

Area 50 – Literature Agenda Items D & I Presentation

Presenter: Harry M

Date: 3/20/26

Agenda Item D

Review draft of the Fifth Edition of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*

Where did the item originate?

This item comes from the trustees' Literature Committee. At their February 1, 2026 meeting, the committee reviewed the final report of the Fifth Edition Big Book subcommittee along with the full draft manuscript and agreed to forward it to the Conference Committee on Literature.

This work follows Advisory Actions from the 71st General Service Conference, which directed that a Fifth Edition be developed with updated stories that better reflect current membership.

What portion of AA is supporting this?

This effort has been carried out through the General Service structure, including trustees, the Literature Committee, and a dedicated Fifth Edition subcommittee.

The process also included participation from the Fellowship, with 2,393 members submitting personal stories for consideration.

Is there a widespread need?

The stated purpose of the Fifth Edition is to update the personal stories so that they better reflect the current Fellowship, while maintaining our primary purpose, to carry the message of AA to the alcoholic who still suffers.

The subcommittee reviewed how previous editions were developed and emphasized that the audience for the book is those coming into AA now.

Already existing or new resource?

This is an update to an existing book.

The background makes clear that the core recovery text remains unchanged, including the first 164 pages, the Doctor's Opinion, Dr. Bob's Nightmare, and the Appendices as originally established.

At the same time, it is confirmed that the **Preface will be updated and a new Foreword will be added.**

In addition, **Appendices III, "The Medical View on A.A.," and V, "The Religious View on A.A.," have been expanded to further develop existing ideas, and Appendix VI, "How to Get in Touch with A.A.," has been revised to reflect current practices and how people seek help today.**

The personal stories section has undergone significant revision. From 2,393 submitted stories, the process resulted in a final selection of 26 new stories, along with 12 retained stories from the Fourth Edition.

Who is this helping?

This item is intended to serve newcomers, current members, and the Fellowship as a whole by presenting a range of experiences that reflect today's AA membership, including geographic diversity and varied life experiences.

What Traditions and Concepts are involved?

Tradition Five reminds us that our primary purpose is to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers, and is relevant here because the content of our literature plays a central role in how that message is shared.

Tradition Three speaks to inclusivity, allowing individuals to identify with a wide range of experiences within the Fellowship, which connects to the consideration of how personal stories reflect current membership.

Concept Eleven highlights the importance of effective communication, particularly through our literature, and applies here in considering how clearly and effectively the book reaches those seeking recovery.

What are the cost and resource considerations?

This project involves the standard costs associated with literature development, including editing, production, printing, and distribution through AA World Services. Estimated costs were not provided in the background information for this agenda item

Agenda Item I

Consider publishing the personal stories from the Fourth Edition not included in the draft Fifth Edition

Where did the item originate?

This item was forwarded by the trustees' Literature Committee as a committee suggestion to the 2026 Conference. At their February 1, 2026 meeting, the committee agreed that consideration should be given to the publication of the 30 personal stories from the Fourth Edition that were not retained in the draft Fifth Edition.

This item also has prior Conference history. In 2022, the Conference Committee on Literature recommended that a second volume of the book *Experience, Strength and Hope* be developed using the stories that were removed from the Fourth Edition of *Alcoholics Anonymous*, and that a progress report be brought back once development was underway.

It is noted that this recommendation did not receive the votes necessary to become an Advisory Action on the Conference floor.

What portion of AA is supporting this?

This item reflects interest within the General Service structure, particularly through the Literature Committee, as well as among members of the Fellowship who value the personal stories currently included in the Fourth Edition.

Is there a widespread need?

As part of the Fifth Edition development process, 42 stories from the Fourth Edition were reviewed, and 12 were selected to be retained. The remaining 30 stories are not included in the Fifth Edition draft, and there is currently no plan in place for their continued publication unless directed by Conference action.

Already existing or new resource?

This item would involve republishing existing material in a new format, such as a separate publication or collection, rather than creating new content.

Who is this helping?

This item may serve members who identify with those stories, as well as groups and future members who benefit from a broader range of shared experience.

What Traditions and Concepts are involved?

This item also relates to several AA principles.

Tradition Five concerns carrying the message through shared experience, which is reflected here in the consideration of whether the stories not included in the Fifth Edition should continue to be available to help alcoholics identify.

Tradition One reflects unity through inclusion of diverse experiences, and is relevant in the discussion of whether maintaining access to a wider range of stories supports a broader sense of identification within the Fellowship.

Concept Eleven addresses the effectiveness and reach of AA literature, which applies here in considering whether publishing these stories separately would enhance how the message is communicated.

What are the cost and resource considerations?

Considerations include the cost of compiling, editing, publishing, and distributing an additional piece of literature, as well as how it may relate to existing publications. Estimated costs were not provided in the background information for this agenda item

Summary

Agenda Item D involves reviewing the draft of the Fifth Edition of our book *Alcoholics Anonymous*, which follows Advisory Actions to update the personal stories while maintaining the original recovery text. The process included thousands of story submissions, a structured review and selection process, and resulted in a draft that includes new stories, retained stories, an updated Preface, a new Foreword, and revisions to Appendices III, V, and VI to reflect current understanding and practices. The Conference Committee will review the draft to determine whether it meets the intended goals and remains consistent with AA principles.

Agenda Item I is directly connected to this process and addresses what happens to the 30 personal stories from the Fourth Edition that are not included in the Fifth Edition. At this time, there is no plan in place for their continued publication, and this item considers whether those stories should be preserved and made available in another format. This reflects an ongoing consideration of how AA literature balances continuity, history, and the need to carry the message to today's alcoholic.