

## 9 October 2021 CP Web Meeting Report

The October 2021 Conference participant web meeting was focused on the Local Service Toolbox Project and its efforts to develop tools for virtual NA meetings and services. 180 people attended the webinar, including 72 regional delegates, 3 zonal delegates, 57 alternate delegates, 11 board members, 5 zonal contacts, 3 HRP members, the 2 WSC Cofacilitators, 6 interpreters, 12 staff members, and 9 former board members who helped facilitate and take notes in the small groups.

Tim opened the meeting and made sure everyone was connected with the proper interpretation feed.

### Upcoming CP Web Meetings

Tim told participants about plans for the upcoming CP web meetings and WSC including:

- The 18 December CP web meeting will focus on the interim *CAR/CAT*, which will be released by 24 November.
- After the November meeting, the board will create videos for the Interim *CAR/CAT*.
- NA World Services is not travelling currently, but will gladly consider requests for virtual presentations and discussions. A number of zones are already asking for the last weekend in January, so that weekend will be a challenge.
- There is a survey posted to determine dates for the first two CP web meetings in 2022. Please complete the survey by the end of October. [www.surveymonkey.com/r/CPweb2022](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CPweb2022)
- The first CP web meeting in 2022, in January or February, will focus on the future of the WSC—things like cycle length, funding, and effective use of our time at and between the WSC meetings.
- The second CP web meeting in 2022, in March or April, will be an orientation for the WSC.

### WSC 2022

Tim reminded everyone about the decisions participants made about WSC 2022.

- The WSC will take place in 2023, hopefully in-person, making the current conference cycle three years.
- A partial, interim, virtual meeting will convene in April 2022 to make decisions required by law and policy, and to decide on the Spiritual Principle a Day book.

- The 2022 partial WSC is provisionally scheduled to take place on 22, 23, 29, and 30 April.
- Participants will be asked to extend term limits for world-level trusted servants by one year. This affects three Board members, two members of the HRP, and one WSC cofacilitator.

Information about all these decisions is posted on the WSC webpage [www.na.org/conference](http://www.na.org/conference) within the two recommendation reports from the board as well as the results of the motions passed by consensus.

### Updates from Anthony

Anthony gave a brief NAWS Update.

- A financial update and the June financials have been uploaded to the CP Dropbox.
- The contributions report will be available earlier than usual, in advance of the Annual Report.
- The Basic Text hardcover is back in stock, but supply chain issues remain challenging. We are running low on 90-day keytags because of shortages in the red dye color. Some of the IP paper colors are also scarce so don't be surprised if you see IPs being printed on different color paper.
- The SPAD approval draft will be available for purchase in paper and included in the Interim CAR/CAT, which will be an electronic document.
- Reporting about the lawsuits is compiled and posted at [www.na.org/fipt](http://www.na.org/fipt) at the link title Lawsuit Reporting.

Anthony closed by thanking Conference participants and members for their support and reminding them they can write to [worldboard@na.org](mailto:worldboard@na.org) with any questions.

### Local Service Toolbox

Lib shared about the Local Service Toolbox Project, reminding everyone that creating service tools for virtual meetings was selected as a top priority by the WSC. We have been working hard all cycle to meet this need, said Lib. A review draft of "Best Practices for Virtual NA Meetings" has been posted on the project webpage [www.na.org/toolbox](http://www.na.org/toolbox)

Best Practices for Virtual NA Meetings offers practical guidance on running virtual meetings. Topics cover getting the meeting set up and listed, and ensuring it runs smoothly. Suggestions are offered on topics including keeping meetings secure from disruption, ensuring a safe and welcoming atmosphere, practicing the Seventh Tradition, and verifying meeting attendance.

Lib said that the board is encouraging everyone to workshop the draft. She reviewed an outline for a workshop to help engage members. The workshop outline is posted on [www.na.org/toolbox](http://www.na.org/toolbox). A survey is also posted on the project page to gather input on the draft tool through the end of November. The finished resource will be Board-approved service material.

Lib let participants know that contact information for members with experience administering virtual meetings is always welcome and can be sent to [toolbox@na.org](mailto:toolbox@na.org).

### Poll on virtual meetings

Lib then explained that the World Board plans to offer a motion to be considered at the 2023 World Service Conference to recognize virtual meetings as groups, based on the survey results on this question and earlier discussions. As we have said in *NAWS News* and other places, Lib said, the board thinks this issue is up to the Fellowship to decide. In the meantime, the board encourages local service bodies to continue to recognize and embrace virtual meetings.

Voting participants were then polled to help plan future discussions:

**Do you believe that virtual meetings meet the criteria to be NA groups?**

**Results: 81 yes (81%), 9 no (9%), 10 unsure (10%)**

### Small group discussion

The meeting broke into 15 small groups for 50 minutes of discussion of these two questions. Discussion notes are compiled beginning on the following page.

1. We are aware that some virtual groups are participants in their local area service bodies, and some have come together to form virtual service bodies that participate in a region or in one case, a zone. We also know about virtual meetings that are hosted by regional subcommittees as part of the outreach services they provide. Other virtual groups are adopting a “wait and see” approach to decide on their role in the wider NA service system.

**How are virtual groups or meetings in your communities participating in NA service outside of the recovery meetings they host?**

2. Some of the recent open webinars hosted by NA World Services have highlighted innovative online service efforts from around the world, including virtual H&I panels, online meetings for parolees, and participation in online

professional conferences that helped build relationships within correctional institutions.

**Do you have any experience to share about innovative virtual service efforts in your community?**

### **What's coming next:**

The meeting closed with a few announcements

- The combined Interim *CAR/CAT* will be released in late November
- The next CP meeting is 18 December
- Please don't forget to complete the survey for the upcoming web meetings in 2022
- The deadline for input on the 60th Anniversary Little White Book is 31 October. See [www.na.org/fipt](http://www.na.org/fipt) for more info
- Website shortcuts are posted at the bottom of the [www.na.org/aboutus](http://www.na.org/aboutus) page

Tim thanked everyone for a productive meeting.

## **Conference Participant Web Meeting Small-Group Discussion Notes**

9 October 2021

### **Group 1**

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#### **1. How are virtual groups or meetings in your communities participating in NA service outside of the recovery meetings they host?**

- Almost all levels of service are participating virtually including subcommittees.
- Some of the areas are meeting virtually, hybrid and in person. There is a mix of diversity in how the areas in the three states of this region. Region met virtually last time.
- 12 areas in our region; only one area meets virtually and the region meets virtually. The virtual meetings are considered as groups with no controversy.

- Never had a strictly virtual meeting before the pandemic, but all meetings have been virtual since pandemic along with subcommittees and region. They do have hybrid NA meetings and subcommittees. His area is no longer meeting virtually, and subcommittees meet in person. No reason groups couldn't be considered as a group if they meet virtual.
- Region had to face with new situation and now use virtual platforms for NA meetings. There were problems: Most of the new meetings were held by some groups, not official NA groups were holding meetings, and they were not considering Traditions. Now they have received guidelines how to handle online meetings for those issues. He is translating these guidelines in Farsi. Wants NAWs to focus on this translated draft.
- All meetings and groups went virtual when pandemic started. 60% are now meeting in person. Nine areas in his region and they still have normal participation. They only have one virtual meeting in New Orleans that sends GSR to the in person ASC. Region meets virtual and sometimes hybrid to allow subcommittees to attend due to locations of those subcommittees.
- Their groups and meetings went virtual, thanks to the zone that helped with hosting and getting it started. They have been back to face to face for a while now.
- Only one group still meets virtually; they do not participate in the service structure other than a contribution to the zone and basically been self-supporting to keep the zoom account open. They share their zoom account with multiple other service committees.
- We have had workshops and all of the subcommittees meeting virtually. Some of the other meetings have had some problems though understanding how to use the Traditions.

