure as to how the beneficial aspects of its structure might be adopted by N.A."

### **1983 WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE**

The report to the WSC on the A.A. structure was given little attention, and contained no recommendations. N.A. was changing and growing so fast, there was little time for adequate discussion about the future. A compilation report, including the original material approved in 1979 and all subsequent actions by the WSC, was prepared and presented during the conference, as requested by WSC '82. That compilation report was adopted and named the *Temporary Working Guide to our Service Structure*.

Sensing the need for considerable change, and tired of changing things each year, the conference participants instructed the WSC Policy Committee "to rewrite the service structure for approval by the WSC."

### **1984 WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE**

This conference heard a report given by an N.A. trustee regarding his meeting with the General Service Board of A.A. It was a very enlightening report, acknowledging A.A.'s support for the work of Narcotics Anonymous. In spite of some initial anxiety, it was received very well by the participants.

In between conferences, the WSC Policy Committee found itself mired in controversy. Elements of the committee met several times during the year, but were unable to move ahead with their work. At a January meeting, the committee tentatively adopted a report which contained several new ideas, including criteria for the formation of new regions. However, at its April meeting, shortly before the conference, the committee reversed its decision and recommended that the WSC select another committee to continue the monumental task of rewriting the service structure. The WSC Select Committee was created as the result, and the Policy Committee report was turned over for further work.

The Select Committee was purposely designed to be different than an ad hoc committee. Its membership was to be appointed by the WSC chairperson. It consisted of eight members that first year.

Their first order of business was to look at the A.A. structure. An N.A. service charter was developed, and A.A.'s Twelve Concepts were discussed during the first



meeting. However, the committee decided to set these things aside and move on, because they felt the fellowship would never buy such a proposal. The committee changed a little here and there in the present service manual, and tackled some difficult issues along the way.

The committee released its first draft, a work in progress, in May 1985. This first draft, however, was missing three important chapters: one on the N.A. member and service, a chapter on group conscience and the trusted servant, and another chapter on regions.

### **1985 AND 1986 WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE**

For the next two years, the committee remained at a virtual standstill. There were only small batches of input on the published draft received from the fellowship, making it difficult to determine how the fellowship actually felt.

New committee members were appointed, including the chairperson of the WSC Policy Committee, to create a bridge of understanding between the work of the two committees. Many other service issues and problems (service centers, resigning trusted servants, new regional development, and international growth) came to the surface during this time. As they did, more effort was spent in resolving them than was given to working on the *Guide*. Changes were occurring within the structure so rapidly, the committee became unsure of how to deal with them effectively.

The committee reports to the conference were short and abrupt, and responses to questions were likewise, creating an adversarial relationship with many of the WSC participants. The committee knew the work had to get done, yet it had no sure-fire solutions to our problems. It was concerned that the WSC was close to dissolving the committee.

### **1986 AND 1987 WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE**

The 1986 committee report to the WSC was very brief, and the committee basically started from scratch after this conference.

Beginning in late 1986, the committee worked hard to complete the remaining chapters of *A Guide to Service*. The committee held an open input forum at the WSC workshop in Minneapolis, and went to work in September. Sensing that the fellowship was growing impatient with the project, a revised version was produced, including the three missing chapters. That revised version was distributed at WSC'87.

The revised draft contained some new and important concepts that had not been presented before. Chapter Three, "Group Conscience and the Trusted Servant," was the committee's attempt to help resolve an age-old problem in N.A. services: establishing the appropriate relationship between the servant and the served. Chapter Five, on regional committees, recommended that RSCs operate without

standing committees, and included a process for the reformation of regions and the introduction of new regions at the WSC.

The committee published a new plan for international service configuration in September 1987. A motion to set a deadline for the work to be completed July 1, 1988, was adopted.

Looking again at the revised *Guide*, Chapter Three especially, the committee began to sense that something vital was missing. The assignment for rewriting Chapter Three began with discussing the development of a set of principles for service, and some fundamental questions that had never been resolved. Discussions progressed to the point where the committee began to look more closely at A.A.'s structure, comparing it with our own experience.

While examining A.A.'s Twelve Concepts for World Service, the committee began to recognize some important and relevant principles which were related to our traditions. Some of these principles, the committee thought, could be used to help N.A. function effectively as a whole. N.A.'s traditions were the cornerstone of the discussions, and required committee members to look hard at some of the more basic issues challenging our service structure: ultimate and delegated authority and responsibility, the relationship of the service structure to the groups, N.A. membership, the relationship of trusted servants to group conscience, leadership, money, service centers, special workers, etc.

In March 1988, the committee published a fairly hard-hitting description of the most disturbing aspects of our fellowship's current system of decision-making. The report cited two examples--WSC participation, and a motion describing the relationship of the fellowship to the WSO--to support its position. The report again mentioned (as previous reports had) the use of a set of principles for our services, and the committee's desire to move ahead with the development of those principles.

