

Area 50 Summary of 70th General Service Conference

Agenda Items and Background

Organization of the document: is by Conference Committee, of which there are 13:

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Our Delegate has been assigned to the **Agenda Committee in the Conference**. The seven (7) agenda items for this committee are in the first section below, beginning on page 2. See the



in the items below which point to the items on which our Delegate could use your group's input, please. **Please let our Delegate know your input by emailing it to him at: p70delegate@area50wny.org**

If you would like any additional information on the items, please visit the Area 50 Website: <http://area50wny.org/>

Thank you to the following who helped read and summarized (these are summaries, not our opinions) over 1068 pages of background material:

Anthony L., Chuck P., Derek H., Desiree W., Hannah W., Jill N., Matt T., Mike R., Lisa S., Olivia C., Patrick, Pete W., Rob F., Stephanie F., and Tom Z.

And a separate thank you to our **Web Chair Tom C.** For organizing and uploading the information on the Area Website & doing all the other tech-y stuff we don't understand!

Yours in Love and Service,

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I. Agenda

A. Review suggestions for the theme of the 2021 General Service Conference- The Conference Agenda Committee recommends a theme for the following year's Conference. Ideally, this is a theme that the Area and AA as a whole can focus on for the entire year. Ideas are:

1. Our Singleness of Purpose
2. 12 x 12 x 12
3. A.A. Staying relevant for the generations to come
4. Our Primary Purpose
5. Trudging!
6. Happier, More Joyous, Free-er
7. We know very little
8. Our Three Legacies
9. Our Past, Stepping Stones for Our Future
10. Carrying the Message: Today and Tomorrow
11. Working with others inside and outside the rooms
12. Our COMMON Welfare...
13. One Alcoholic helping another Alcoholic like no one else can
14. The attached string (*A.A. Comes of Age*, page 280, para 1 – 3)
15. Our 3 Legacies: Does Recovery Come First?
16. Our 3 Legacies: Recovery then Unity then Service?
17. Our 3 Legacies: Can unity or Service Exist without Recovery?
18. Unity: A.A. Fellowship & the GSC
19. Autonomy: A.A. Fellowship & General Service
20. Autonomy: Unity, Humility, Authority
21. Unity: Group Autonomy & A.A. as a whole
22. Being financially responsible at the group level



**Check these
Topics out and let
our
Delegate Hank
what you think
would be the
best theme for
the 2021 General
Service
Conference!**

23. How to be inclusive and still retain our singleness of purpose
24. How can we stay current without losing our history?
25. Three legacy sponsorship: leading us into the future by remembering where we come from
26. Inform, Involve, Inspire
27. By Faith & By Works (**note this is the other part of the 1951 theme)
28. Home Groups/ The Beginning
29. Principles over Personalities
30. Home Group – The Heartbeat of A.A.
31. Twelve points to assure our Future
32. Our Literature – Preserving the A.A. Message
33. Beyond Love and Service – Sacrifice
34. Trauma and Recovery
35. Trauma and Addiction
36. Holding Fast to traditions
37. Being a Good role model for New Members
38. Encouraging service at the District and Area Levels
39. The A.A. Home Group
40. A.A. and other Organizations
41. Unity – One Solution.... One message
42. Rigorous Honesty
43. Unity - Service - Recovery
44. Interpersonal - Collective – Self
45. Our Unshakeable Foundation – Preserving It
46. Our Three Legacies in Action – Yesterday, Today & Tomorrow
47. Practicing the Principles – Preserving our Fellowship

48. H.O.W. It Works
49. Attraction Rather than Promotion
50. Emotional Sobriety – To Serve A.A. Better
51. This Colossus of Communication
52. Always Inclusive, Never Exclusive
53. Working with Others
54. Drop of Participation and participants during meetings
55. Our People, Our Places, Our Participation & Our Progress
56. The 12 Concepts
57. The Members, The Meetings, The Magic
58. A.A. Services – It Begins as an Experiment and ends as an Experience
(Inspired by the 1st GSC theme: 1951 – Genuine Faith – It Begins as an Experiment and Ends as an Experience)
59. HOW It Works – Honesty Openness and Willingness
60. Back to the Basics
61. Where It All Began
62. HALT – Humility, Acceptance, Love and Tolerance
63. Recovery & Unity = Service
64. Consider a request to discuss the exclusionary language in Grapevine Inc. Examples include: The Preamble's use of 'men and women,' the use of language such as 'transgendered' in countless pamphlets, including *Sober and Out*; lack of transgender stories in The Grapevine, our meeting in print; and more" for discussion as part of all the suggested Themes, Presentation/Discussion, and Workshop ideas for the 2021 Conference. The committee suggests the Conference committee consider broadening the focus of the exclusionary language topic.

B. Likewise, the Agenda Committee selects presentation/discussion topics for the Conference. These topics will be available to us all as they will appear in the Final Report for the 71st General Service Conference (2021). Suggested ideas are:

1. Dealing with people in meetings with problems other than alcohol
2. Foundation of Service
3. Maintaining love and tolerance throughout A.A. Groups

- 
4. How to reach the new generations
 5. Does Recovery Come First?
 6. Recovery then Unity then Service?
 7. What is My Message?
 8. Who defines “the Message”?
 9. What is my group’s message?
 10. Principle into action: staying relevant
 11. Finding and reaching the problem drinker
 12. Our COMMON Welfare... One Alcoholic helping another Alcoholic like no one else can
 13. A True Fellowship
 14. Strong as the Weakest Link
 15. Seeking the Light
 16. Insulation Against Anarchy
 17. Unity: A.A. Literature & Tradition Four
 18. Tradition Four: Group Conscience, Autonomy, Humility
 19. Unity: Our Common Welfare should come first
 20. What is the purpose of an A.A. Group?
 21. What is the difference between carrying THE message and carrying MY message?
 22. How can we better convey the meaning of the Responsibility Pledge?
 23. What are our Three legacies?
 24. Service, Sponsorship, repairing the broken link in the three-legacy chain.
 25. How will the three legacies help me to better do my 12-step work
 26. A.A. General Service:
 - - Inform: How to develop an informed group conscience

Check these presentation/ discussion topics out and let our Delegate Hank know what presentation topics you think are most appropriate for AA - we'll get to read about them in the 2021 GSC Final Report !

- - Involve: How to encourage participation (inactive groups and districts)
 - - Inspire: How to sponsor into service
27. From 1951 to 2021 the changes in A.A. fellowship and G.S.O. and the foundations or things that have not changed in A.A. fellowship and G.S.O that continue to provide unity.
 28. What are upcoming and exciting things for the future of G.S.O.
 29. Home Groups: - Our Mission – carrying the message to “alcoholics” (nonalcoholics should not have the privilege of speaking at meetings)
 30. Principles over Personalities:
 - - The Principles of A.A.
 - - The Traditions =
 - - The Concepts
 31. Our Literature – Preserving the A.A. Message
 32. Twelve points to assure our Future
 33. Do I Carry the A.A. Message or My Own?
 34. The Spiritual and Practical Benefits of a Prudent Reserve
 35. Carrying the message outside of A.A.
 36. Group Inventory
 37. Business meetings
 38. When apathy leads to becoming a Dark District
 39. What is the common solution and why it is important
 40. Why ALL the Traditions are still relevant
 41. Practicing the principles and the solution as a pathway to unity
 42. Sponsorship
 43. Our Singleness of Purpose
 44. Language of the Heart

45. Self-Reflection – Hidden Motives
46. Where does personal honesty fit in with service to the group
47. Uncovering Hidden Motives and Agendas - Radical Honesty; Radical Acceptance
48. Cross-Cultural Communications – Finding Connections
49. Upside Down Triangle
50. How to Proactively Communicate with Attraction
51. Attraction Rather than Promotion – at the Individual Level
52. Emotional Sobriety – Attraction for the Newcomers
53. Service Sponsorship
54. Find Inner Peace
55. Emotional Sobriety – Attraction from Unity
56. Emotional Sobriety – to give weight to the Traditions. (i.e., to make them more important) and to live the Steps
57. Recovery: Our lives have depended on Communication (from *Our Great Responsibility*, p. 101)
58. Unity: Our unity depends on Communication (from *Our Great Responsibility*, p. 101)
59. Service: Our function depends on Communication (from *Our Great Responsibility*, p. 101)
60. Cultural Diversity – Who is not in the room and Why Not?
61. Traditional Sponsorship – when face to face is not possible, making the approach
62. Lack of members for responsibility and for supporting
63. Speaker on the topic – Our People, Our Places, Our Participation & Our Progress
64. The Original Manuscript (the book that started it all)
65. History is Now: How will Actions taken Today impact A.A. Tomorrow?
66. Digital Communications at the Speed of A.A.

67. Action to Faith – Where Services and Spirituality Mix
68. Rule 62
69. Safety in A.A. – Don't be silent, say something
70. The Recovery Plane comes before the service and material plane
71. Literature at A.A. meetings – What do we read, and do we change it when we read it aloud?
72. 72. Anonymity vs. Technology
73. Communication Leadership – An Ever-Vital Need
74. Prudence – A Way to Achieve Spiritual Progress
75. Freedom to Serve – Freedom to Live and Love Unconditionally
76. Sacrifice – Opens the Door to Unity
77. Consider a request to discuss the exclusionary language in Grapevine Inc. Examples include: The Preamble's use of 'men and women,' the use of language such as 'transgendered' in countless pamphlets, including *Sober and Out*; lack of transgender stories in The Grapevine, our meeting in print; and more" for discussion as part of all the suggested Themes, Presentation/Discussion, and Workshop ideas for the 2021 Conference. The committee suggests the Conference committee consider broadening the focus of the exclusionary language topic.

C. Likewise, the Conference Agenda Committee reviews workshop topic ideas for the 2021 General Service Conference. The summary of the discussions from each workshop will be available to us in the Final Report of the 71st General Service Conference (2021). Workshop ideas are:

1. Dealing with meeting attendees from drug courts
2. How a concept relates to a tradition or step (Ex. Concept 1 w/ Tradition 1)
3. How "appropriate" is harming groups and the members
4. Why A.A. isn't judge, jury, and executioner of its members
5. Building Participatory Activities into Communications
6. Singleness of Purpose
7. Traditions Workshop
8. 6th Step
9. Can Unity or Service Exist Without Recovery?



Check out these workshop topics and let our Delegate Hank know which ones you think are most appropriate - we get to read about them in the 2021 GSC Final Report - and - we can discuss them in our Area!!

