New York North Area
Task Force to Accept Electronic Meetings

Does NYN want to welcome Electronic Groups into our Area service structure?

Task Force Members:
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The Task

➔ Use Knowledge Based Decision Making (KBDM) to consider if NYN should accept electronic groups into the NYN Area Service Structure

➔ Propose policy/procedure to accept electronic groups into NYN Service Structure

➔ More information about KBDM can be found here:

◆ sp13-framing_instr.pdf (nynafg.com)

◆ sp13-KBDM_Questions.pdf (nynafg.com)

Understanding Electronic Meetings in Geographic Areas

Historical Background

- Al-Anon electronic meetings were not groups.
  - Thus no voice or vote within the World Service Structure (WSC)
- 2021 WSC motion passed allowing creation of a new Area for meetings that meet exclusively online
  - Still no vote within the World Service Structure (WSC)
- 2022 Global Electronic Area was admitted into the WSC
  - Electronic groups now have voice and vote within the WSC

Electronic Group vs Physical Group

Electronic groups

➔ **are not bound by physical location**
➔ have URLs and meet on platforms
➔ **global members**
➔ Have a Group Rep
➔ Part of a District and Area
➔ Part of the WSC

Physical groups

➔ **groups have physical locations and addresses where they meet**
➔ **Local members**
➔ Have a Group Rep
➔ Part of a District and Area
➔ Part of the WSC

Acceptance of Electronic Meetings in Geographical Areas

➔ 59 geographic WSC Structure Areas now support electronic groups
➔ Majority have integrated electronic groups into geographic Districts
➔ Remaining 8 are in the process of developing their Area procedures
➔ NY North is one of the 8 in the process of developing Area procedures. We are not able to accept electronic groups at this time.

Knowledge-Based Decision Making (KBDM)

What Principles, Policies and Legacies (Steps, Traditions/Concepts) apply to this Question

➔ **Tradition 1:** Our common welfare should come first: personal progress depends upon unity.

   ◆ This decision could help unite Temporary Electronic meetings that were formed our Area during COVID. Accepting Electronic Groups into NYN is the essence of unity, not separation.

➔ **Tradition 3:** The relatives of alcoholics, when gathered together for mutual aid, may call themselves an Al-Anon Family Group, provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation. The only requirement for membership is that there be a problem of alcoholism in a relative or friend.

   ◆ Electronic Groups fit the "requirement for membership."

What Principles, Policies and Legacies apply to this Question (2)

➔ **Tradition 5:** Each Al-Anon family group has but one purpose: to help families of alcoholics. We do this by practicing the 12 Steps of AA ourselves, by encouraging and understanding our alcoholic relatives, and by welcoming and giving comfort to families of alcoholics.

◆ Welcoming Electronic Groups into our Area supports our primary purpose.

◆ It supports member who are unable to attend physical meetings.

◆ It supports members who prefer to attend electronic meetings.

◆ It supports members in rural areas who won't have to drive long distances to attend meetings.

◆ It supports public outreach to younger members who are comfortable using technology.

What Principles, Policies and Legacies apply to this Question (3)

➔ **Concept 4:** Participation is the key to Harmony. Electronic Groups would be encouraged to elect a FR who is able to participate in District and Area meetings/assemblies.

   ◆ Our spiritual principles of Cooperation, Participation, Responsibility, Singleness of Purpose, Unity or Common Welfare (Service Manual page 91) are supported by welcoming Electronic Groups into our Area service structure: "We are a fellowship of equals" (Service Manual page 39)

   ◆ "Practicing our principles in all our affairs" means we are recognizing not only Al-Anon Groups that are meeting at a physical location, but also those Groups that are meeting electronically.

What do we know:

➔ The WSO will temporarily allow Temporary Electronic Meetings to continue in "limbo" status until the Area decided to accept Electronic Groups.
➔ NYN is one of the remaining 6 Areas who have not yet voted to accept Electronic Groups into the Area.
➔ There are Temporary Electronic Meetings that originated in our geographic Area that want to continue to meet electronically and be able to participate in the NYN Area Service Structure.
➔ The World Service Conference (WSC) and the Al-Anon Family Groups (AFG) Board of Trustees have encouraged Areas to develop a plan to welcome Electronic Groups in their Areas.

What do we know: (2)

➔ Electronic Groups will have the choice to belong to our NYN Area, or the Global Electronic Area (GEA) according to their group conscience.

➔ When newcomers ask for guidance about which meetings to attend, the first question asked is "Do you want to attend a physical/in person meeting or an Electronic meeting?"

➔ During Panel 64, NYN will have 2 "in-person" assemblies/conventions without an electronic component.

What we don't know:

➔ How many Electronic Groups fall into the category of wanting to officially belong to our service structure.

➔ How many Temporary Electronic Groups in our Area want to become Permanent Electronic Groups in our Area service structure.

➔ If our Area will continue to have in person only Assemblies

➔ If our Area will be able to fill service positions to facilitate hybrid assemblies in the future.

➔ If Districts in our Area will choose to hold meetings electronically or in-person.

Task Force Summary

➔ The KBDM information considered by the Task Force indicate that:
   ◆ Electronic Meetings are now officially recognized by the WSC/WSO as "Groups" with all of the rights and responsibilities that Physical Groups have.
   ◆ Our Legacies and Spiritual Principles support recognizing and including Electronic Groups into our service structure, equal to Physical Groups.
   ◆ We have Temporary Electronic Meetings in our Area that want to stay connected to our Area service structure
   ◆ We can "keep it simple" and develop procedures to accept Electronic Groups into our service structure as it is now, with some in-person and electronic only assemblies/conventions and without assurances of hybrid meetings.

Proposed Policy to Accept Electronic Groups into NYN Area Service Structure