**2. Do you have any experience to share about innovative virtual service efforts in your community?**

- We have been doing H&I bi monthly, when pandemic hit, now we are in the facility three times a week and still letting them hold the virtual meetings in the treatment center. Being virtual has allowed us to expand that.
- All of the world was dealing with the pandemic, and we were doing service virtually, as soon as we could, and handling everything online with the regional and area and subcommittees online. Everything is going well now.

- Zone was able to do a virtual conference about this issue and with Probation Officers and other professionals that was innovative and now we have been able to increase the number of professionals to be in our public relations endeavors. In NY, there is only one area that is meeting in person. Attend more community board meetings virtually due to this platform.
- Nothing more to add really – all subcommittees meeting virtually and H&I.
- Using cashapp to donate to the area or the region – the only thing we are doing that hasn't been mentioned yet.
- We do have a special workshop committee now in our region that has held hybrid type of learning days for our areas.

## Group 2

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### 2. Do you have any experience to share about innovative virtual service efforts in your community?

- Area went online meeting 3x/day almost immediately. All groups including online represented at area. Set up Venmo link and donate to area. Some meetings dropped from online group and back face to face. Very active. 20 at virtual business meeting and participate at area. This happened very quickly and was brand new.
- Region set up evening online meeting; then, regular meetings went online. One area does H&I at treatment and detox. Brought in laptop computers that were contributed and refurbished computers. No HIPPA privacy issues were considered though. Virtual groups in region are ongoing and have never existed in person and have no plans to. Publishes meetings on social website yet no service delivery. Haven't connected to regular service structure
- Region has no innovative efforts. Help area and region to run virtually. Falling short with H&I virtually
- Reaching out by region. 2 areas are doing H&I virtually. Areas looking at hybrid platform thinking of others health. Region on hybrid platform. Paypal for donate and fund flow.
- Region reaching out to facilities for H&I – webinar Monday and Saturday nights – HIPPA compliant. Institutions, treatment and psych. Shipped recordings all over the world. Will be presenting at WSLD.

- Region hasn't done virtual services. Held convention online.
- Innovative questionable in our region. Virtual meetings are ongoing. Keeping some virtual meetings going to service single parents, disabled, rural. Send contribution via email address with accountability. Some facilities unwilling to accommodate online H&I. Restrictions within facility on distancing. Contribution to NAWA 15K and 10K later.
- Nothing unique. Regional meeting online. Areas have their own meetings. Overall, meetings back to face to face and some are hybrid. 7<sup>th</sup> tradition monies coming in.

**If time permits:**

Do you have any ideas for how virtual groups possibly participate in NA services that are not already being tried? What solutions might there be to these challenges?

- Virtual groups make themselves available to areas and assist if virtual H&I is needed.
- SE Zone set up multi zonal symposium. WB coming to do presentation and in all 4 rooms simultaneously with ability to ask questions by setting up camera and microphone. Florida Symposium on zoom – brought folks in to speak. We should build upon this. Think outside the box. Extend reach.
- Behind the walls meetings have elected member to participate in area. Experienced members need to share with newer members that online is effective and nothing wrong with online. Age may be a factor in ability to get to a meeting, and online allows attendance, decreases isolation.
- Before pandemic there were groups, areas. Established service structure there are lines of accountability. Questions need to be answered re: accountability, one example. Who do virtual/region groups represent with folks from all over?
- Have workgroups. PR and remote treatment centers. Isolated/rural. Indigenous. Positive online have allowed increased interaction whereas before interaction was by mail only. Offering PR presentations right into meeting virtually.
- Accountability flow. One region has capacity to do correctional institution virtually and another unable. Accountability from one to the other how meeting went.

- Zonal based collaboration is ongoing with members participating from all over US, and every zone has liaison that reports back.

### Group 3

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#### **2. Do you have any experience to share about innovative virtual service efforts in your community?**

- Currently living new experience – number of online meetings increased significantly, already being structured as groups – new virtual area seated in Brazil region – this is new and we are learning how to deal with this reality / learning curve on how to deal with this new environment – open mindedness efforts. Online groups help especially in H&I, PR, workshops being held weekly / recently new group in the Amazon and new PR virtual to help local community know more about NA / active participation in regional service through GSRs / Regarding 7th tradition – online meetings make wire transfers to the virtual area, which also does the same to the region. Currently area with highest contribution in the region.
- RAD has been absorbed by ABNA (Brazilian Zonal Forum)/current focus is now to restructure in present meetings. Few things still require online service, so efforts have been to get back to full in person activities / Only exceptions or where not possible presently is virtual still being maintained. The function of the RAD structure is to structure meetings specifically for people who are not able to go to meetings. This means that to all those who can go, they are incentivized to actually go to in person meetings/Service has worked well virtually, but for recovery meetings members are sent to the RAD (Brazilian Zonal Forum) online structure.
- GATA group from RJ Region (hybrid) – is part of RAD structure (BZF) / this group is part of 2 service structures, US's as well as Outreach (RAD). This virtual group participates in virtual H&I panels in treatment centers, as many as one per day. Guide to H&I services is being revised to include information on virtual H&I panels. Virtual service meetings have brought together servants from different service structures. Virtual also enables creation of new online conventions etc that have brought unity. As in person meetings are coming back, the virtual meetings are decreasing – time should show where virtual will remain relevant in NA service (LTCs, H&I etc) .

- Most virtual meetings that started after pandemic (78 weekly meetings) have stopped. Only 4 weekly meetings remain). PR for professionals being organized in hybrid manner – this was going to be completely in person but due to pandemic was changed to hybrid. New meeting being opened due to this project (in person meeting). In Natal (RN state) online group (Dunas) still has 2 daily meetings, and has been the largest contributor of local area.
- Virtual meetings very important for service. PR state in Brazil has seen in person activities being transformed to virtual – onus / bonus – lose member contact but gain efficiency and mobility. Implementation of business meetings to bring together service chairpersons from the different areas to meet and exchange service experiences. Virtual meetings also enable project to open new groups in locations previously without NA – the pandemic made this process virtual – brought together servants from all around the region from different cities to be able to provide NA service and through specific initiative be able to do NA service in locations where there are no groups. Virtual has made possible to do service where NA has not yet arrived (H&I, treatment centers, etc). We are adapting, breaking paradigms, opening minds, etc. The explosion of virtual meetings for making decisions has brought about the need to have clear guidelines on when and how online decision making for NA service can take place. Around 7-15 meetings / NA groups remain virtual, all others have gone back to in person meetings. Region is discussing how to define and mold guidelines for NA service to include virtual best practices.
- Virtual meeting asked to be seated in the area; however group no longer meets. Virtual meetings were especially efficient for H&I service, immediately contacting institutions and correctional facilities to move service to online format. It worked so well that the region was asked to help other regions both locally and internationally. As region geographically is huge, virtual meetings enable NA service to go to locations where there is no NA group.
- Groups have mostly gone back to in person meetings with few exceptions. Some that had moved temporarily to virtual became new meetings and have moved out of the region to be seated in the current virtual area of Brazil Region. There is one virtual meeting that has been seated in a local area with the prerequisite for acceptance to have the GSR present during monthly area meetings. In service, some institutions have positioned themselves to

maintain virtual meetings; they have requested NA to maintain virtual service as facilitates employee's organization with inmates, etc. Virtual PR panels in private companies, etc. working very well. Trusted servants and members seem to be mobilized to validate virtual meetings and service as any other form of NA meetings / service.