10. How did I become the G.S.R.?
11. A.A. is already established, why do we need service?
12. How much does our past look like the future?
13. Let our nonalcoholic friends recommend A.A./ How does that happen?
14. Are treatment centers, halfway houses and other recovery groups doing our A.A. work?
15. Can I smoke marijuana and be sober in A.A.?
16. Has the Tradition 12 "Anonymity" faded from its intended use?
17. A checklist for the A.A. message
18. The identity of my group's message
19. Where does the newcomer fit in my group structure?
20. How to develop my attraction
21. What more can we do to stay relevant?
22. Reaching problem drinkers where they are and on their terms.
23. Why are there breakaways from the original A.A. such as A.A. for young people, A.A. for the native American, etc.
24. Our COMMON Welfare...One Alcoholic helping another Alcoholic like no one else can
25. An Obligation to Society
26. Providing a permanent & Safe Haven
27. The Flame of Faith
28. Special Interest Groups: inclusive or divisive?
29. The Big Book & Tradition Three: How they are one?
30. Are A.A. Groups connected to General Service?
31. Can the GSC decide first on matters that affect A.A. as a whole?
32. Concept One: Final Responsibility & Ultimate Authority
33. What is the difference between carrying A.A.'s message and carrying My message?

34. If the A.A. message is the Language of the Heart, why would it be different now?
35. Is A.A. broken? If not, then why the need to update the language
36. Sharing the Three Legacies to insure we leave what we were given
37. Inform, Involve, Inspire: Rocketed into a fourth dimension
38. How do people serving at G.S.O become involved in serving at that level?
39. Home Groups: Strengthening the Home Group
40. Principles Over Personalities: - Longevity of A.A. Ensuring it will be here 500 years from now
- Anonymity: How we protect it in this day of the Internet
 - - Carrying the Message: What does that mean? Different ways we can carry the message? What exactly is the message?
 - - Importance of consistency at different meetings; what is the connection in conducting a meeting that all A.A adheres to. The bare minimum?
41. Twelve points to assure our Future
42. Home Group – The Heartbeat of A.A.
43. Cooperation without Affiliation
44. Do I Carry the A.A. message or my own?
45. Our Spiritual Heritage
46. Liaising with professionals, probation, etc.
47. Public Information
48. Home group vs. A.A. meeting
49. Service structure
50. Chairing an A.A. meeting
51. Open vs. Closed meetings
52. Bridging the Gap
53. Application of the Traditions in our interactions with our Friends
54. Affiliation versus Cooperation

55. Maintaining our Primary Purpose in the ever-changing world of Treatment
56. Informing A.A. members of what A.A. does and doesn't do
57. What is an A.A. member's responsibility?
58. I am Responsible
59. Tradition 3 – The only requirement...
60. Our Literature – Preserving the A.A. Message
61. Avoiding “Group Think”
62. Tools for uncovering hidden motives in oneself
63. Unity – Conformity or Synthesis
64. Humility in the Digital Age
65. Respect for Wisdom & Experience
66. Sponsorship and Responsibility
67. More will be Disclosed; “Our book is meant to be suggestive only...God will constantly disclose more to you and to us.” [A.A., p 164]. What does this mean; how do members take responsibility to ensure that this occurs?
68. Spiritual awakening comes before emotional sobriety
69. Create for yourself and find a Higher Power
70. Maintaining emotional sobriety through the Tenth Step
71. Emotional sobriety for better leadership
72. Our responsibility to communicate on self-support
73. A.A. and Electronic Media
74. Constant thought of Others? What an Order! Our past becomes our greatest asset giving it away to get it – what seemed at first a flimsy reed
75. Honesty and borrowing money from the 7th Tradition and financial responsibility
76. Meetings and the Chairperson's responsibilities
77. Concept workshops (1 workshop per concept)

78. Traditions
79. Safety and A.A. on Social media
80. A.A. Turf – Who's Doing what?
81. Communication in A.A.: Staying Ahead of the "Telephone Game"
82. Getting the Newcomer to Stay
83. Serving with Enthusiasm
84. Knowledge – What A.A. is and What it is Not
85. Experience as Foundation
86. Setting Examples: Initiative and Demonstrating Responsibility and Dedication
87. Applying Judgment
88. Developing Discretion
89. Value of Intuition
90. Significance of Risk, Failure and Success
91. Orientation – Spending Sufficient Time to Teach Others
92. Spirit of Rotation
93. Within Reach for all Members to Serve
94. Being Available
95. 7th Tradition Contributions
96. Willingness: as privilege, as choice
97. The beginning of true recovery
98. Sharing for the benefit of others
99. Getting rid of selfishness
100. Applying Traditions to Everyday Life
101. Consider a request to discuss the exclusionary language in Grapevine Inc. Examples include: The Preamble's use of 'men and women,' the use of language such as 'transgendered' in countless pamphlets,

including *Sober and Out*; lack of transgender stories in *The Grapevine*, our meeting in print; and more” for discussion as part of all the suggested Themes, Presentation/Discussion, and Workshop ideas for the 2021 Conference. The committee suggests the Conference committee consider broadening the focus of the exclusionary language topic.

D. Review the GSC Evaluation Form, process an 2019 Evaluation Summary.

The Conference attendees have the opportunity, and are requested, to fill out the 13 page conference evaluation each year. A summary of the evaluations were also provided in the background. The evaluations were widely filled out, and widely representative, as up to 106 of the 135 potential conference members completed some or all of the evaluations.

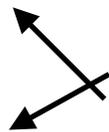
E. Review the 2019 January conference call participant survey results. In January 2019, the Delegates had an opportunity to have a conference call (for purpose of background only, not to decision or opine on agenda items) with the Trustee’s committee and secretary. Feedback was generally good, but requested more explanation of purpose, and receipt of background material before the call. Trustees have background, so why not delegates?

F. Discuss report on the Conference Agenda Process from the Trustees’ Committee on GSC

From a 2016 GSC recommendation, the GSB was to consider how to enhance participation of the area delegates in the process for selection of agenda items. The conference call implemented in January 2019, and reviewed in item E above was one of the implemented steps (this also occurred in January 2020). Feedback from the Conference Committee Chairs (these are Delegates) were overwhelmingly positive, and requested to continue this process.

G. Discuss the General Service Conference schedule

The committee agreed to forward a proposal on the GSC schedule regarding “What can we stop doing during Conference week?”



Let our delegate, Hank, know what your group thinks of the Conference Committee Process. Check out background at <http://area50wny.org/>

1. Prior to January meeting of GSB, schedule a video or teleconference between Trustee and Conference Committees to discuss
 1. status of items from prior GSCs that are still in progress
 2. composition, scope and procedure of Conference Committee
 3. Discuss agenda items not forwarded to Conference Committee - for reconsideration
2. Two weeks prior to GSC, conduct joint Trustee and Conference Committee video conference
 1. Allow for questions

2. Appointed Committee Members then may not need to attend the conference

3. Day 1 of GSC:

1. Option 1: Open Space for 3-3.5 hours so delegates can hear from others on top 10 agenda items (per online poll) prior to committee meetings. Discussion led by Conference Committee Chair (Delegate) OR

2. Option 2: Shift and Share: Stations set up for 13 committees. Give all delegates number between 1-13 and group rotates through 13 stations for 15 minutes each providing input.

Also: eliminate Keynote Speaker. Start earlier in Morning. Eliminate verbal Area Highlights.

II. Cooperation with the Professional Community

A. Consider a request to discontinue the pamphlet "A.A. in Your Community"

Request from: Sober Society group - Area 64, Tennessee April 2, 2019 Forwarded to: trustees' Committee on C.P.C/Treatment-Accessibilities Status: Forwarded to 2020 Conference C.P.C. Committee

Reasons: mis-informative for the intended audience similar information already embodied in two other fliers- not cost effectiveness

Background:

1966- APPROVED the new pamphlet "Alcoholics Anonymous in Your Community" was produced to replace the "Helpful Ally" pamphlet.

1979- DISCONTINUED the pamphlet "Alcoholics Anonymous in Your Community" since the pamphlet was found so similar to two other pamphlets "AA at a glance" and "A Brief Guide".

1981- REINSTATED the "Alcoholics Anonymous in Your Community" pamphlet.

Since 1983 , Conference Committee on C.P.C. approved 6 recommendations creating revisions of text removal, replacement and additions to better address the intended audience and best represent the

explanation of what A.A. is and is not and description of alcoholism.

Other pamphlets contain similar information (most A.A. literature contains duplicative material);

the titles are important however, as only some imply

a targeted audience as does the pamphlet "Alcoholics Anonymous in your Community ". "A.A. at a Glance" is a good description of the Fellowship , but it does not make the statement, by title or content, that A.A. is a community resource.

The "A.A. in Your Community" pamphlet has a professional appearance, can be read quickly and contains a great deal of concise information.

Pamphlet text: "The alcoholics we know seem to have lost the power to control their drinking" is at odds with the first step which states that we are powerless over alcohol. The first step is a declarative sentence - "seems to have lost" indicates some alcoholics may not have lost the power of choice to control their drinking.

G.S.O. statistics of the pamphlet Alcoholics Anonymous in your community

Cost- \$0.07 ea.

2018- order quantity 35,000 MFG \$2,538.28

Distributed 37,029

Total Sales \$2,028.88

2017- order quantity 30,000 MFG \$1,767.00

Distributed 32,068

Total Sales \$2,288.18

With minimal fluctuation, sales continue to be profitable. Discontinuation of the pamphlet is not cost effective.

B. Consider a Request to create a pamphlet for mental health professionals

While professionals are well informed that AA exists, beyond a general awareness, many professionals had misconceptions and misinformation about AA. Create pamphlet to educate and help them be better qualified to help a person who has the desire to stop drinking.

Ideas for inclusion in pamphlet:

Discuss that AA is not psychotherapy. That it is a spiritual, not a religious, program. That AA does not offer a medical solution. That we do not offer financial help or housing or other social services. Does not require payment. That other “problems” do not qualify them for AA membership. That we are not affiliated with other 12-step programs. Description of what alcoholism IS. Discuss anonymity. Suggest they attend an open meeting or be in contact with our CPC.

C. Discuss progress report on LinkedIn page implementation.

This is a reporting activity, on an item from a 2018 Conference Advisory Action. The LinkedIn page was launched on November 19, 2019 in English, French and Spanish. The goal of the page is to share information on AA with professionals and refer them to aa.org.

The page had 304 unique visits in November, 138 in December and 165 in January. These resulted in the following “clicks to aa.org”: 80 in November, 29 in December and 56 in January.