### **1988 WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE**

WSC 1988 brought a sense of renewed vigor to the members of the committee. In the report to the conference, the committee illuminated its discussions of the past year, especially about the development of a set of principles for our services. The report brought forth numerous examples where the traditions were not sufficiently geared to guide us through some of the more complex issues of our growing worldwide service structure. The committee presented a number of questions in its report, some with conclusions, and others that needed some discussion by the conference.

Several motions were adopted by this conference, and a proposal was made that principles for our services be studied by the trustees. Other motions adopted by the conference included postponing the deadline established the previous year. The conference also voted to change the name of the committee; it became known as the

WSC Ad Hoc Committee on N.A. Service. A motion to elect committee members by the fellowship on the floor of the WSC was defeated by voice vote.

During the year, the committee continued to discuss its work conceptually, and made some rather direct decisions at its December 1988 meeting regarding a new structure and concepts for service. It was at this point that the committee began to put its discussions in writing. The writing task was assigned to the project coordinator, who utilized other resources within the office to compose the text. The first project was to complete the draft, known as "Twelve Principles for N.A. Service." A staff team was composed, consisting of a primary writer, an editor, and three additional staff members, who would present their work to the full committee in March.

The staff team approach was not without its problems, and it presented the committee with a few difficulties. While drafting each chapter, details were sometimes left unresolved or unaddressed by the committee discussions. Staff accordingly would fill in those details with recommendations, which often resulted in an adversarial relationship--staff vs. committee. Since this was not an acceptable position to be in, the committee and staff alike have had to make adjustments in understanding both, the committee's responsibilities and those of staff.

The committee reviewed the staff draft recommendations, and then modified the drafts according to the decisions of the full committee. The draft on the Twelve Principles was published as a report and distributed to all WSC participants three weeks prior to the WSC 1989. The draft was distributed for discussion purposes only. Meanwhile, work continued on the other sections of the *Guide*, including chapters on the group, area, and region. A general plan for the international development of N.A. services was part of the report prepared for the conference.

### **1989 WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE**

When the committee gave its report at the conference, it was followed by a lengthy "committee of the whole" session. The participants asked many questions, shared their concerns with the material, and even gave the committee some encouragement to continue on its path.

What preceded the committee's delivery of its report was a very different story, however. The day before the WSC opened, the committee was suddenly anxious about the material and how it would be received. There was also the question of who would give the report, and how the presenter would be received by the participants. All of this gave the committee a case of the "eleventh hour jitters"--and no wonder, with the controversial impact of the proposals they were presenting.

The open forum on Monday painted a different picture, as the WSC discussed problems of remaining in the same configuration and trying to serve the international fellowship. It was a very frank and honest discussion about our inability to meet the challenge of a worldwide movement. Instead of the hostile

reception the committee anticipated, the WSC actually seemed open and ready to discuss alternatives.

Several motions were put forward at this conference to put the published principles of service into some type of formal approval process. The committee argued hard against it. The committee members felt strongly that time was needed to discuss the principles and the other chapters in the *Guide to Service*, and proposed a motion calling for fellowshipwide discussion of the material when it was published. Only after the fellowship had discussed the material openly, and without a rush to approve it, should the conference consider proposing a formal process for approval. The WSC agreed, and the committee went on to finish its work, with the understanding that a good deal of time would be spent at WSC 1990 discussing the committee's final report and proposals.

It wasn't too long before the committee realized that its deadline was not realistic. The committee also felt it needed wider review of the material it was developing, while it was still in development. At the May JAC meeting, the committee members requested that a meeting be held involving the entire world service community, to review the drafts of the *Guide* and the Twelve Principles. The committee felt that this type of review could substantially benefit the project and give the fellowship a better product. The JAC agreed that it was necessary to have only one WSC workshop during the year, and after further consultation with the trustees and the World Service Office board, plans were made to hold an expanded ad hoc committee meeting in July in Albuquerque, New Mexico, the first of two that would be held during the 1989-90 conference year. A delay of the *Guide's* publication date was announced by the WSC chairperson in his conference summary report.

The first Albuquerque meeting was not publicized, but no one was kept from attending. Several members of the local N.A. community in New Mexico attended and listened intently to the discussions. This first Albuquerque meeting was significant for two reasons. First, the committee believes that the input improved the initial drafts of the work. Second, it was the first time that all members of the world service community were gathered together as equal participants in a review discussion. The ad hoc committee took suggestions made by all those present, revised their drafts accordingly--producing, among other material, the Twelve Concepts for N.A. Service--and continued work on the chapters relating to national and international services.

The following January, the ad hoc committee invited the members of the world service community to a second review and input session in Albuquerque, this time to review new drafts for the *Guide to Service* on national and world services. No consensus was to be found among the participants at this meeting, however, and the committee was left to pursue its own best judgment regarding the *Guide*. Hoping to get a clearer consensus among members of the World Service Conference, and

among members of the fellowship itself, they released a nearly-complete review draft in late March 1990. Included in the Spring 1990 *Guide* draft was a schedule for completion of the project, including a commitment to conduct a series of fellowship workshops on the material over the coming year. At the 1990 meeting of the World Service Conference the following month, conference participants voted overwhelmingly to allow the committee to complete their work.