## Group 4

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### 1. **How are virtual groups or meetings in your communities participating in NA service outside of the recovery meetings they host?**

- Virtual home group since 2017; remained a part of the ASC with a participating GSR
- Virtual groups have been welcomed into ASCs with full GSR rep/participation XXX
- Haven't lost any traction in service provision; it's working!
- FD subcommittee started hosting virtual meetings for outreach/FD purposes, and some of these have evolved into international meetings
- They're not participating in service: significant concern because groups have aligned with polarizing beliefs about in-person vs. virtual meetings, therefore causing gaps in who is willing to participate in various services and many just not participating.
- Some facilities have not welcomed/allowed virtual services. Difficult to integrate tech into H&I because "monopoly" providers of treatment in geographic areas have had limited virtual opportunities, and human resources for in-person services are scarce because many have focused their recovery and fellowship in virtual groups.
- ASC and RSC attendance has been very strong at virtual service meetings.
  - On other hand, some have better attendance with hybrid RSC, with MORE people attending in-person than pre-pandemic
- Treatment centers participated in virtual meetings, allowing the group itself to provide H&I service.

### 2. **Do you have any experience to share about innovative virtual service efforts in your community?**

- Groups
  - Virtual or hybrid home groups
  - Some members uncomfortable being on video
  - More virtual meetings near cities; more in-person in suburban/rural areas
- ASCs/RSCs/Zones
  - Some groups created very successful virtual ASC. Groups can join ASC regardless of their geographic location.
  - A virtual region was established
  - Hybrid regional meetings
    - Hybrid region established policy that any participant can fully participate virtually if they can't attend in person.
  - Some RSCs were meeting virtually before pandemic (some as far back as 2015) to better reach distant participants.
  - One region has adopted policy now that virtual is default practice; a motion to end virtual RSC meetings failed.
- Region includes areas outside of the country, where members speak common language (Russian).
- Zonal forum and task forces/workgroups meeting virtually (some more than a year) XX
  - Motion to maintain virtual RSC by default unless a hosting ASC requests in-person meeting to allow for local workshops, connection, events, etc.
- Other events and services
  - Fully virtual convention XX
  - H&I virtual meetings in prison, including inmates participating via tablets
  - Virtual learning days, including virtual professionals day
  - Virtual parolee meeting
- Other

- Concerned RE losing newcomers due to lack of physical meetings (including hugs!); however, still welcoming newcomers and seeking folks stay clean who've never met IRL.

**If time permits:**

Do you have any ideas for how virtual groups could possibly participate in NA services that are not already being tried? Why do you think this is a good idea?

- Many facilities not welcoming in-person contact. Members willing to continue virtual NA participation could respond to those H&I needs

What barriers do you see to integrating virtual groups with the NA service system?

What solutions might there be to these challenges?

- Geographic limitations/challenges: attendees are from all over the place, so how can they be supportive of local services? Geographic boundaries don't necessarily exist anymore.
- In some places, there is a much smaller number of people in real-life meetings, so they are challenged to find members to engage in service to the group.

## Group 5

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### 1. **How are virtual groups or meetings in your communities participating in NA service outside of the recovery meetings they host?**

- We have stopped local virtual meetings, hosted by the area and listed on the area meeting list. We are promoting other virtual meetings.
- Presentations in hospitals and prisons. We are not allowed in prisons in person.
- Virtual groups are participating in ASC and RSC virtually. Providing H&I and PR virtually. Many meetings are going back to in-person meetings and looking for options for service for homebound members. Virtual groups send GSRs to ASC meetings and RCMs are attending virtual regional meetings.
- ASC meetings throughout region are held virtual or hybrid. Region held virtually. Service delivery mostly virtual. Challenges with going back to in-person service delivery.
- ASC went virtual, and meetings that were virtual or hybrid were sending reps. The only opportunity for GSRs to attend is in person. Not a lot of virtual meeting representation.
- ASC has in person representation. Virtual meetings and in person collect 7th Tradition contributions. Groups participate in service structure virtually.
- A group in a hospital is held virtually and includes people outside the institution. The group reports at the ASC. The benefit is that many more people can participate than if it were in person. Group is under H&I subcommittee.
- No opportunities created for virtual meeting GSRs to participate virtually at ASC.
- Virtual meeting GSRs can attend ASC virtually.

### 2. **Do you have any experience to share about innovative virtual service efforts in your community?**

- Some attempts to do H&I virtually in the beginning did not carry through
- PI subcommittee put on a virtual presentation for corrections. We have done virtual events for the region – learning days and activities

- H&I is able to take virtual meetings into correctional facilities where they can listen to speakers from around the country. Several facilities can participate at once.
- A region in our zone did a virtual fundraising event that raised a lot of money for World Services. It included a virtual dance party. Many great meetings and speakers.
- H&I taking virtual meetings into correctional facilities. Region celebrated Unity Day virtually. Workshops for trusted servants conducted every three months for training.

## Group 6

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### 1. **How are virtual groups or meetings in your communities participating in NA service outside of the recovery meetings they host?**

- Virtual meetings looking for a virtual area to “attend”
- 2 areas hybrid, the rest virtual—groups attending area virtually and supporting 7th Trad. They are from all over—not just the geographic location. Have also joined subcommittees.
- One group has two meetings—one f2f and one virtual. Two representatives go to the area.
- Q: if not physical boundaries how do they serve? There will be challenges if new virtual areas and regions pop up. Guidelines will not support non-geographic locations to join areas/region.
- Virtual only meetings joining service bodies should join with the understanding that there are limitations to not being in the geographic location physically.
- Homegroup status—educating what a homegroup means. If you attend a meeting that is not in your physical geographic location then you do service where your homegroup is physically.
- If they are welcoming newcomers and supporting 7th Trad—then what’s the problem?

### 2. **Do you have any experience to share about innovative virtual service efforts in your community?**

- Area and regional business meetings are virtual. Subcommittees meeting as well.
- Looking into prison tablets. X3.
- Created videos for PR—Do’s and Don’ts for newcomers esp. virtually.
- Trying to do some virtual H&I. X3
- Virtual activities (speaker jam)
- Conventions
- QR codes for meeting lists. Printed to cards for f2f meetings and PR efforts.

- PR for professionals—videos as well as presentations.
- Working on the RSO selling on the web.
- Working on guidelines for virtual meetings to be included in area/region.

## Group 7

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### 1. **How are virtual groups or meetings in your communities participating in NA service outside of the recovery meetings they host?**

- In the beginning of the pandemic we started IDT workshops (you can find at na.org) weekly homegroup workshops. Some groups meet on line but come to area meeting in person
- We started contributing to NAWs instead of just the area
- All of the RSC meetings are online; they were F2F before pandemic. Starting this month my homegroup can start to meet F2F. We increased the number of regular meetings when we met virtually. So group members stayed and used chat room after meetings. Some issues where members having technical difficulties
- When pandemic started, region went virtual all around. RSC, areas even subcommittees of RSC, helped host the Journey Continues. Today we use virtual hybrids to increase the number of people who can attend our service meetings.
- In the beginning of the pandemic we all had to go virtual, meetings were shut down, a lot of home groups in my region have started meeting F2F. We still have about 3 meetings that are only virtual. The RSC is hybrid meeting now, my area is hybrid. Looks like it will stay like this for a while
- We are such a big region, 21 areas, we were lost at the beginning; we eventually became virtual. We lost a lot of F2F meetings, but now 18 months in to it, we have F2F, some areas are meeting F2F. RSC is hybrid. The biggest challenge last year was our convention: we didn't know where we were going to go, and at the last minute, we set up a virtual convention in 2 months. I recorded all the meetings. It was good. We are now looking forward to our next convention in three weeks. It's going to be live, but we have limitations with vaccine mandates in LA county. Expect over 1000 people.