The page also provides information about national professional events in which local AA members volunteer and staff traveling exhibits.

The next issue of About AA will include an article on how AA’s use technology to carry the message.

Additional uses: search for Class A Trustees, post pieces from current and past Class A Trustees, and other friends of AA, announce national, state and local conferences where AA will be an exhibitor, post studies, broaden reach of our About AA newsletter,

There are 467 million total LinkedIn users. 40% use LinkedIn daily.

Minority opinion is that LinkedIn presence is in conflict with traditions 6, 10 and 11. Felt that pushing content out about ourselves is not staying true to Tradition 11.

Majority opinion is that not having linked in compromises Tradition 5.

D. Review contents of C.P.C. Kit and Workbook

Background:

1. C.P.C. Kit and Workbooks are reviewed by the C.P.C. Committee at each General Service Conference every year.

2. 2012 Conference Committee on C.P.C. considered the suggestion- the sentence on page 15, (now currently on page 16) which reads :

“Open: Guests are welcome; if practical, mention that individual members are available to take a professional friend to a meeting” be changed to read “Open: Guests are welcome ‘as

observers'; if practical, mention that individual members are available to take a professional friend to a meeting." but took no action.

- 'To make such a need clear is simply a matter of right information and education' The A.A. Service Manual, pg.63

C.P.C. Kit Contents review suggests that in the Service Material section, a change to An Open Letter to Health Care Professionals (F-210) to include reference to the LinkedIn page.

Review suggests that there should be a bold comprehensive revision specifically keeping in mind the advantage of an online presence to reach the professional to remain relevant for today. 'We could therefore no longer be a seldom heard of secret society. Word-of-mouth communication with the few alcoholics we could contact by our then current method would be not only slow but dangerous; dangerous because a recovery message in which we now had such high confidence might soon be garbled and twisted beyond recognition. Clearly our budding society and its message would have to be publicized.' - Bill W.

III. Corrections

A. Review the contents of the Corrections Kit and Workbook

Corrections kit is available on GSO's website www.aa.org with hyperlinks to most items on kit list F-68. The workbook is in the kit. Workbooks and kits are service pieces, so suggested changes to contents are not recommendations, but are committee considerations.

IV. Finance

A. Review pamphlet "Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix"

Request is that even though the pie charts in the pamphlet are examples, that the pie charts be updated. It is thought that the example amounts and the suggested duties listed do not fit all of the areas in AA equally or accurately. Would like to see the pie charts listed without % so that groups can better decide what fits their situation rather than having the contribution % suggested to them. In addition, some central offices send out the pie chart with their monthly newsletters as though it was something other than a sample from the pamphlet.

In addition, there has been requests for information on how to set up a "virtual basket" to digitally collect contributions from members.

B. Review Self Support Packet

Includes Self-support card, pamphlet Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix, The AA Group Treasurer, AA Guidelines on Finance, Your Seventh Tradition Contributions Flyer, Birthday Contribution Envelope.

V. Grapevine

A. Consider the list of suggested AA Grapevine book topics for 2021 or later.

- Book topics include, but not limited to:
 - i. Step 3 – Turning it over
 - ii. Character defects – Steps 6 & 7
 - iii. AA and families in recovery
 - iv. Old timers stories

- v. Twelve Steps
Their were also ideas about – Fun in Sobriety, Gratitude, Steps 4 & 5, Getting Involved
- Approved La Vina books
 - i. Hispanic Women
 - ii. La Vina Workshops
 - iii. Carrying the message to institutions
- Review progress report on AA Grapevine Workbook revisions.
 - Background – considerations drawn from 2017, 2018 & 2019 committee findings and reports.
 - The Grapevine & La-Vina as a recovery tool, is the primary goal of this agenda item.
- Review progress report on actions taken from the findings of the AA Grapevine Fellowship Feedback Survey.

a. In 2018, a 15 minute online (6516 respondents, while of those, 4568 completed the survey) survey was given to readers and potential readers. The goal was to measure attitudes about existing, current and preferences concerning the Grapevine & La Vina.

- i. Ongoing actions to address perception, relevance, clarity on funding, content formula, simplification of subscription model, digital experience and engagement strategies.
- ii. Methodology, Executive Summary and next steps are contained the background info.

B. Review progress report on AA Grapevine Workbook revisions

Conference advisory action from 2018, to perform a comprehensive review and revision of the Grapevine Workbook. 2020 GSC, will be the second progress report. A contract freelancer was hired to help expand on shared experience and how to use GV and LV as a recovery tool.

C. Review progress report on actions taken from the findings of the AA GV fellowship survey

In fall of 2018, survey of readers and potential readers was taken. Opportunities identified were:

1. Improve perceptions of GV and LV
2. Confusion over how GV and LV are funded
3. Improve content to be relevant to young members, and to the with longterm sobriety
4. Desire for simpler subscription model and less interest in standalone digital subscription
5. Digital experience problems

6. Learn from LV engagement strategies

D. Consider revising the AA Preamble to use gender neutral pronouns. For example, "Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of people who share their experience, strength and hope with each other..."

a. Letter received from Jackson S., GSR representing his home group in Area 29 Maryland that requested the above.

- i. Group frequently receives attendees, and has home group members that identify as LGBTQ+ community members. They value the preamble but feel it is not all-inclusive.
- ii. They feel this will align their/our contemporary population for all to identify.

E. Consider a request to change the language of the first sentence of the AA Preamble as follows: "Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of people who share..."

- Change verbiage to "Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of people who share their experience strength and hope" Vs "Men and Women"
- An estimated 2 million Transgender people live in the US and Canada. This population is 2.5 times likely to abuse alcohol than others. Of these 2 million one in five do identify with being male or female.
- The Preamble was first introduced in June 1947 Grapevine. Since then two changes have occurred.
 - i. "Honest" desire to stop drinking was changed to current script
 - ii. "AA has no dues or fees" was expanded to today's script
- Tradition 3 states: AA is always inclusive never exclusive. The preamble as stated is being challenged as being in direct conflict with inclusivity

i. Tradition 3 Long form "Our membership ought to include all who suffer from alcoholism. Hence

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

F. Consider a request to develop an AA Grapevine pamphlet on how the Grapevine can be utilized to carry the AA message.

a. Suggestions include

- i. Utilizing the AA Grapevine Statement of Purpose
 - ii. Targeting: Meeting topics, corrections facilities, probation and parole, treatment facilities, loaners, Public information (barbershops, doctors offices etc.), accessibilities, AA anniversary gifts, New comer packets, military stations over sea, ...
- Consider a request to change the name of the General Service Conference Committee on Grapevine to the Conference Committee on Grapevine an La Vina.
 - a. Received a letter from Area 13 stating they believe this will enhance the relationship between the two magazines and be a display of unity.
 - Consider a request for AA Grapevine, Inc. to establish an Instagram account in line with the Twelve Traditions.
 - 2018 Conference Committee reviewed the 2018 Grapevine social media report regarding, Instagram, Facebook, and Google. The committee suggested the Grapevine continue to explore social media strategy in their forthcoming 3-5 year strategic plan.
 - Proposed Instagram Implementation Plan
 - i. Stated Strategy: use Instagram as an extension of Grapevine’s graphics, videos and audio content.
 - ii. Stated Objective: Expose more people to Alcoholics Anonymous and AA Grapevine by sharing out inspirational content, information and resources to support recovery from alcoholism.
 1. The Grapevine Strategic plan includes “creating a stronger digital presence” as a priority.
 2. The Grapevine office continued to consult with industry experts, specifically Stikky Media, about social media platforms.
 3. The Grapevine Board stated “Instagram is the next avenue we would recommend adding to the tools in our tool box”.

G. Consider a request to change name of GSC Committee on Grapevine to Conference Committee on Grapevine and La Vina.

Request from District 13, to “further affirm the spiritual interconnectedness between these two entities”.

H. Consider a request for AA Grapevine to establish an Instagram account in line with the Twelve Traditions

From 2018 additional considerations, that AAGV continue to explore social media strategy in forthcoming strategic plan, taking into account anonymity, security, affiliation, outside contributions, privacy and promotion.

There are 500 million instagram user accounts with 59% of adults 18-29 utilizing this network. More than 300 million use it daily.

Need a clearly defined strategy, noticeable visual style, commitment to regular posts, in-depth knowledge of target audience.

AA Grapevine is committed to creating viable plan to develop, design and implement a social media strategy to increase engagement and sales. GV board and staff working on comprehensive plan.

VI. Literature

A. Review progress report on pamphlet “The Twelve Steps Illustrated”

This began with a 2019 Conference Advisory Action to update using simplified language and better text to describe the Steps.

B. Review progress report on the pamphlet “The Twelve Concepts for World Service Illustrated.”

This began with a 2019 Conference Advisory Action to update using simplified language and better text to describe concepts.

C. Review progress report on the development of pamphlet on AA’s Three Legacies.

This began as a 2018 Conference Advisory Action, and was reviewed in 2019 as well. Stories have been submitted for the pamphlet, and additional content is now available.

D. Review progress report on the pamphlet, “Too Young?”

This originated in a GSC floor action in 2017, with continuous work on this. The committee is working with YPAA on content, and is capturing feedback. Considering new name for pamphlet, modern design, no graphics.

E. Review progress report regarding the pamphlet “Young People in AA.”

This originated in a 2016 Advisor Action from the GSC. Updates have been provided each year. This year’s update will include feedback from YPAA.

F. Review progress report regarding the development of the pamphlet for Spanish-speaking women in AA.

This originated as a prior GSC action/recommendation. Criteria for review of stories submitted is in progress, as well as seeking input from Spanish-speaking women at upcoming AA gatherings.

G. Review draft update of the video “Your General Service Office, the Grapevine and the General Service Structure”

This originated as a 2018 Advisory Action of the GSC, to reflect a contemporary presentation of the offices. A draft of the updated video will be reviewed by the committee at the GSC. The update is 8 minutes shorter, and includes La Vina in the content, as well.

H. Review draft language regarding safety and AA to be included in Living Sober and “Questions and Answers on Sponsorship”

This originated as a 2018 GSC Committee Consideration, and has been continuously worked on. Draft language for each will be reviewed at the GSC this year.

I. Discuss draft update of the "Twelve Traditions Illustrated" Pamphlet

This originated as a 2016 Conference Advisory Action, to present a modernized version of the text and illustrations to reflect a contemporary AA experience. Progress has been ongoing since, and an updated draft version will be provided to the Conference Literature Committee for review.

