

Report 2022 March AWSC

Thought Force: P61- Inclusion of Electronic Meetings in NYN Area Service Structure

The Thought Force on the Inclusion of Electronic Meetings in the NY North Area Service Structure has met monthly since our 2021 Fall Assembly.

We set up the five questions for the areas to consider by the World Service Office (WSO) in a survey and sent it to all area groups and districts. All responses were logged into a spreadsheet are summarized below.

We held two town meetings after the survey was sent (November 30th and December 5th) for discussion and questions. All agree that the issue is confusing and little understood by our membership. More education is needed.

Our mission as trusted servants is not to make sure that everyone has total understanding but to have an understanding of the members we serve. That is a factor in making a decision and to use the Legacies in making any decision. The right of decision makes effective leadership possible. (Concept 3)

Of the 360 registered groups in NY North, 259 are active. 38 AFGs that is 15.2% of active Al-Anon groups completed the survey and Google Form.

Of the 28 Districts in NY North 2 Districts, that is 7.1% completed and returned the Google Form.

Do we need to do more before we present to and ask for a vote at Assembly? Yes. More will follow using KBDM - Knowledge Based Decision Making.

Look for more at the Spring Assembly.

Discussion Questions and Responses Summary:

Question 1 *What are the potential benefits of welcoming non-geographically based groups into our geographically based Area? What are the potential risks? Are there any options for overcoming the risks?*

- Benefits-more members, people for service, ideas, diversity, different perspectives, income,
- Risks-anonymity, security online, loss of cohesiveness, financial and not understanding the unique needs of our Area.
- Overcoming risks-follow Al-Anon principles, group sponsorship, improve technology, E-host, or keep E-meeting in its own Area.

Note: approximately 1/3 of responses seem to relate more to the question of electronic meetings as a whole rather than incorporating a non-geographic meeting in a district.

Question 2 *Groups which meet electronically often attract members who do not reside within the geographic boundaries of the Area. These members may be encouraged and willing to serve our groups, Districts, and Area as trusted servants. What impact might this have on our District and Area service structure? What impact might this have on how our Area service responsibilities are fulfilled?*

- There are risks - no knowledge of Area needs, E-groups interfere with our structure, financial, increase need tech support, confusion (people not knowing what to do), diluted or eliminated, and combining cause problems (hybrid)
- Comments reflected a lack of understanding of virtual groups
- Supportive, seeing possibilities - more trusted servants, split positions into in-person and virtual components, E-meetings for business, in-person: panels and sharing, send Rep to assemblies

Question 3 *Groups which meet on electronic platforms and seek to participate in the local structure may have trusted servants who reside in different locations across the geographic Area. How would the Area determine in which District(s) these groups would participate?*

- Many positive ideas (14) on how the Area would determine which District the electronic group would join from the group and down to WSO. Due to language preference, a group may request a particular district alignment. The idea that WSO will create an entirely new structure for electronic meetings separate from geographic groups needs to be addressed along with following existing procedures.

These questions may be helpful to discuss at District and Area levels:

Question 4 *How might Area Assemblies and District meetings need to change to accommodate trusted servants living within and outside the Area? Would Areas need new service roles to support groups which meet electronically? Why or why not? Are our groups willing to financially support additional Area service roles and/or technology?*

- Need hybrid meetings, to invest in technology and Tech/Zoom experts at District and Area levels.
- Virtual meetings should be in a virtual district; Groups should be self-supporting;
- Fifteen to eighteen (15-18) unanswered/don't know responses

Question 5 *Because Electronic Meetings were not a part of any service structure, some of their members may not have participated in District and Area meetings. How might our Area welcome and support them? How might we help them understand the service structure in our Districts and Area? For example, are members willing to organize service workshops? Are members willing to act as Service Sponsors? What other kinds of support could our members provide? Are there any kinds of support which it would be wise for us not to provide?*

- As we do now, loving, graciously, with the use of our fellowship and principles.
- Through the use of existing online workshops, online meetings and current strategies

already being used.

- Nine responses of possibly becoming Service Sponsors and two not interested at this time.
- Possibly in service on "What is a Service Sponsor?"
- Concerns about anonymity, security and financial support, for "extravagant" travel expenses, service positions for electronic members, not knowing needs of the Area. There were 20-24 responses that were no input—either lack of knowledge and trust in group, or, skipped for time/ unanswered.

One Al-Anon Family Group's Response follows as submitted. They cited the legacies used in our Recovery journey.

We believe the answer to all of these concerns lies in the 5th tradition – Each Al-Anon Family Group has but one purpose: to help families of alcoholics. We do this by practicing the Twelve Steps of AA ourselves, by encouraging and understanding our alcoholic relatives, and by welcoming and giving comfort to families of alcoholics.

This is our sole purpose – whoever comes to our meetings is there because they need help and Al-Anon is there to help them. Where they come from is of no importance.

If issues arise, we deal with them, as we do now.

These questions sound like we are trying to anticipate the future – what problems may arise? This kind of thinking is what we try, in our recovery, to avoid.

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