## **2. Do you have any experience to share about innovative virtual service efforts in your community?**

- Being able to do events and celebrations virtually. New Years Eve I went to four zoom parties in 4 time zones, rang it in four time. Otherwise I would have been isolated and alone as we were in lockdown.
- H&I normally very active in prisons; they have an internal radio station; they are playing speaker tapes.
- We celebrate NA's birthday, big dance party, etc. Last year we did a speaker jam, got international speakers, didn't have to pay for their airfare. Being able to attend events around the world, it's been neat.
- Lots of online conventions; this morning I was in South Africa. My sponsorship tree from all over was able to meet via zoom, and now we can do it once a week. It has brought us together a lot more
- We are able to do virtual monthly workshops, like Concepts, Traditions, with people from all over the world.
- Because of pandemic we were no longer to provide H&I services, we are able to go to some places now – we provide services to 7 hospitals and one prison on line. We also had difficulty trying to hold a convention in Japan. Lots of requests from members. Each area will have a speaker jam. Halloween party on line. We are able to have members from outside of Japan

## **Group 8**

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### **1. How are virtual groups or meetings in your communities participating in NA service outside of the recovery meetings they host?**

- Leave the room open after the recovery meeting, use social media, have had several picnics (with a hybrid capability). Good fellowshipping opportunities.
- During the zonal forum, virtual dance. Hire a DJ, play music on zoom, and people on zoom were dancing. Picnic. Parking lot meeting after the meeting (leave the zoom open). Special events coming up with more creative ideas.

- Had planned a picnic to celebrate “getting back together.” Had to cancel due to Delta variant. A lot of meetings have a meeting after the meeting. Some folks are afraid to come back to in-person meetings (because of Covid). Concerns about vaccination statuses in folks. They plan to do a virtual workshop on the Toolbox tool “best practices.” Not seeing the closeness, hugs, which is being missed.
- Moved online very quickly, which set a good example. All the groups that are virtual only have been accepted if they meet the 6-points in *The Group Booklet*. NA @ Home was approached to try to resubmit their seating request. If NAWs doesn’t recognize virtual groups, how can a group of groups be accepted by an ASC. The discussion was very quick this time and the group was endorsed. The only stipulation was that the RCM must reside in the country. The RSC pays for the travel cost for RCMs to travel to RSC, so it needs to be a financial consideration for this reason and a requirement. Doing a couple of workshops on virtual meetings, building strong homegroups, etc.
- Many groups meeting virtually. Doing the group service and not much other than having meetings.
- Many people attending virtual events + meetings that have never been to an in-person meeting. Did a picnic that had folks that never been to an in-person meeting. Lots of love and caring concern.
- Groups are participating in the ASC. Assuming that the ASCs are meeting virtually. Meetings are sending GSRs. The ASC is slow to adopt any methods for moving money along from the group->ASC. Literature sales shut down when it was no longer possible to do in-person. Fund flow stopped when they couldn’t carry paper/coin currency to the treasurer. Fortunately, they had a good stockpile of money when the lockdown occurs, which has allowed the ASC to operate up to this point. They put together an online workshop, for specifically local areas to show they different way to do virtual fund flow.

**2. Do you have any experience to share about innovative virtual service efforts in your community?**

- During the shutdown they went online. The service structure all went online including service delivery (H&I, PR, Outreach. Etc.). Very successful. H&I

is almost double since Covid started. Reaching every prison in the state, most of the jails. Never been stronger. The zone (WSZF) put together a workgroup to revitalize H&I and PR. They have presentation materials [slides + pre-recorded video]. How to get into a facility when the warden says no (usually people are trying to get out, we are trying to get in). Pre-recorded DVDs with shares to send in. There are political avenues to pursue potentially. We can do service online very well. Outreach + phonenumber would go in and work together to create meetings for people outside an area where there might be meetings.

- Service structure, RSC and ASCs, is also virtual. It's successful in that people are participating and staying clean. New people are coming (some that have never been to in-person meetings). It's working, making connections, and reaching out. Today we had our RSC (with quorum) – 13 areas (8 were present). Planning our regional convention.
- Region shutdown in the beginning of the pandemic. Scrambled, but each area organized their own virtual meeting. They posted it on their website. A few live meetings survived the whole time. Most meetings are starting to go back in-person. Still several meeting virtually. RSC is meeting virtually since the shutdown started. Met once F2F. Areas went to virtual, so they were able to take care of business and taking care of business at region as well. Toolbox is going to make easier to participate in this type of service. H&I + PR has resumed and looking for folks for panels. Still a communications problem.
- Region was involved in virtual service before the pandemic. Very large country. Indigenous areas are difficult to reach so it's been useful in delivering H&I and other service. NA @ Home has been around for a while and had been assisting in delivering conventions streaming. Organized a virtual outreach sponsorship committee through their FD committee. ASCs + RSC are meeting online. Victoria ASC is doing 40 H&I / PR meetings per week. Sharing zoom account is being used to facilitate housing lots of recovery and service meetings. Magazine is now being distributed online and subscriptions have gone up since going virtual. Doing some fellowshipping virtually, watching movies together zoom. Press coordinated play. Fosters unity and connection (missing the meeting after the meeting affect).

- Used virtual technology long before the pandemic for service, to reduce travel. Sweden sponsored Poland and doing virtual workshops for social media during the pandemic. There is a little more planning involved with using translations functionality of zoom in order to do the workshop.
- During pandemic forced to go virtual. It was successful. We met quorum. We are doing hybrid now. We held our convention virtually. It was successful, even though it was the first time we did it. Subcommittees are meeting virtually.
- Region has been resisting online meetings. The pandemic has given little choice. A real effort in being back in-person. Met in-person in July. 7 folks who normally be there showed. The meeting couldn't proceed as quorum couldn't be reached. Went back to virtual, which is getting the job done. AD's ASC met virtually and got service work done (despite desire to be in-person). Subcommittees (PR/PI) has been working virtually the whole pandemic and has been getting the work done. H&I locally has been resistant to meeting virtually. They stopped doing the work during the pandemic, just now starting up the work again. This is even though there are resources available and experience to show how to deliver these services virtually. There is a sentiment about doing things in-person.

## Group 9

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### 1. **How are virtual groups or meetings in your communities participating in NA service outside of the recovery meetings they host?**

- Virtual style since 2018, first hybrid in US. Take iPad in locked down facility. Turned into virtual only for a while. Grew tremendously. Started supporting area. Contribute \$100 a month. Virtual phone line using BMLT technology. \$20 a month. Available in US. Remote GSR in one of our groups. Did presentation to prisons in Mexico. 11 hybrid meetings in Mexico prisons now in collaboration with other regions. Lot of remote members in region necessitated the use of virtual. Everyone has a cell phone. Were able to connect isolated members to established communities. Treatment centers and H&I being done virtually now.
- Virtual area as member of region. Prior to pandemic had hybrid meetings. Attended RSC remotely. When pandemic started group of people started virtual meetings and developed into an area that joined the region. Region

already incorporated virtual into structure. HG meets virtually lost space in hospital. Existing meetings still part of area they were originally from.