J. A.A.W.S. Policy:

1. Review “A.A.W.S. Policy on Publication of Literature: Updating Pamphlets and Other A.A. Materials” approved in January 2020.

Assure conference approval, but allow publishing to be proactive in keeping materials current.

Examples of:

“Editorial Changes”-correction of typos and errors of grammar, correction of erroneous statements of fact, updating historical and statistical info, and correction of cross-referencing material.

“Format”- hard or soft cover, large print, standard size, pocket size, audio, Braille, video for ASL, digital, or electronic.

If the Conference approves new or amended literature, A.A.W.S. will have authorization to select formats, make Editorial changes (not the Big Book’s preface, Forewords, The Doctor’s Opinion, the first 164 pages, Dr. Bob’s Nightmare, or the Appendices), change graphics, and translate into different languages.

A new piece of literature, and any change to any existing piece of literature other than Editorial Changes or new or changed Formats, will not be published by AAWS prior to approval of such literature at the General Service Conference. There is a proposal that the Publishing Department would regularly forward recommendations to the Conference by reviewing pamphlets and literature against these questions:

Does the material use outdated language, jargon, or references?

Does the material use the most current science about alcoholism?

Does the material focus on inclusivity and represent AA’s broad diversity?

Does the material draw on AA’s history in a way that is relevant and necessary?

Does the material effectively address the audience to whom it is directed? (Target audience input will be sought in the review process)

2. Review proposed "A.A.W.S. Policy on Conversion of Written Conference-approved Literature and Service Material into video format."

The proposed policy is: "Each year the A.A.W.S. Board will present to the General Service Conference for input, feedback and approval a full prioritized list of items slated for conversion to video in the following year(s). This list may include both Conference- approved and service materials as an opportunity for the membership to provide input regarding: Prioritization of which items to convert to video; Key concerns to keep in mind during the development of any individual item; The membership’s desire NOT to convert a specific item to video; the membership’s desire to include items not on the list; and estimated cost/time for each item.

They anticipate making 1 - 4 video conversion recommendations a year (similar to how GV books are done), and would like to try this for 3 years and then evaluate if the process needs adjusting.

K: Consider if proposed agenda items for plain language, simplified language, accessible translations and large print versions of the book Alcoholics Anonymous, as well as workbooks to help study the program of Alcoholics Anonymous, can be addressed with a common solution

Summary:

My understanding of the background suggests that this is not an issue that will be put to a “yes or no” vote, but rather seeks a group conscience from the conference as to how to address these issues holistically. The discussion of individual agenda items to change the Big Book or create an alternate version in the past few years have been met with a very emotional response on both sides, with less attention paid to the overall goal of the motions than there probably should have been.

As reported by the Trustees’ Literature Committee (TLC), the main issues at hand are: “Accessibility– due to the literacy level or lack of ability to adequately comprehend the message of recovery by the individual as written in the book Alcoholics Anonymous Relatability–changes in current language and culture (including views on modern language, gender and religion) which hinder the individual’s ability to relate and embrace the program as set forth in the book Alcoholics Anonymous.”

The primary question is: “Should the TLC explore possible solutions that could help make our message more available?”

The TLC received separate agenda items requesting a workbook for the steps, traditions, and concepts; an official Big Book dictionary; addition of language from other religions to the 5th edition; and removal of the chapters “To Wives,” “The Family Afterward,” and “To Employers” for the 5th edition. They took no action on these items and instead combined them as seen above.

There is background information from previous years (2015-2019) demonstrating the requests for a “Plain Language” or 5th-grade reading level Big Book. Requests state that individuals with learning difficulties or low reading levels cannot utilize our literature effectively. According to an assessment done by the Plain Language Group (text translation company) and included with an agenda item request, passages from the current Big Book are rated at between a 6th and 11th-grade reading level. There are examples of passages “translated” to a 4th-7th grade level (PERSONAL OPINION: “translated” passages seem clunky and lose emotional power).

The TLC reviewed past conference actions regarding the creation of “simplified” literature - almost exclusively pamphlets. There is precedent for seeking to create more accessible literature in pamphlet form (Traditions and Concepts Illustrated, Is AA For You, Is AA For Me, comic book style pamphlets, etc.). In the 1940s, Dr. Bob apparently expressed concern that the Big Book was too “highbrow” for many alcoholics and there were a few pamphlets developed to address that concern.

The TLC researched literacy levels and discovered that there are rising numbers of people in the US who struggle with reading - 50% of US adults cannot read a book written at an 8th-grade level and less than 50% of adults with a high school education could read and understand the Big Book independently. For incarcerated persons, that number is even lower. TLC considered societal changes - language and cultural modernization that make the language and tone of the Big Book difficult to understand today and sometimes offensive to newcomers. Example: sexism and problematic history of To Wives (Lois wanted to write it and Bill wouldn’t let her, then filled it with gender role stereotypes and concepts that are counter to the current Al-Anon program such as suggestions that a wife’s behavior can lead a husband to drink or stay sober).

TLC considered a request for step/"three legacies" workbooks but took no action. 1977 committee considered a similar request and determined that creating a workbook would give the impression that "this is the only way." Meetings and 1:1 discussions should be our "study guides". The idea was cited that if a guide was needed, the first members would have created one. "AA is a program of self-diagnosis, self-motivation, and self-action and the use of study guides... or interpretations is therefore not generally appropriate." (Quotes are from the 1977 document)

L: Consider requests to revise the book Alcoholics Anonymous.

Summary:

The trustees' Literature Committee reviewed and agreed to forward to the 2020 Conference Committee on Literature requests to: 1. Consider an audit of the first 164 pages of the Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous. 2. Consider adding pages 3 through 41 of the pamphlet "The A.A. Group" to the appendix of the next printing of the book Alcoholics Anonymous.

Area 13 (Washington) requests that the contents of the pamphlet "The AA Group" be added to a 5th edition as an appendix as a way to encourage participation in service.

District 55 in Area 59 requests that the first 164 pages of the Big Book be "audited" to consider the following: "Pronoun usage—where possible the gender-neutral form should be incorporated. • Passages or sections that are no longer consistent with or relevant when taken in context of society in general or the A.A. membership composition. • The chapters To Wives and The Family Afterward should specifically be evaluated for revisions to be more consistent with today's membership." No changes should be made to Bill's Story. Nothing should be done to alter the message of the Big Book.

Background includes a list of GSC advisory actions regarding changes to the first 164 pages of the Big Book. All of them uphold the feeling that the first 164 pages as well as the Preface, the Forewords, The Doctor's Opinion, "Dr. Bob's Nightmare" and the Appendices remain unchanged.

M: Consider proposals related to a possible Fifth Edition of the book Alcoholics Anonymous.

Summary:

Proposals: Consider a proposed addendum to the Fifth Edition foreword addressing gendered language in the text (District 10 / the Fifth Traditionists Group - Bloomington, IN); Consider developing a Fifth Edition with updated stories and revisions to Appendices III and V (Area 6 California Northern Coastal); Consider development of a Fifth Edition of the book Alcoholics Anonymous (Area 20 Northern Illinois).

TLC decided that the issue of whether a Fifth Edition should be developed at all should be decided before the sub-proposals are considered further.

The proposed reasoning behind the need for a Fifth Edition is that the stories should be updated to "reflect our changing society."

Another reason for a Fifth Edition is the passage of time - there were 16 years between 1st and 2nd editions, 21 years between 2nd and 3rd and 25 years between 3rd and 4th.

Proposed updates to Appendices: "Update Appendix III (The Medical View on A.A.) to include more information on mental illness" and remove reference to the now out-of-print pamphlet "Three Talks to Medical Societies by Bill W." "Update Appendix V and include perspectives from different faiths."

TLC reviewed all TLC and Conference Literature Committee (CLC) actions from initial requests in 1994 to publishing in 2001. Surveys were sent to all delegates to determine if the fellowship felt a new edition was necessary. Conference approval was received in 1997 for work to begin.

N: Consider development of a draft Fourth Edition of the book *Alcoholicos Anonimos*. This originated from a Floor Action of the 2019 GSC to commit to the Trustees Literature Committee - so this is not an approval, nor does it mean this will be implemented. This moves the discussion of the recommendation from the floor of the Conference to a Trustee's Committee.

Alcoholics Anonimos is in its Third Edition. Development was approved in 2004, and work continued until production was approved by the GSC in 2007.

O: Consider updating the pamphlet "AA for the Black and African-American Alcoholic" This originated from a Floor Action of the 2019 GSC to commit to the Trustees Literature Committee - so this is not an approval, nor does it mean this will be implemented. This moves the discussion of the recommendation from the floor of the Conference to a Trustee's Committee.

The 2014 AA Membership survey indicates only 4% of AA members are black, while white membership is estimated at 89%. In July 2018, two trustees reached out to black members serving as delegates, as well as GSO, staff, trustees and past trustees to have discussions. It was indicated that in some places meetings are segregated and in others there are very few black members. Many perspectives were provided, and it has been suggested that presentations or workshops at the GSC discuss the topic of inclusivity, and that the pamphlet "The AA Group" discuss how groups could be more inclusive. In addition, the GSB Strategic Plan includes the goals (among others) of (1) The AA Fellowship will become more inclusive and accepting, and thereby AA will experience an increase in membership as more people are introduced to recovery and (2) Identify new places and audiences to bring the AA message of hope.

P: Consider requests to revise the book *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*.

Summary:

Request 1: To remove the phrase "opposite sex" from page 117 in the chapter on the 12th step.

Way Out Northeast Group - St. Petersburg, Florida (passed by simple majority at district meeting but not by enough to pass on to Area 15)

"Nearly every sound human being experiences, at some time in life, a compelling desire to find a mate of the opposite sex with whom the fullest possible union can be made—spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical. This mighty urge is the root of great human accomplishments, a creative energy that deeply influences our lives. God fashioned us that way..." p. 117

Proposed change: just remove the words "of the opposite sex" and it still makes sense.

Request states that this violates the 10th tradition - affiliation / opinions on outside issues - as it is based in religious belief.

Request 2: Reconsider the use of the phrase "lustful enough to rape" on page 66 in the chapter on the 6th step. Area 7 (California Northern Interior)

Reasoning behind request is that lust is not the cause of rape. "The multiple motivations include, but are not limited to, sexual gratification, revenge. recreation, power/control, and attempts to achieve or perform masculinity and a desire for power, among other causes" Quote is from the request but quoted from a 2015 literary review of the causes of rape. The phrase is misleading and may be offensive/uncomfortable for many members.