### EXACT WORDING OF MOTIONS

#### 1982

1. "All items contained on pages 1-15 of the proposed service manual (green), be adopted and delete the words 'sub-committee' as it refers to WSO and all references to the World Service Conference as World Service Committee." *Motion carried.*
2. "Table further consideration of input on change of policy until 1983 WSC, and to instruct the Administrative Committee to make an investigation of A.A. service structure and report to the 1983 WSC as to how the beneficial aspects of operation and structure of A.A. service manual might be adopted by N.A...." *Motion carried.*
3. Amendment to 1982 motion #2: "To table further consideration of the proposed revision to the service manual until the 1983 WSC; to refer the material to the Policy Committee for further study." *Amendment carried.*

#### 1983

4. "The report of the vice chairperson, George H., concerning the compilation of the N.A. service manual, be accepted." *Motion carried, as amended below.*
5. Amendment: "That it be titled *A Temporary Guide to our Service Structure.*" *Amendment carried.*
6. "We direct the WSC Policy Committee to rewrite the service structure for approval at the WSC." *Motion carried.*

#### 1984

From report to conference of WSC Policy Committee: "Policy Committee on 4/23/84, by a vote of 14 yes, 7 no, voted to refer to [another] committee the Policy Committee report as submitted by the 1983/84 Policy Committee, and to pass the work on to a committee selected by the 1984 WSC."

7. "To form a 'Select Committee' to review the entire WSC Policy Report and for their input drawing from those members who are most experienced in service at all levels." *Motion carried.*

8. "That the Select Committee have the proposed work completed and distributed to the fellowship no later than November 1, 1984." *Motion carried.*

#### 1985

Work in progress distributed to conference participants.

9. "That the functions assigned to the 84-85 WSC Select Committee on the Service Structure be reassigned to the WSC Policy Committee." *Motion failed 9:44:5.*

#### 1986

No motions. Brief report at conference.

#### 1987

New draft of *Guide* passed out at conference.

10. "At the WSC quarterly in July 1987, an open forum meeting will be held by the WSC Select Committee to answer questions, receive input on the draft, and to otherwise have a general evaluation of the work. The Select Committee will receive additional written input from the fellowship until December 1, 1987. The committee will meet to consider input and to propose any further changes to the draft that are warranted from the input. This completed work will be sent out to the fellowship in approval form by July 1, 1988, for consideration at WSC 89." *Carried by unanimous vote.*

#### 1988

11. Richard S. (RSR, Greater New York) requested "That the WSB reconsider the AIDS article and also the principles of service within the upcoming year and that this matter be reflected in the minutes." *Chuck L. (WSC vice chairperson) requested the consent of the conference. Passed by majority voice vote.* This came up during the trustees' report.

12. "That the Select Committee be released from the previously adopted (WSC'87) work schedule, requiring a revised draft by July 1, 1988, and be instructed to issue a draft by July 1, 1989." *Motion carried.*

13. "To change the name of the Select Committee to the Ad Hoc Committee on N.A. Service." *Motion carried.*

## 1989

First draft of "Twelve Principles of Service" mailed to WSC participants in early April.

**14.** "That the WSC Ad Hoc Committee on N.A. Service be directed to:

- 1) have a review and input period on the proposed Twelve Principles of Service until October 1, 1989.
- 2) Have an approval version of the Twelve Principles of Service in the *Conference Agenda Report* for conference action in April, 1990."

*Motion carried by voice vote. Motion reconsidered the next day, along with a substitute motion (#16 below). Motions 14 and 16 were tabled indefinitely.*

**15.** "That the date for publication and distribution of *A Guide to Service* be extended from July 1, 1989, to September 1, 1989. During the two-month extension, the *Guide to Service* draft be sent to the Board of Trustees on or before July 1, 1989. The Board of Trustees will review the draft and return it with comments on the Ad Hoc Committee on N.A. Service on or before August 1, 1989." *Motion failed.*

**16.** Substitute for #14 above: "That the WSC Ad Hoc Committee on N.A. Service be directed to have an approval version/report of the Twelve Principles of Service for conference action at WSC 1990; which allows the 1990 conference the option of referring them back to committee, adopting them, or any action of its choice." *Motion tabled indefinitely.*

## 1990

**17.** "That the Ad Hoc Committee on N.A. Service continue work on *A Guide to Service* until it is completed, and a final draft is distributed." *Passed 61:13:6--76% approval--on a roll call vote. [FYI: RSRs voted 48:10:3--79% approval.]*

**Item.** Object to consideration. *The objection was ruled out of order.*

**Amendment.** To change the word "the" in the beginning to "a new." *Failed 29:41--41%--by standing vote.*

**18.** "That membership on any WSC ad hoc committee be limited to only two (2) years of service total. To refer to next year's *Conference Agenda Report* for action at the WSC 1991." *Motion failed by voice vote.*