- Hitting some pretty-large bumps in the road when it comes to virtual. About a third still virtual. 25% hybrid. During lockdown, some meetings continued to meet in person became underground. Region continuing to meet virtual. Working thru solutions to try to meet hybrid. State convention meeting in person with no hybrid option. Most treatment and all jails happy to allow virtual.
- Experience in region is kind-of divided. Have a combination of things. Hybrid, virtual, in-person, and both hybrid-virtual meeting at same time but are not the same meeting. Some H&I virtual and some in-person. Have some listed on website. Not aware if some are doing service other than hosting meeting. Region is meeting in person and have a virtual option, but have to have a quorum to have to be in-person.
- 2012 first experience with Skype. Area spread out; hard to attend service meetings. When pandemic hit, area bought zoom account and have hybrid meetings now. Met in person in August with the hybrid option. October meeting was held virtually. Variety of hybrid/in-person meetings. Use area account for several group meetings. Seems to work well. Discussed meeting virtually only at region since we are geographically challenged and to save travel funds.
- Region committee does regional meetings with zoom for 17 meetings. Discussion to move to a virtual area. Tried to host a campout, but it was canceled due to forest fires. Region meets virtually since spread out. Most meetings are hybrid, but some do not have anyone attend virtually.
- Meetings in all kinds of ways, hybrid, in person, virtual. Not much virtual before pandemic. After all in-person went virtual. Lawmakers insisted they go virtual. Did this in a few days. Government has loosened rules so now have hybrid and in person meetings. Most are back in person as this is what most prefer. Virtual do not have to pay rent for a facility so have much to contribute to area and region. That has been a positive for fund flow. Not much going on virtually with H&I/PR and these kinds of efforts are still in development. All treatment facilities were closed to outside participation when the pandemic hit. Now they are starting to open again. They were not

aware of virtual possibilities. RSC has met virtually for the last 1 ½ years and are going to meet in person for the first time.

- Virtual area joined region in June. By next regional meeting, RCM had to step aside and alternate did not step in. Initial steam kind-of petered out so not meeting as virtual area any longer. Reached out to area, they have not shut it down. Still working on getting trusted servants. Breakdown in communications when you have virtual meetings. Unaware that WSC will not be in person in 2022. Disconnect that virtual meetings may not be getting all the information. Pointing them to na.org for info. Region welcoming and supportive. Region continues to meet virtually. Used to travel from area to area. Not much concern. Local area still hosts virtual meeting and is involved that way.
- Successes and challenges. Instantly within a month from 400 in person to 100 virtual when pandemic hit. 20 of those groups started as virtual; the rest previously met in person. Most stayed involved with the area they originally came from. Those 20 meetings are continuing to be monitored to see what they end up doing within the service structure. They have attendees from all over the world so what do they do. How does this fit with a local service committee. Have seen continued fund flow with virtual meetings. Not successful in getting service done in a virtual environment. H&I/PR pretty much came to a halt. Facilities went into lockdown. Working on connecting to prisons and jails virtually. Were able to get some virtual meetings in treatment centers. Not involved yet with PR presentations to professionals. Adamant that sponsorship behind the walls can happen virtually. Not a lot done there yet. Able to get some literature on tablets in some communities. Unable to get regions to work together on a state level. Able to get some bulk purchases to jails. Still working on working together to get some presentations conducted. Some regional H&I collaboration occurring now to assist in H&I efforts. Making connection for getting them to meetings upon release.

**2. Do you have any experience to share about innovative virtual service efforts in your community?**

- Events chair put on some really interesting events virtually. Games nights, fashion shows, and will be sharing about this at MRSLD. Motivated to put on area events in collaboration with other zones. Used virtual options to put

on the MZSS. Used virtual for training, RCM workshops, etc. improved our ability to do services.

- Every day have one or two treatment centers log into our meetings from around the state. One of the jails logs into our meetings as well. Lot of visitors from all over the country, nursing students.
- Every month have virtual presentation with professionals. Professionals have said they have found it easier to login from their desks. Currently having a meeting to try to get virtual basic texts to inmates and find solutions to get literature distributed.
- Had some great successes with PR events with probation and parole offices around the state. Mental health professionals used to meet in person and we were able to attend their conference virtually and have a booth. Able to speak one on one with some that we were not able to do at in person events.

## Group 10

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### 2. Do you have any experience to share about innovative virtual service efforts in your community?

- Virtual meetings attend ASC and some meetings have started as virtual & some have become virtual from face to face – with no plan to return to face-to-face.
- No virtual meetings. Hybrid RSC, zone. INNOVATIVE all planning is virtual, connected and spot-on communication. Committee unified and supportive.
- Had a regional virtual rural outreach meeting prior to the pandemic – challenged by the question is it a regional outreach or has it become its own group or area? Zoom admin team meets weekly and addresses zoom forum and other dynamics. Unity, accountability, and flexibility is the focus. Area & regional service meetings will likely continue permanently, and may see greater support and participation
- Online committee renamed and call themselves rural recovery outreach community and focus on ensuring recovery available within nearly 150 thousand miles.
- Virtual service meeting resulted in reduction of available & willing service members. Not aware of any innovative virtual service.

Held virtual ZF meeting and activity with a dance, games, & worldwide speakers and service forum. Virtual workgroups and collaboration with other zone and use SLACK channel to communicate.

- Believes behind the times. All virtual meetings came out of from face to face meetings no new virtual that did not exist before pandemic. Region lost 30 or more meetings that do not participate in local area any longer. RSC is virtual & H&I virtual
- Region has met as hybrid for long while, and RSC is exclusively virtual. Meetings vary virtual, hybrid & face to face. Zone is virtual and use multiple tools for communication. WSLD is in Albuquerque and will be Hybrid
- Many meetings met virtually for a while and now most are face to face. Service Members discussing virtual service delivery-particularly H&I. Regional convention is face to face end of month.
- Region and zone met virtually prior to pandemic and seamless transition during pandemic. Daily recovery meeting donates directly to zone. First hybrid RSC in rural community with no wifi and it worked. Fellowship development and rural outreach increased during the pandemic. Virtual H&I meetings in treatment centers and reaching out to Jails and prisons.
- The Journey Continues is innovative and made worldwide connection. The event essentially created a worldwide convention in the middle of QUARANTINE
- H&I may be moving to virtual permanently. Hybrid recovery meetings work to include all attending virtual and face to face
- Virtual meetings allow all to attend even medically challenged and physically limited

**If time permits:**

Do you have any ideas for how virtual groups could possibly participate in NA services that are not already being tried? Why do you think this is a good idea?

- GSFs would be a practical bridge and collaboration tool. Encourages flexibility and inclusion

What barriers do you see to integrating virtual groups with the NA service system?  
What solutions might there be to these challenges?

- Only requirement for membership is desire, internet connection, and technical ability.

## Group 11

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### 1. How are virtual groups or meetings in your communities participating in NA service outside of the recovery meetings they host?