Q. Consider a request to add a subtitle to the booklet *Living Sober*. This is a request to add the subtitle "How not to take the first drink".

R. Consider requests to revise text related to open meetings in the pamphlet "The AA Group".

Two areas have requested removing from the pamphlet (P-16) the text regarding open meetings that reads:

“Non-alcoholics” may attend open meetings as observers”

The suggestion is to keep literature consistent, and since the 2019 GSC voted to not add the above sentence to the (F-17) AA Primary Purpose Card, those that agree we should be consistent, recommend removing the sentence from the F-17 card. Further, it is thought that this sentence shows AA’s increasing tendency toward rigidity and that telling someone how or in what matter they may participate is a clear violation of Tradition Four: “Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or AA as a whole.”

Also cited was page 159-160 of Alcoholics Anonymous:

In addition to casual get-togethers, it became customary to set apart one night a week for a meeting to be attended by anyone or everyone interested in a spiritual way of life. Aside from fellowship and sociability, the prime object was to provide a time and place where new people might bring their problems.

S. Consider request to revised text related to self-support in the pamphlet “Frequently Asked Questions About AA”.

On page 17 of this pamphlet (P-2) the question “What does Membership in AA cost?” Is answered by stating that “we pass the hat at the meeting to defray the cost of renting a meeting place and other meeting expenses, including coffee, sandwiches, cakes or whatever else may be served.”

The request is to have the language about sandwiches, cakes or whatever else may be served, as there is no mention anywhere in the traditions of feeding or catering to the members.

T. Consider revising the pamphlet “Questions and Answers on Sponsorship”(P-15)

The request is for two things:

(1) Replace the language that the sponsor and newcomer be of the same sex.

Sponsorship is one of the most important tools that we use to carry out our message, and should be equally available to all AAs. Transgender and nonbinary (people who do not identify as either men or women) alcoholics do not have equal access to sponsorship. Our pamphlets, literature, and meeting formats maintain a strict segregation of men and women. This leaves transgender AAs at risk of misunderstanding, ostracism, rejection, and even violence.

The request is to replace this paragraph, found on page 12 under the heading “Can any member be a sponsor?”:

In most instances, A.A. custom does suggest one limitation, already noted on page 10: If the group is large enough to allow a choice, sponsor and newcomer be of the same sex. The reasons are the same from both viewpoints; we A.A. members, no matter how long we have been sober, remain thoroughly human, subject to emotions that might divert us from “our primary purpose.”

Replace with:

A.A. custom does suggest one limitation: sponsorship should be avoided wherever a romantic entanglement might arise between sponsor and newcomer. We A.A. members, no matter how long we have been sober, remain thoroughly human, subject to emotions that might divert us from “our primary purpose.”

(2)Expand the section on Service Sponsorship and that the pamphlet be retitled to include Service Sponsorship.

U. Consider revising the pamphlet “GSR: Your Group’s Link to AA as a Whole” (P-19)
Two Areas submitted a request to add the GSR Preamble to the pamphlet. The wording is:

We are the General Service Representatives. We are the link in the chain of communication for our groups with the General Service Conference and the world of A.A.

We realize the ultimate authority is a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. As trusted servants, our job is to bring information to our groups in order that they can reach an informed group conscience. In passing along this group conscience, we are helping to maintain the unity and strength so vital to our fellowship.

Let us, therefore, have the patience and tolerance to listen while others share, the courage to speak up when we have something to share, and the wisdom to do what is right for our group and A.A. as a whole.

V. Review recovery literature matrix.

The conference committee will review the matrix, and its usefulness as a tool to maintain our literature.

VII. Policy and Admissions

- A. Consider this proposed process for approving observers to the US/Canada GSC: Observer requests must be received by October 1, for the GSC held in the following year. Request is forwarded to Trustees Committee on GSC, which makes a recommendation to the GSB. Upon the GSB approval of a request for admissions, the request goes to the Conference Policy/Admissions Committee for review and discussion. If recommended, the entire GSC is polled so that the entire GSC weighs in, leaving enough time for and approved observer to secure travel.
- B. Consider implementing electronic voting for Trustee Elections: Since 2018, GSC voting is electronic for all votes except for elections of regional trustees and trustees-at-large. Since elections are held on Wednesday of GSC, which is a Committee Report day there e is no additional cost to implement electronic voting for elections.
- C. Review GSO General Manager’s report on GSC site selection, including venues outside NYC and NYS. Our Charter and By-laws of GSB has GSC meeting (and Trustee Meetings) in NYC unless agreed upon. By-laws of AAWS and AA Grapevine each call for respective annual meetings to be in NYS on the day immediately following GSC. GSO is working with a consultant on 2025 GSC, exploring cost effective and more efficient locations, outside of NYC and NYS.
- D. Item corrected in that dates for the GSC are reviewed in two-year blocks. Considering review dates for GSC will be next year, with the dates for the 2025 and 2026 GSCs to be reviewed at that time.
- E. Consider a proposed process for how a Conference Committee could review, discuss and act on proposed agenda items not forwarded to a Conference committee.

Per 2016 Conference recommendation, the GSB is to develop a new policy and a plan that enhances the GSC agenda review and selection process, providing delegates a role in the vetting and selection process. This ongoing work has resulted in two proposed processes for (1)how a Conference committee could review, discuss and act on proposed agenda items not forwarded

a. Proposed agenda items not forwarded to conference committee, will be presented in a standing agenda item to “review those grid items not forwarded”.

b. Additional background can be included if deemed helpful.

- c. "Do not forward" items will have background included with the conference background for whole conference (except confidential info).
 - d. Conference committee determines if they agree with Trustee committee or to send back for additional work and consideration.
 - 1. If in agreement, secretary will respond to submitter of item with rationale
 - 2. If more work and consideration is needed, it is sent to the Trustees Committee on the GSC (TCGSC)
 - e. Conference Committee reports will capture the review of items not forwarded.
- (2)process for approving observers to the GSC - see item A in this section
- F. Consider a proposed process for equitable distribution of Conference Committee workload.

A 2017 Advisor Action recommended that a plan be developed for equitable distribution of the workload. Work has been ongoing, with an agreement to present a proposed process at the 2020 GSC.

Several options were considered, however, the subcommittee recommended the importance of: keeping current committee structure intact, move additional items into a committee for equity, add additional primary committees as needed.

A proposed scoring tool would help add consideration to time involved per item.

G. Review the floor action process at the GSC, which will guard against circumventing the conference process. The normal conference process involves study of background material, careful discussion, a full-informed vote, substantial unanimity - reflecting the true voice of AA.

VIII. Public Information

- A. Review 2019 Annual Report from trustees PIC regarding AA.org and Grapevine.org
 - Many changes occurred and a list is available. All went through AAWS board
 - 16.5 million total visits to aa.org in 2019
 - Daily visits average was 45,000
 - Grapevine revamped its website jan 31, 2021 with 50k visits in February
- B. Discuss a Progress Report on AAWS Meeting Guide app
 - AAWS Meeting Guide app went live in August 2019
 - October-November 3.6 to 4.1 million views.
 - October-November 74k to 234k Unique visitors
- C. Review 2019 trustees PIC progress on usefulness and effectiveness of AAWS YouTube Account

This past week at meetings I generally mentioned the Youtube account as a resource and platform that PIC has had implemented for a couple a years and will be evaluated for its usefulness and effectiveness by the General Service Committee. I'm not sure if the committee will want some quantitative information but I went to 5 meetings and spoke one on one or in small groups of 2-3 with 9 individuals. These people are early 30's or younger. Overwhelmingly, the one on one conversations I've had with people were not even aware that AA had a Youtube channel. Quite a few people said they're more likely to turn to Instagram accounts to follow regarding sobriety over searching Youtube. A couple people said they are part of private Facebook groups that organize social activities and use that as a way to bring in new people to the fellowship. The Facebook groups allow them to

create events that people can register for and plan for, as well being a sound board for meeting recommendations and arrange for rides. I took a look through the Youtube videos and I think the videos capture the message of AA for the general public to consider especially the videos for professionals.

- As of 12/2019: 4200 subscribers' to with 2k-4k views per month
- 16 (English Spanish and French) There are 165 completed videos that need to be readied for YouTube.

D. Review the 2019 trustees' Public Information Committee progress report on the use of Google AdWords/Grants to carry the A.A. message.

The item begins with a review of the following PI committee meetings:

2016- a proposal for a Google-for-Non-Profits account to help carry the message of AA be brought back to the 2017 Conference Committee on PI for review.

2017-create a Google non profit account. Usefulness and effectiveness of AAWS YouTube account be brought back to the 2018 conference Committee

2018-the committee reviewed the PI report of Google AdWords and Google Grants that is being requested which include information about the full years cost when implemented and a progress report. Implementing a 6 month trial, report will be brought back.

2019-

Jan- Actions: AAWS and AA Grapevine apply for "LegitScript" certification to qualify for Google Ad Words/Grants

AAWS apply for Google AdWords/Grants, for the purpose of providing information about AA to the public.

AAWS implement Good Ad Words/Grants for the purpose of providing information about AA to the public and that a report be brought back to the 2020 Conference for PI

GSO Communication Services Dept. Google Ads/Legit Script Progress Report

Opened blank Google Ads account Feb 2018. No ads were inputted until January 2020. There has been no other activity in this account.

AAWS is certified by Legit Script November 2019.

Google Ads

Consists of a main message [\[?\]](#) Incentive to Click-> Hyperlink

"Can't Stop Drinking"-> "Maybe AA can help"-> Website

E. Discuss a request to adjust all A.A.W.S. video titles for search engine optimization (SEO).

2020 Committee on PI- update all Conference approved video titles for search engine optimization. Committee approved.

Memo 2019 sent prior to 2020 PI Committee meeting; Proposed Agenda Item- requesting the creation of new titles that are more descriptive of content in the video, making the video naming conventions consistent, and making the content easier to find by search engines

Better titles will help individuals select what content they want to watch. Many folks turn to the internet to look up information on drinking, drinking problems or getting sober. Adding Sobriety in A.A. to the beginning of titles or other small edits that lead into what type of content it besides knows it is A.A. content. Many times this is the first interaction people will have with A.A. content and optimizing these titles and content would be great way to have them find information pertinent and personal to them.

Optimizing Video Titles: End goal

- More Descriptive
- Consistent
- Easier to Find

F: Report on the Development of the 2020 P.I. Comprehensive Media Plan

Goal:

Increase awareness of what A.A. is and what A.A. can and cannot do so that any alcoholic in need can find A.A.