- There are two online meetings of our group and one in person meeting. The local group brings the conscience to the local area
- Our region has started a new standing committee called IT coordinator. Having meetings to help develop guidelines and procedures. My area is going hybrid. Just putting out a laptop in the meeting. Audio problems. Large area (70ish meetings), so we're going to buy a projector and other tech. I actually need to get better info from my region about this.
- When it comes to virtual groups, we didn't have many pre-pandemic. Since then, we do have Quarantined NA that does have lots of meetings. My home group is virtual and planning to stay virtual. Regional meeting still virtual as well. So convenient it may not change. These efforts are still in their infancy.
- Historical perspective: those groups that were virtual before the pandemic transferred seamlessly. Included services like H&I & PR virtually. There wasn't a whole lot of disruption. Communities in the virtual world really don't have a land-based address, so our virtual meeting reach people in various geographical locations and still help members with things like getting sponsors etc. Have had international participation. Services are appropriate to one addict helping another while connected virtually. But we found something missing. Virtual groups not talking to each other. Felt we needed a virtual support forum, so we formed one. Sent out the invitations to other groups in this situation. Had a great turnout the first couple months. 70 or 80 at first then dropped off. By the 5th or 6th one, no one showed up. Not doing it anymore.
- I think of the recovery rather than service aspects of this question. Helped start virtual group for local service structure. Put it in the directory and other places like virtualgroups.com and got some participation but not a lot of support from trusted servants. Issues: Treasurer's commitment attached to

personal bank account, had some security issues, had to evolve our format for virtual group. Anxiety from trusted servants when getting zoom bombed and we gave up on the meeting and attendance dropped off. If we had better rules and more security from the beginning, it may have survived better.

- Hybrid meetings: My home group went online early pandemic with all the service positions intact. GSR still reported to area. Carried group conscience there. Continued the 7th Tradition online. Sent money to treasurer who passed it along. Lots of groups in my area the same. We had a fully virtual group that as far as I know don't have a GSR. I don't think they give money to the service structure. They have expenses because they hold a convention every other weekend. The group is 24/7. Every couple hours another meeting with a half-hour social time in between. I need to find out whether they do have a GSR or other questions like that.
- We have 6 areas, with 2 meeting online. My area we have 2 online meetings. They join our area meeting face to face or hybrid. All area meetings offer hybrid attendance. Online groups are sending money to areas and helping the area like the f2f meetings do.
- Our region has been virtual since May 2020. Aiming to have a hybrid regional meeting by Jan 2022. Some exciting stuff going on, but I am gathering it now and will forward it to the WB. PI and H&I subcommittees are excited about the number of tablets that have been put into the jails. We've just had some seating guidelines at the region for ASCs, which have incorporated virtual and non-geographical communities as well. If you want these guidelines, contact the UK region and they're happy to share.
- Started an online group early pandemic, and realized soon that it was meeting a need: connecting isolated members. We requested to keep this permanent, and the area agreed. Now we're a permanent part of the area. Large area covering 4 counties, some islands, rural areas, etc. No negative push-back about the meeting. I think it went so well because the trust level was high based on who was behind the effort.
- Most of our virtual meetings give out the regional PayPal account rather than a donation link for the meeting itself.

**2. Do you have any experience to share about innovative virtual service efforts in your community?**

- We're a nonprofit 5013c with Microsoft 360 accounts with generic e-mail addresses for trusted servants. Trying to get an email address for each home group. Get 1TB of free space for each, and use MS teams for both recovery and service meetings. One H&I panel does a Zoom meeting each week, and another uses Teams where we use the facility's teams meeting. Another uses Google Meets. We're diversified, not so myopic and focused on Zoom only. We keep looking at the tech and doing the software updates for it all.
- We have a hybrid online meeting with international speakers from various time zones. We can reach aboriginal reserves and isolated members. Very successful.
- Zoom breakout rooms: groups in my area that were f2f and went virtual use these breakout rooms. This way we can use a single Zoom account to accommodate multiple meetings at once. Higher Zoom levels can be pricey, partly because they require at least 10 seats. We have begun to share with another area/region who has made this purchase and help with expenses. That way we get the capacity we want without using all the seats. We've created various presentations and put them on a virtual drive, and those can be used by various presenters. Providing guidelines this way on lots of things -- anything where a need has been identified. Share these guidelines freely. We also have twice-monthly training sessions. Guidelines committee reviews these guidelines monthly. We give away Basic Texts no questions asked. We cover the shipping as well.
- We have a service called NA text blasts. Blast out to everyone who has signed up for this. Let people know Zoom ids etc just before events.
- Russia: We have a new service body called NA Digital for the region. Mainly focused on website and virtual media. Have a Q&A section where people's answers can be answered. Use a google-like search engine and make sure we get found when certain searches are performed (SEO). Subdomain our website to offer things like personal sharing, overview of services, etc. Lots of sections and lots of trusted servants maintaining content constantly. Also have a streaming service where we stream personal shares, but also people having conversations on recovery topics. Stream reading of NA lit. Jump in anytime and hear something recovery related. Stream various meetings live as well. Stream NA events as well. Anyone can tune into this channel and get content like this. Conventions, other NA

events as well. Regional meetings on Zoom, bi-monthly discussions among delegates. Lots of zoom meetings for various service efforts.

- Talking to prison radio to try to get some of our content on their channel. Buying texts and sending them out wherever the need is.

## Group 12

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### 2. Do you have any experience to share about innovative virtual service efforts in your community?

- Created a Virtual Group Starter Kit. We purchased 12 licenses through Zoom and groups can contact their Regional Webmaster for training on virtual meetings, on the use of Zoom, and to be provided weekly time slots for their meetings. We also offer this service to our service bodies. It was so successful we opened it up to groups from other areas and other regions.
- Working on creating a hybrid meeting with activity in the room by assigning people to virtual regions like a mock world convention. Also got a nonprofit license from Microsoft for 1000 groups. Also created a structured email address system for groups and areas to facilitate contact from the region. H&I is involved with providing virtual meetings through the prison's tablet system. We are also pushing people to go to QR codes and bookmarks to facilitate members searching for meetings and helpline contact info. Migration is an issue for us and we are trying to get people to migrate onto the same platforms where they've purchased licenses.
- Not a lot of success with hybrid meetings for in person with zoom simultaneous. These meetings are separating out into two different meetings but they are consolidating treasury for those groups that have split apart. Rents for meetings in NY are very high so this is an issue for a lot of groups. Also have H&I presentations virtually but it depends on the facility. Some have virtual hookups and some don't. We have the trusted servants who are willing. Finding a lot more openness these days for public service announcements to provide information about NA and where to find meetings; we are developing more PI efforts around this new opportunity. Regarding virtual meetings for facilities that are not prisons, a lot more of them are able to attend on zoom, often attending with someone who's a part of the meeting.

- Created two collaboration groups, which originated at a zonal IDT workshop in January. Those collaboration groups combined to create power points for H&I, PR, and Behind the Walls. Our webservant posted it all online. It's exploded locally because zoom is so easy as a connection tool. Have hybrid ASCs, RSC which meets quarterly live & on zoom. Also had a BMLT presentation brought in on zoom. The excitement has really exploded in the region for group attendance and also totally brought down expenses for the groups. Our convention had to be done totally on zoom, couldn't meet live, and we raised a great deal of money even though it was on zoom. The Collaboration group is finishing their 4th PowerPoint called Who's On First and they find making it fun on zoom is improving attendance and helping to reach the members in their community. This PowerPoint will explain what's a group, an ASC, an RSC, the Zone and the World Board. Will involve a moving beach all and be a lot of fun.
- Zoom is turning out to be very effective for service meetings but meeting quarterly is less effective than it used to be when we met in person quarterly. We are considering meeting bi-monthly now by zoom instead. The zone provides the zoom accounts for all the regions in the zone, and anyone in the zone can access it if they get on the calendar. Turns out zoom is not as bad as we thought it was going to be at first. Haven't heard yet how hybrid meetings are going. The region bought some equipment to improve quality of a zoom meeting. Using a projector to improve the image of who is talking online. Using a central microphone in room rather than walking a microphone around.
- H&I hasn't been able to get back in to the prison system as the prison system is just not permitting it. We approached corrections with a zoom meeting proposal but got a lot of pushback from corrections on that. The region was very able to shore itself up with zoom during the pandemic and recovery meetings were able to shore themselves up pretty quickly. Had about 300 meetings weekly before the pandemic. Within 30 days more than half of the meetings were on zoom. As of April we had 109 meetings in person and 116 virtual meetings. Between them, 14 of them were hybrid. The fellowship has shored up the recovery meetings. Region has 9 areas, only four of them were actually meeting virtually and the rest just stopped meeting. The region went virtual. The expenditure of funds wasn't quite as organized, maybe 80% of groups purchased their own zoom accounts. Think a more organized system

for accessing a virtual platform would save money and some guidance may be helpful on that.

- Has experimented with the QR code in PR, used them in bus stops and bus stations. Their QR code is linked to the BMLT. Their region just switched to YAP for phone lines which is also linked to BMLT. YAP was developed by someone in the rooms and it was adapted for their needs, it's a cost saver and they're using it and it's making phone lines better. Their region is hosting a zonal forum in January on zoom and they are going to experiment with break out rooms to have area chairs in the same room and other rusted servants. Baltimore has two virtual H&I meetings currently. A lot of area services having difficulty participating and with attendance virtually, think it's because of meeting hybrid which is not working well for ASC meetings but it is working well for their regional meetings. Filling regional subcommittee chairs in virtual environment has been challenging. Using outreach to address struggles with attendance and consistency.

## Group 13

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### 1. How are virtual groups or meetings in your communities participating in NA service outside of the recovery meetings they host?

- We are still participating in some ASCs virtually and some meetings are doing virtual H&I. There has been some virtual PR work too—letting people know who NA is. For instance, a presentation to a homeless camp. People who run a facility reached out to ask for a PR presentation and then they did a presentation at the camp itself. Tried to get a meeting going but the public health situation made that impossible. We are still meeting virtually. We've tried to meet in person but it hasn't happened yet. Also did a virtual orientation for the state dept of corrections. They are discussing virtual meetings.
- Our RSC is still meeting virtually. We have a virtual H&I meeting and virtual events. Some meetings are in person, some are virtual, and some hybrid. Our region is hybrid and has been for about 2 years. We have one ASC that is joining virtually.
- The virtual groups in our region all belong to existing ASCs. The areas are primarily meeting virtually, but some are starting to meet in person again, depending on public health. The RSC and subcomms are meeting virtually. There's been an increase in activity as a result. There's been more interest in service and have planned service symposiums on a regional, area and zonal level for 2022.
- Our elections have been simplified. We can put someone in a waiting room and bring them back. Voting has been easier. (there is some difference in the regions in this experience). Zoom polls make it easier.
- Increase in service since going virtual. Corrections are seeing virtual meetings as a much easier way to have meetings because it is a way to deal with security issues more easily.
- Virtual meetings have been mostly due to pandemic. In person meetings that have gone virtual. A few native virtual meetings plan to continue. They mostly have ASC representation. There's been some discussion about a virtual ASC. Discussion about how to support virtual meetings that have no intention of meeting in person that want to be part of a service body that is focused toward their needs. Postering PR project, some in person, some

virtual. Similar to pre-pandemic PR but taking advantage of new medium. Challenge of how to support the community's greater good when some meetings and members are reluctant to utilize technology and don't want to embrace the changes brought about by the pandemic. In person meetings that aren't represented at a virtual ASC are getting cut off from the communication.

- Haven't come out of restrictions yet. Still online ASC and RSC, but most recovery meetings are in-person again. Set up a permanent online virtual meeting that's going well. It was the first meeting online during the pandemic. Had a celebration. Before that, we had no virtual meetings. Some meetings created during the pandemic are going well and they will remain online. They are connected with already existing ASCs. We had to move conventions online rather than cancelling conventions altogether. We even had an online dance. We've been able to connect remote members better and some groups that have never before formed have been able to form.
- All of our recovery and service meetings gravitated online in the first wave. Then a bunch of groups went back to in person and now with the second wave, we have adapted—some are hybrid and some are completely virtual. Doing virtual H&I on RSC Zoom account.
- Our RSC meets online quarterly. We've also done our ZF meetings virtually. We did have one in person RSC meeting in Sept outside, but we may go back online for Dec. Elections are awkward virtually. How do you have a conversation about candidates when they are in the room. But in general it's gone well. There has been a pick up in the virtual groups, and as others have said, we are attracting remote members, geographically distant. One online meeting had an in person event and people came from far away. We've had a drop off in attendance—both recovery and service meeting. Not doing much H&I; the facilities don't have consistent processes for virtual H&I. Something new: virtual 7<sup>th</sup> Tradition. That has been good—our finances are good. Donations are strong and expenses have been reduced bc of travel and meeting space/rent.
- Sponsorship—it's become easier as people get used to the virtual platform. People are sponsoring members they've never met. And opening up sponsorship internationally even.

## 2. Do you have any experience to share about innovative virtual service efforts in your community?

- H&I and PR are taking advantage of the online platform.
- Our ASC has meetings from other states that have joined. All of our policy votes are done by e-poll. 60 day turn around and then announce the results in ASC. Keeps the discussion to a minimum and reduces the time in the ASC
- Dinosaur Day event went virtual—had about 150 people and generous contributions. Had speakers we wouldn't be able to invite.
- Virtual dance at our convention had a DJ. After convention had a break and a DJ dance. Other convention had members performing in intervals.
- Trusted servants have been able to finish their terms even after moving. In the past, when someone moved and couldn't participate; now they can stay active and attend even if they don't live nearby.
- Our region participated in MZSS, and places from far away, like LAZF could participate. The border puts a constraint on us, and we can now reach across the border more easily.
- WSZF has met quarterly not just the usual annual meeting. We've gotten more work done. We have four workgroups. Locally we started an FD team doing on demand services—pre-recorded and animated videos for GSR orientation, Trusted servant workshop, welcome to NA mock presentation for new members and facilities. We have been playing virtual games after the meeting and it has attracted newcomers. People who are experiencing service at the home group because they are attracted.
- Meetings can happen around things like Concepts—a topic that wouldn't necessarily happen if we had to pay rent.

## Group 14

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### 2. Do you have any experience to share about innovative virtual service efforts in your community?

- Permanent virtual meetings via Zoom 24/7 in Argentina.
- Multinational virtual panel PR workgroup of the LAZF performs H&I service in prisons in several Latin American countries and even in the USA.
- Meeting open via Zoom once a month.
- Zoom H&I meetings at Treatment Centers in locations where there are no NA groups.
- Virtual groups at 11pm at 1am from Thursday to Sunday.
- RSC meeting and virtual convention
- Virtual panels on technology and PR.
- Multi-hour meetings organized by the Costa Rica Region. In the November service meeting there will be a proposal to recognize virtual meetings as NA Groups.
- Service structure meetings are hybrids, technology has helped.
- Online meetings with government authorities.
- In one region, virtual groups disappeared when face-to-face meetings were restarted
- Technology has helped a lot with integration (events, conventions, workshops, etc.). Regions that were isolated have become more integrated in the activities of the Zonal Forum.
- You can reach places and organizations that you did not reach before.

## Group 15

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### 1. How are virtual groups or meetings in your communities participating in NA service outside of the recovery meetings they host?

- The regional service conference approved a motion that includes virtual groups that meet the requirements as part of the RSC and they can participate with voice and vote in their areas. Virtual meetings worked at the time when they were needed, but virtual meetings have lost steam and

attendance has dropped, and most meetings are meeting in person. Some virtual meetings are already part of the areas.