Activities:

- Implementation of Google AdWords/Grants
- A.A.W.S YouTube Channel maintenance and progress report

Items also discussed by the TCPI 2020 Comprehensive Media Plan Subcommittee:

- Discuss Comp Media Plan architecture
- Discuss Audio PSA's
- Development of two video PSA's (2019 Advsiory Action)
- Develop a plan to produce video shorts based on current A.A. pamphlets that provide information about A.A. to the public. (2019 Advisory Action)
- Discuss updating aa.org Web Banners
- Discuss possible online PSA distribution
- Discuss a new draft Young People Video Project flyer
- Discuss the development of a series of P.I. postcard service pieces/local P.I. banner jpeg
- Identify efforts that may overlap with other committees/department

Action items - completed:

1. GSO Publishing to update "Anonymity Card"
2. Press Releases -
 - Our Great Responsibility Book
 - ASL Alcoholics Anonymous Book
 - ASL Twelve Steps Twelve Traditions
 - Young & Sober in A.A.: From Drinking to Recovery Video

G. Review a draft plan to create video shorts based on AA Pamphlets

Based on 2019 Advisory Action, Trustees' PI Committee developed a plan to produce video shorts of the following pamphlets:

A brief guide to AA

Is AA for you?

A Message to Teenagers

Two separate plans were presented, with costs of \$3000-8000, for 1-3:50 min videos.

Recommending illustrated drawings, visually representing the message of the pamphlet through basic sketches. Written text of the pamphlet will accompany the frames.

H. Review and track PSA announcements

- PSA "Changes" is now titled "Sobriety in AA: We Made Changes to Stop Drinking".
- This was updated for search engine optimization purposes.
- Regarding tracking Buffalo had 3 airing with 22,128 impression (Nielsen)
- Combined US and Canada 2019 PSAs
 - Aired- 71,278 times
 - 584,893,597 Impressions
 - \$20,843,307 in donated media value
- Two new PSAs are being developed not to exceed \$50,000 each

I. Discuss a Request "to create a new form of communication" to address anonymity on social media

- Request originated in area 29 Maryland as the "Questions and Answers on Sponsorship" pamphlet is not enough. "Principles before Posting" came from a survey conducted in their area.

J. Consider a request to develop a plan to create an A.A. Podcast

I always like to compare how new technologies are used to what they might be taking the place of, in this case Audio cassettes and CDs. It is getting difficult to listen to either as the players are becoming extinct. So we have to go to the newer technology to get the same message across. I think this is a very viable platform that should be pursued if only to stay up to date on how people get information in 2020.

K. Review "A.A. Triennial Membership Survey" report.

Worries: Bias will exist no matter what, What is the cost? Where is this data stored?

AA membership survey recommendations for improvement:

Using the widely accepted Total Survey Error framework – AA in the UK uses this format – five sources of errors

Sampling error, Coverage error, Nonresponse error, Error, Processing error.

The objective of either confirming the current sampling methodology as the most appropriate means of selecting a sample for The Survey; or identifying a more appropriate sampling protocol reflecting the current state of survey sampling methodology.

Including

Strengths and weaknesses

Other methods from similar groups – 12 step programs

Can it be more effective?

What is correct sample size?

AA Areas = strata

Groups = clusters

may not be appropriate and feasible to implement

L. Review contents of P.I. Kit and Workbook

Public Information Workbook available to view on www.aa.org

IX. Report and Charter

A. The first thing this committee does is review the Final Report from the General Service Conference of the prior year (2019, in this case). So no conscience needs to be developed here.

B. Discuss AA Directories (Canada, Eastern US, Western US)

In light of new ERP system at GSO, this is to explore alternative methods of accessing and distributing the contact info in the AA directories, as in 2018 it was decided not to print the directories due to the ERP system; and to report to 2020 GSC. Ongoing concerns are also what kind of groups should not be listed in the directories, and how to maintain confidentiality of the information (for instance not listing the GSR last names as a suggestion).

Newcomers do not generally use the directories, *but they may*. Intergroup do - in a survey of 12 intergroup, 10 said they use directories occasionally. There is a leaflet, F-25, Central Offices, Intergroup and Answering Services, that is sent to prisons and jails asking for pre-release contacts. Technology has changed what we use - alternate resources include the “AA Near You” section of the aa.org site and The Meeting Guide App (downloaded for free on smart phones (iOS and Android). In December 2019, there were 1.4 million visits to the app. The app does not provide GSR contact info though.

Directories cost \$3.60. Next printing would be for Spring 2021. Print on Demand directories have been explored, but it was thought this would cost more to establish. Idea is to expand the access to the “My Portal” section of the new ERP system (Area Registrars are currently being trained on the use) to include DCMs.

Printed regional directory has historically been included with DCM kit - but no one in focus group discussion could ever remembering seeing one at a home group. The F-25 Leaflet could be included instead.

At the GSC in 2015, a Trustee warned of dangers of creating two fellowships...those with access (to new technologies) and those without.

C. Consider restoring the two paragraphs and accompanying footnote in the Concept Eleven essay of Twelve Concepts for World Service that were removed by an advisory action of the 2016 GSC. So the consideration, is to return to the practice of not changing Bill W.'s writings and too also return to the policy of printing the Twelve Concepts of World Service as originally written by Bill W. In 1962, as stated in the Preface to the Twelve Concepts.

What this request is asking, is to reverse the 2016 decision to:

The following text in endnote 4 be removed from Concept XII on page 73 of the Twelve Concepts for World Service:

4. Bill here, apparently inadvertently, used the phrase "in action and spirit," instead of "in thought and action," that appears elsewhere in both the Conference Charter and the statement of Concept XII.

The following text be removed from the Concept XI essay on page 58 of Twelve Concepts for World Service:

Women workers present still another problem. Our Headquarters is pretty much a man's world. Some men are apt to feel, unconsciously, that they are women's superiors, thus producing a reflex reaction in the gals. Then, too, some of us of both sexes have been emotionally damaged in the area of man woman relations. Our drinking has made us wrongly dependent on our marriage partners. We have turned them into our "moms" and "pops," and then we have deeply resented that situation. Perhaps maladjustment has taken still other turns which leave us with a hangover of hostility that we are apt to project into any man woman relatedness that we undertake. It is possible for these forces to defeat the good working partnerships we would like to have. But if we are fully aware of these tendencies they can be the more easily overcome, and forgiven. We can be aware also that any sound working relation between adult men and women must be in the character of a partnership, a non-competitive one in which each partner complements the other. It is not a question of superiority or inferiority at all. Men, for example, because they are men, are apt to be better at business. But suppose we replaced our six women staff members with six men? In these positions could the men possibly relate themselves so uniquely and so effectively to our Fellowship as the women? Of course not. The women can handle this assignment far better, just because they are women.

Endnote 10, on page 59 in Twelve Concepts for World Service in the Concept XI essay be revised by the Publishing Department with language noting that two paragraphs have been removed from the Concept XI essay and are available upon request from the G.S.O. Archives Department as a reference to A.A. history

The background information provides GSC decisions from 1984, 2002, 2005 in which writings by Bill were not changed.

D. Consider amending a sentence in Article 4 of the current Conference Charter (to add "participating in the vote" in the paragraph below:

It will be further understood, regardless of the legal prerogatives of the

General Service Board, as a matter of tradition, that a three quarters vote of all Conference members participating in the vote may bring about a reorganization of the General Service Board and the directors and staff members of its corporate services, if or when such reorganization is deemed essential.

This was brought about by the 2018 Conference Committee review of a proposal to reorganized the AAWS and GSBs, but took no action. While a reorganization is not considered necessary at this time, the above change is requested as it is expected that Trustees and services workers alike would refrain from voting on their own past activities (which is what would be *expected*) in the event of a reorganization.

E. The AA Service Manual, 2020-2022 Edition

The Delegate members of this committee are reviewing Draft 4 of the updated AA Service Manual. Draft 5 will then be available early April, and will be shared with all members of the 2020 GSC.

X. Treatment and Accessibilities

A. Report on Review of Bridging the Gap Materials

The committee requested that the trustees' Committee on Cooperation with the Professional Community/Treatment and Accessibilities consult with the trustees' Committee on Corrections to review all treatment and corrections committee literature from G.S.O. related to bridging the gap and temporary contact activities with the following in mind

- How treatment and corrections material can be updated for currency and inclusion.
- How this material could be combined
- What material might be discontinued
- How the combined material might be broadened to encompass the full range of possibilities in which a temporary contact might be useful.

The committee noted samples that demonstrated current and inclusive language and encompassed possible opportunities for Bridging the Gap and Temporary Contact services.

The following Treatment and Correctional literature from G.S.O. was reviewed:

Conference Approved Service Materials

1. "Bridging the Gap"
2. "A.A. in Treatment Settings"
3. "A.A. in Correctional Facilities"
4. "Sure Beats sitting in a Cell"
5. "A Message to Corrections Professionals"
6. "A.A. Temporary Contact/Bridging the Gap Volunteer" (Outside)
7. "A.A. Temporary Contact/Bridging the Gap Request" (Inside)
8. "A.A. Corrections Prerelease Contact Information" (Inside)
9. "A.A. Corrections Prerelease Contact Information" (Outside)
10. Treatment Workbook pg. (19-24)
11. Corrections Workbook pg. (35 -41)
12. A.A. Guidelines on Treatment Committees
13. A.A. Guidelines on Corrections Committees
14. Newsletter, "Sharing from Behind the Walls" Corrections Assignment Letter
15. "The Role of Prerelease and Bridging the Gap (BTG) Temporary Contact Volunteers"

GOALS - Current and Inclusive

Less stigmatizing language

Neutral pronouns

Combining and Discontinuing Materials

Clearer more descriptive language

Increase inclusivity

Encompass a broader scope of setting

EXAMPLE

To encompass a full range of possibilities in which a temporary contact might be useful, both examples replace words such as, “facilities” and “institutions” with “settings” to cover a broader scope of programs. Additionally, to strive to include all alcoholics who may request this service, both drafts replace words such as, “inmate” or “patients” and try to use words like “alcoholics”, “people,” and “clients” and pronouns “they and “their” as needed.

One way to simplify might be useful to consider using a “Question and Answer” style to share the information clearly

Treatment/ Accessibilities Item A Doc. 2

Sample of updating information for currency and inclusion, using the pamphlet, “Bridging the Gap”

The highlighted text added to the pamphlet “Bridging the Gap” demonstrates possible ways to encompass a full range of possibilities in which a temporary contact might be useful, and to update for currency and inclusion.

Treatment Accessibilities Item A Doc. 3

Sample of Combined Service Materials, “A.A. Corrections Prerelease Contact Information-Outside” and “A.A. Temporary Contact/Bridging the Gap Volunteer”

The highlighted text added to the sample, using the A.A. volunteer forms (outside), demonstrates examples on how materials could be combined. For the new title, it might be helpful to link the old and new materials.

Treatment/Accessibilities Item A Doc. 4

Sample on how materials might be broadened to encompass all possibilities - A.A. Guidelines on Bridging the Gap

To encompass a full range of possibilities in which a temporary contact might be useful, both examples replace words such as, “facilities” and “institutions” with “settings” to cover a broader scope of programs. Additionally, to strive to include all alcoholics who may request this service, both drafts replace words such as, “inmate” or “patients” and try to use words like “alcoholics”, “people,” and “clients” and pronouns “they and “their” as needed.

B: Request to Create a Bridging the Gap (B.T.G.) Workbook

Background Notes:

This item was submitted by BTG coordinator, in District 10, Area 69, Utah:

That a Bridging the Gap Workbook be created to assist A.A. members who have Interest in Bridging the Gap responsibilities in their Districts and Area.

Workbooks are service pieces that provide detailed shared experiences on topics related to a specific service area.

Treatment/ Accessibilities Item B Doc. 1

Correspondence from Submitter

Treatment/ Accessibilities Item B Doc. 2

Motion from Area 69 Utah

Treatment/ Accessibilities Item B Doc. 3 - Sample Workbook from Area 69, Utah

Introduction/explanation of BTG program

Basic program procedures

Preface to BTG Guidelines

Responsibilities of area – database, program, workshop

Responsibility of districts – presentation, volunteers, volunteer database and temporary contact request
Documents used in BTG
Guidelines for AA members who are temporary contacts (from the GSO treatment workbook)
BTG Guidelines Statement of Purpose
Table of contents
Basics of the BTG program
Building BTG program procedures
 Preparing volunteers
 Presentation to facilities and new members
Guidelines for AA members who are temporary contacts (from GSO correction workbook)
 Introduction
 Prerelease AA contact
Suggestions for BTG volunteers - do's and don'ts
Sample pamphlet
Volunteer signup sheet
Suggested literature packages
BTG prison request forms

C: Review progress report regarding the pamphlet “A.A. for the Older Alcoholic Never Too Late.”

2019 Conference Advisory Action:

Progress Report from the TLC Secretary:

In consultation with the subcommittee Chair, a request for stories was sent on August 12, 2019, with a deadline of December 15, 2019. A ranking matrix with which to review the new stories was developed and distributed to the subcommittee members.

To follow up on the January 15, 2020 deadline, a total of 44 stories submissions were compiled, it was noted that the stories submitted had an equal participation of female and male A.A. members, as well as a broad regional representation.

D: Review contents of Treatment Committee Kit and Workbook

Workbooks and Kits are service pieces. Any suggested changes to their content from the Conference committee are put forth as Committee Considerations rather than recommendations.

Typically, service kits are updated annually each fall

Treatment/ Accessibilities Item D Doc. 1

CONTENTS OF TREATMENT COMMITTEE KIT

Last Rev. 10/18

E: Review contents of Accessibilities Kit and Workbook.

Treatment/ Accessibilities Item E Doc 1

CONTENTS OF ACCESSIBILITIES KIT

Last Rev. 10/17

XI. Trustees

- A. Vote for West Central Region Trustee and Western Canada Regional Trustee by 4 and 2, respectively, randomly selected members from Conference Committee, 4 and 2, respectively, randomly selected members of Trustees' Nominating Committee and all 8 and 4, respective, delegates in the regions.
- B. Review slate of Trustees and Officers of the GSB of AA, and resume of General Service Trustee nominee, Josh E.
- C. Review slate of Directors of AAWS, and resume of Non-trustee Director nominee, John W.

- D. Review slate of Directors of AA Grapevine, Inc. and resume of Non-trustee Director nominee, Cindy F.
- E. Consider the Revised Procedure for a Partial or Complete Reorganization of the General Service Board, AAWS or AA Grapevine Boards and reviewed suggested changes:
 - A. To create pool of Regional Trustees available to be considered to serve on interim board
 - B. To create a pool of Class A Trustees available to be considered to serve on interim board
 - C. To add text that “until the election, the trustees would still be bound by their code of conduct and required to fulfill fiduciary duties.
 - D. Reorganization is voted in by 3/4 go GSC members participating in the vote - which assumes that the Trustees and Directors would reclude themselves.

XII. Archives

- A. Consider requests to develop a book on AA History from 1955 through the present
Request submitted to start work on a new book, to cover history from 1955-1985.

A history book had been started, with an unacceptable manuscript submitted in 1988 as the writer had received no guidance or supervision. There was a further attempt, which was more of a sociological version, and the proposal was rejected. Finally an outline was followed with many drafts, and then a final manuscript was sent to the 1992 GSC Literature Committee. There were numerous revisions, and finally work was stopped on the history book by 1999.

- B. Review Archives Workbook

The workbook is available at www.aa.org/assets/en_US/archives-committees/m-44i-archives-workbook

XIII. International Conventions/Regional Forums

- A. Discuss method of Closing Big Meetings at International Convention. Historically, Friday night is closed with the Lord’s Prayer, Saturday night is closed with the Serenity Prayer and Sunday morning is closed with the Responsibility Statement.
- B. Committee will Discuss upcoming International Convention, in Detroit, MI July 2-5 (no background provided)
- C. Recent suggestions to encourage interest in Regional Forums includes: compile notes from first-timer sharing, develop Regional Forum app, develop micro-site in addition to postal mailings, increase local awareness with “intentional” outreach, create “save the date” flyers, invite AAWS/AAGrapevine Directors to non-service AA Events, place Regional Forum info in Grapevine/La Vina. In forum feedback, across the board, regardless of region, the most attendees suggested Tradition and Concept workshops.

II. CPC - additional summary

- A. Consider a request to discontinue the pamphlet “A.A. in Your Community.”**

(One issue is that the information is duplicative, and costs a fair amount to publish, so I took the costs that are spread out throughout the report can created a table from the data):

[AA in your Community](https://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/p-31_AAinyourcommunity.pdf) – https://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/p-31_AAinyourcommunity.pdf
How the fellowship of AA works in your community to help alcoholics

| | Distribution | Order Qty | MFG Cost | % +/- Ave Cost | Cost against average |
|----------------|---------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|----------------|----------------------|
| 2020 | 2,135 "to date" | | | | |
| 2019 | 29,020 | 26,750 | \$1,912.63 (\$0.07 ea.) | 8% lower | \$166 |
| 2018* | 37,029 | 35,000 | \$2,538.28 | 18% higher | \$373 |
| 2017 | 32,068 | 30,000 | \$1,767.00 | 17% higher | \$352 |
| 17-19 Averages | 98,117 / 3 = 32,705 | 91,750 / 30,583 | \$6,218/3 =\$2,072 | | \$297 |

*NOTE: A typo was discovered on the front cover and a decision was made to reprint the corrected pamphlet asap. (Lisa: for this purpose I took the more expensive of the two runs and assume the extra cost was due to set up charges, fresh layout, etc.)

Should this be discontinued?

https://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/f-1_AAataGlance.pdf - pamphlet "AA at a Glance"

https://aa.org/assets/en_US/f-2_InfoonAA.pdf - an alternate asset from AAWS – not a pamphlet

Details pulled from text:

in 1997 "The committee encourages the trustees' committee efforts to combine the pamphlets "If You Are a Professional," "Alcoholics Anonymous in Your Community" and "A.A. and Employee Assistance Programs" with consideration to the following:

Brief introduction for professional groups and individuals who have:

- contact with alcoholics.
- Consider a professional presentation of items found in the A.A. Fact Sheet to provide a simple and concise overview of Alcoholics Anonymous and how we can be helpful as a resource for professionals.
- Incorporate the theme "A.A. as a Resource" so it can be used in a variety of presentations. (Professionals, Community Agencies, Employee Assistance Programs, etc.)
- The C.P.C. Conference Committee maintains that this will eliminate the duplication and redundancy that currently exists in the above-mentioned

An Excerpt – p 20:

My experience is that "A.A. in Your Community" is needed. It is true that other pamphlets contain similar information. However, I believe that pamphlet titles are important since they, too, make a statement. "A.A. in Your Community" says that A.A. is available as a community resource and explains how the Fellowship works within the community to help alcoholics. It has a professional look, can be read quickly and contains a great deal of concise information. Before it was discontinued, I used the pamphlet with great frequency on the C.P.C. assignment.

B. Consider a request to create a pamphlet for mental health professionals.

(submitted from Area 11 – CT)

Conception: This idea came from the realization that many professionals who work in the mental health field have little knowledge of our program. Our experience in our service as well as personal lives has made clear that while many of these professionals are well versed in what we do, there remains a large amount of misconception and misinformation.

Excerpts of topical recommendations from Area 11:

- AA is not psychotherapy
- Present the idea that A.A. is a spiritual program, not a religious one
- A.A. has no opinion on anyone taking medication prescribed by a doctor
- We are not aligned with any government agencies
- We do not require any payment
- Let the professional know that just because a patient of theirs has a problem with sex, drugs, gambling, or overeating, does not qualify them for membership in Alcoholics Anonymous nor does it disqualify them. The only requirement for membership in our program is the desire to stop drinking. Anyone can attend an open meeting but only a person with a desire to stop drinking may attend a closed meeting. (explain the difference)
- A.A. is not affiliated with any other 12 step fellowships
- Raise awareness of Website/smartphone app
- Policy of welcoming all and anonymity, suggest professionals attend an open meeting
- (Maybe) Let them know that our members, all the way back to our founders, have suffered from mental illness so it is likely that they will come across an Alcoholic in their professional life that could benefit from our program.

The Conference Committee on C.P.C. accepted the report with appreciation and felt that a new compilation DVD was not needed for some of the following reasons:

- The list of suggested existing materials seemed limited and was already available on G.S.O.'s A.A. Web Site.
- When communicating with professionals, it is often most helpful to have material that is specific to a particular profession.
- In the contemporary, ever-changing digital age, the DVD format might not be appropriate for the distribution of information about Alcoholics Anonymous.

P.30 provides the history of Trustee communication with the mental health professional field from 1987 to 2015.

2015: The trustees' committee considered an additional committee consideration from the 2015 Conference Literature Committee on the development of service material on A.A. as a resource for the mental health professional and agreed to add this to the scope of the Subcommittee on Review of C.P.C. Pamphlets.

In 2015: The trustees' subcommittee on C.P.C. Publications also gave a report of their discussion regarding the creation of a draft letter from a mental health professional to mental health professionals, for possible inclusion on the professionals' page on the G.S.O. website, aa.org. The trustees' committee asked the staff secretary to send a memo to the Publishing Department asking for their collaboration with a former Class A trustee in the mental health profession in developing language for the letter.

Content Under C.P.C. Purview

| | Service Pieces | Videos | Flyers | Newsletters |
|--|---|---|--------------------------------------|-------------------|
| A Member's Eye-View of A.A. (P-41) | A.A. Fact Sheet (F-94) | C.P.C. DVD "A.A. Cooperation with the Professional Community" (DV-13) | About A.A. placard (F-24) | About A.A. (F-13) |
| A.A. as a Resource for the Health Care Professional (P-23) | A.A. Guidelines (on) Cooperating with Court, D.W.I. and Similar Programs (MG-5) | | About A.A. Subscription Cards (F-23) | |
| Alcoholics Anonymous in Your Community (P-31) | A.A. Guidelines (on) Cooperation with the Professional Community (MG-11) | | | |
| How A.A. Members Cooperate with Professionals (P-29) | A.A. Guidelines for A.A. Members Employed in the Alcoholism Field (MG-10) C.P.C. Kit (M-41) | | | |
| If You Are a Professional (P-48) | C.P.C. Workbook (M-41 I) | | | |
| Is There an Alcoholic in the Workplace? (P-54) | Information on Alcoholics Anonymous (F-02) | | | |
| Members of the Clergy Ask About A.A. (P-25) | A.A. as a Resource for Drug & Alcohol Court Professionals (F-177) | | | |
| Problems Other Than Alcohol (P-35) | | | | |

C. Discuss progress report on LinkedIn page implementation

The LinkedIn page was launched on November 19, 2019, in English, French, and Spanish. The overall goal of the LinkedIn page is to share information on A.A. with professionals and refer professionals to aa.org.

(Note: Did not compile the graphs or marketing-based information on “page visits” or “impressions” however the data is available on pages 35-37 of the CPC links)

The post included the following statement to clarify the list’s purpose:

- “Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. (“A.A.W.S.”) is providing the list below of national professional events where traveling exhibits are staffed by local A.A. members (not employees of A.A.W.S.) who volunteer at booths to provide information about A.A. and how professionals can find local or online A.A. contacts.
- A.A.W.S. is posting this list to only inform professionals that information about A.A. is available at these national events. Please note that A.A.W.S. is not affiliated with and does not endorse or approve any of the professional organizations listed below.
- A.A.W.S. has every desire to be cooperative with professionals who want to help alcoholics. For further information, please contact the Cooperation with the Professional Communities Coordinator of A.A.W.S. at cpc@aa.org.”

A grid of information was provided with links to refer professionals
A selection of positive comments were shared in the report. (P 40)

2017 stats:

The report contains many statistics about LinkedIn, from the total number of users (476 million) to the percentage who use LinkedIn daily (40%). Here is a sampling for specific job titles:

- 138,055 Nurse Practitioners
- 90,522 Psychotherapists
- 38,160 Addiction Medicine Specialists
- 49,754 Probation Officers
- 4,443 Parole Board Members

There are also broader classifications such as:

- 540,641 people in the field of Corrections
- 94,100 people who do some kind of training in the Probation field

There are also organizations such as:

- The U.S. Department of Veteran's Affairs with 253,840 followers
- Society of Human Resource Management with 231,454 followers

Concern about advertisements:

- When we queried the LinkedIn Help Center about whether or not these could be disabled we received the following communication: "At this time, ads will appear on all Company Pages (even the Company Page for LinkedIn). We don't currently have the functionality available to prevent Ads from appearing on a Company Page."

AI anon has had a presence much longer on LinkedIn:

- AI-Anon is comfortable with professionals following them, that it doesn't imply affiliation, and that they don't feel professionals are using AI-Anon to promote themselves, they are simply showing what they believe in. They said that "following" on LinkedIn is not declaring your AI-Anon membership, especially if you are a professional. On their Facebook page they feel that just because someone "likes" or "friends" AI-Anon, it doesn't mean they are declaring their membership. The example they used was: you may "like" an organization on Facebook that combats child abuse but that doesn't mean you were abused as a child. You are simply signaling that you value their work.

The AI-Anon team feels that being on LinkedIn is much like being at a health fair. In the digital age this is how you make sure that professionals can find you; it's a way to demonstrate that you are open to cooperating with professionals.

They feel that the words "marketing" and "promotion" are not synonymous. What they are doing is "content marketing" – creating content that people can find and using the platforms and channels that are available.

- 1) Use LinkedIn to educate professionals about what A.A. is and is not. Currently local C.P.C. committees and members share information about A.A. with professionals through presentations at events like breakfasts, exhibits at conferences, mailings, and by one-on-one interactions with clergy, H.R. people at their job, or their personal physicians. Information about A.A. is also available on www.aa.org, especially on the "Information for Professionals" page.

OPPORTUNITIES:

- There are many sources of inaccurate information about A.A. on the web. A Company Page would be an accurate source, geared toward professionals and widely accessible to them.
- This information could address misconceptions about A.A. and help professionals understand aspects of our Traditions such as anonymity, singleness of purpose, non-affiliation, and our non-professional status.
- Links could bring more professionals to our website so they can see its potential as a resource for themselves and their clients/patients.
- Our presence on LinkedIn could reinforce the relevance of A.A.
- A LinkedIn page is a low cost way to reach international professionals (there is more on this later in the report.)

CHALLENGES

- Creating the page, maintaining it, and especially posting updates require a time commitment from whoever is the administrator.

QUESTIONS

- At what point does pushing communications out cross the line from attraction to promotion?
- Is a LinkedIn presence usurping responsibility from local C.P.C. committees or discouraging face-to-face interactions with professionals?

Pages 37-56 in our compiled PDF provide significant information on how search engines function, how Al-Anon has already gained expertise with this opportunity to inform professionals how their fellowship functions, and reinforces that affiliation with professionals does not equate to endorsement (on either side).

CONCLUSIONS

- The majority opinion of the subcommittee is that Alcoholics Anonymous should have a Company Page on LinkedIn to enhance our cooperation with the professional community.
- It would offer another digital resource in addition to our website where professionals could find accurate information about A.A. and where we could address misconceptions;
- it would broaden the reach of About A.A.;
- it could offer a venue for our professional friends to recommend us which is significant given the impact of peer to peer communication;
- it could expand the network of professional friends which could deepen the pool of Class A candidates;
- it could raise awareness of national and local professional conferences where A.A. would be exhibiting;
- and our presence on LinkedIn could reinforce the continuing relevance and efficacy of our Program.

While those in the majority wish promoted content didn't appear on Company pages they feel that professionals on LinkedIn would have enough familiarity with digital media to recognize that the content is not provided by A.A. and they would not misinterpret it as affiliation or endorsement.

The subcommittee discussed adding a disclaimer on the Company Page along the lines of, "Alcoholics Anonymous does not endorse and is not affiliated with any of the advertisers featured in promoted content that may appear in the right column of this page." The Google Not-For-Profit page is facing similar challenges and may provide helpful experience.

Likewise, the majority opinion is that the opportunities explored do not cross from attraction to promotion. As one member of the subcommittee put it, “While some may say this is promotion, it appears instead to be moving from invisibility to the possibility of attraction. To be attracted, people need to see us and have a sense of what we are.”

The majority opinion is that A.A. can have a presence on LinkedIn without compromising Traditions 6, 10, and 11. Also, that without a presence on LinkedIn we may be compromising Tradition 5, since making A.A. more accessible to professionals is part of our primary purpose – to carry the A.A. message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

The minority opinion is that our presence on LinkedIn would be in conflict with Traditions 6, 10, and 11. The minority opinion is that affiliation and endorsement are implied by promoted content as well as by publishing our presence at other organizations’ conferences. The minority opinion is that by pushing content out about ourselves we are not staying true to the spirit of Tradition 11: **“There is never need to praise ourselves. We feel it better to let our friends recommend us.”**

While the letters or thought pieces would be authored by our friends, it is we, Alcoholics Anonymous, who would be publishing them, and therefore praising ourselves. Another concern voiced as part of the minority opinion is that the LinkedIn effort usurps what should be the domain of group members and local committees. “We have two million members. That should be an adequate resource to carry the message to professionals. If we show up and keep with our primary purpose of helping alcoholics, then we don’t need to promote ourselves and professionals will respond accordingly.”

“Depending on LinkedIn we should be improving lines of communication within the Fellowship to make members more aware of this need and how to answer it.”

The minority opinion is that if we deployed an App properly it would preclude the need for dealing with social media platforms. An App is far more acceptable because it “could be used to direct specific people to specific pieces of literature and we would have complete control over the content and would not be affiliated with any other entity.”

(P.67 – begins the history of action re: Linked In. They are asking the secretary to provide a progress report at the 2020 meeting.)

D. Review contents of C.P.C. Kit and Workbook.

CPC Kit Review:

1. C.P.C. Kit Contents List <https://www.aa.org/cpckit>
2. Suggestions on a comprehensive revision of the C.P.C. Workbook and Kit.
3. C.P.C. Kit (Mailed directly to the Conference Committee on C.P.C. only.)

This workbook as a tool **has failed to keep pace with how this work is done using the Internet.**

The Public Information Workbook is in need of major, immediate updates.

- For example, these two suggestions, on page 8, seem outdated and in need of update: “Work with the newspapers— anonymity, Traditions— generating interest in our Fellowship.”

- As newspaper circulation is falling and many long-time publications are available online only, we should have shared experience and guidance on posting ads on websites.
- “Place a small (paid if necessary) announcement in every district newspaper around the holidays.” What does this mean in today’s language? Are there districts and areas doing this as a best practice in 2019?

Consider what might replace this. It may be something like: “Share information with the public about local A.A. in ways that lead people to your local central office, website, or the Meeting Guide app.”

The language may be different, but to remain relevant the goals suggested in the Workbook must be reconsidered for today. While the Conference is asked to review the Workbooks annually, the review we made locally and the suggestions that came out of it suggest that there should be a bold comprehensive revision.