- Virtual groups are here to stay. Many groups are still meeting virtually, and they are considered valid meetings in the region. The RSC meetings and workshops are all virtual. The H&I subcommittee takes a virtual H&I meeting to a treatment center, but it has not been possible to take meetings to prisons and many of the members who attended meetings in the treatment center are now members of NA. Virtual groups have been used 100% in the region.
- Despite the Internet connectivity problems, we continue having some virtual meetings, there are some members who are reluctant who attend face-to-face meetings, we have facilitated virtual workshops on the principles that guide us book, we are using hybrid meetings to connect with the areas and we use virtual meetings for many activities.
- Virtual meetings are a recovery tool because everything has already returned to almost normal; the RSC met virtually the first year of the pandemic, but now almost all the groups already meet in person and the next RSC meeting will be in person.
- The issues presented by the pandemic were no exception. Some colleagues created a virtual group that will continue to be virtual; several face-to-face groups created virtual groups that we thought were going to be temporary. The membership is asking that meetings need to be more in person than virtual. We are holding a virtual meeting at a detox center and we have a guide for virtual facilitators so all virtual meetings can use the same scheme. The region approved this virtual meeting to participate in the region as a group. We have virtual PR service we met with several representatives of a brewery and per their request, we did a PI presentation for them. We are creating a calendar of activities in Google to streamline information and reports.
- A motion was approved at the regional meeting for the marathon group to be a virtual area of the region. The face-to-face meetings are already 100% open and some groups continue to meet virtually and some are hybrid, the virtual meetings participate in area and regional service and in H&I. Virtuality is still working.

## Results of Decision Making Poll Regarding WSC 2022/2023

The following motions were decided on via electronic poll. Conference participants had 72 hours to respond to the poll, beginning Thursday 26 August and ending Sunday 29 August.

123 participants took part in the poll.

**Motion V1 (from 2020 but revised to be a policy):** When the WSC chooses to meet virtually, all World Service Conference participants may participate and vote remotely in the same manner as the current policy for participants who are unable to obtain visas:

*“Participants who are unable to attend the WSC due to visa issues may participate remotely. Remote participants have the same rights as if they were at the WSC” 2020 GWSNA*

To accommodate the variety of time zones and to ensure an accurate record, decisions of the WSC can be made outside of the WSC meeting by epoll that is sent to all seated Conference participants.

**Maker:** World Board

**Intent:** To allow the Conference to choose to make decisions virtually when necessary.

**Poll Results:** 120 yes (98%) ♦ 2 no (2%) ♦ 1 abstain (1%) ♦ 0 present not voting

**Motion V2:** Due to travel restrictions and safety concerns from the global COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020-2022 Conference cycle is extended to 2023. A short, interim, virtual, Conference business meeting shall be held in 2022 to fulfil our obligation to address legally essential business, as described in Motion V3, and to approve the Spiritual Principle a Day book if the WSC chooses to do so. After the essential business is conducted, the 2022 virtual meeting of the WSC shall recess and reconvene in 2023. Dates and deadlines pertaining to the meeting of the Conference in 2023 shall be provided by the World Board, including CAR motion deadlines, and seating application deadlines.

**Maker:** World Board

**Intent:** To adapt the current Conference schedule due to the global pandemic.

**Poll Results:** 110 yes (92%) ♦ 7 no (6%) ♦ 3 abstain (3%) ♦ 3 present not voting

**Motion V3:** The business for the virtual session of the WSC in 2022 shall be distributed in one electronic document, which for the purposes of business and decision-making shall serve as an interim *Conference Agenda Report (CAR)* and Conference Approval Track (CAT) using the current *CAR* deadlines and distribution dates and shall include:

1. NA World Services Budget for one year – 2022-2023
2. Extend existing *FIPT* moratorium on inspection clause for one year. (Acting as the trustor, the delegates present at the virtual WSC 2022, are continuing the suspension of Article 5, Section 3 of the *FIPT* Operational Rules, while we make a decision about the future. This suspension will expire at the close of WSC 2023.)
3. Adjustment of terms for WSC trusted servants. (the details of this will be provided)

**Maker:** World Board

**Intent:** To describe what is legally required or essential for the Conference in 2022.

**Poll Results:** 109 yes (91%) ♦ 6 no (5%) ♦ 5 abstain (4%) ♦ 3 present not voting

**Motion V4:** The business for the virtual session of the WSC in 2022 shall include the approval draft of the Spiritual Principle a Day book (SPAD), which shall be included in the interim *Conference Agenda Report (CAR)*

**Maker:** World Board

**Intent:** To approve the Spiritual Principle a Day book

**Poll Results:** 117 yes (95%) ♦ 4 no (3%) ♦ 2 abstain (2%) ♦ 0 present not voting

## Best Practices for Virtual NA Meetings – Draft Outline to post for review

March 2021

This document is the next step in creating new service material for virtual meetings.

The Local Service Toolbox Project has two current focuses: 1. best practices for virtual meetings and 2. how virtual meetings are connecting to the wider world of NA, including service delivery. This outline is related to the first focus.

We have posted a second, shorter survey to continue gathering experience for the second focus, the role of virtual meetings within the service system, and how they are connected to it. The survey will be posted here [www.na.org/toolbox](http://www.na.org/toolbox) from early March to 31 May 2021.

This draft outline contains a list of topics that we believe the Fellowship is looking for shared experience about, along with some notes for each one to indicate the main points of the content. Please view what follows as a work in progress. Your input will improve this draft.

We encourage you to send us your thoughts in response to these questions:

1. Are there any topics that should be added?
2. Are there any topics that should not be included?
3. Do you have any experience or ideas for the content of any topic that is not already included? (Please make sure to indicate which topic your thoughts relate to.)
4. Do you have any other thoughts or ideas to offer?

Please email your thoughts to [toolbox@na.org](mailto:toolbox@na.org). The initial deadline for input to this outline is 31 May, 2021, but please send your thoughts as soon as you are able to. As we receive input and the outline develops, we will post revised versions of this document on the project webpage at [www.na.org/toolbox](http://www.na.org/toolbox) and extend the deadline as needed. If you check back frequently, please pay attention to the date at the top of this document.

### Introduction

- What is a virtual meeting?
  - We are using the term “virtual meetings” to mean any NA meeting that is not held in person. This includes meetings that meet on the internet and via phones. Suggestions in this tool may not apply to every type of virtual meeting platform.
  - Virtual meetings can be offered by NA groups, by service bodies, or as events hosted by a group or a service body. Virtual meetings may also occur informally between friends.
- Brief history of virtual meetings
- References to the guidance in *The Group Booklet* and the relevance of this guidance to virtual meetings
- How can virtual meetings help to better carry the message?

### Choosing a meeting platform

The importance of discussing the options as a group, rather than an individual making the decision, and gaining experience of different options by attending other virtual meetings

Factors to consider – cost, accessibility in terms of geographical location and type of device, familiarity with the platform, ease of use, meeting capacity.

Desirable features may include:

- The ability to join the meeting via a simple link
- Access to the meeting without internet service
- Ways to help secure the meeting from intruders
- Screen-sharing to show literature and other material

### **Listing meeting information**

Groups may wish to consider potential security issues when deciding where to list information about meetings. Disruption in meetings can result from listing a meeting too publicly, but it should also be easy for an addict to find one when they need it. Some options for where information about virtual meetings can be listed include:

- NA websites, including the options on this page [www.na.org/virtual](http://www.na.org/virtual)
- Social media groups
- In a cloud-based document that can be shared
- Meeting flyers (hard copies and electronic) that can be distributed

Information to include in a listing:

- Type of meeting platform and basic instructions on how to use it
- Meeting ID, password, and phone number for audio-only connections
- Time (including time zone) and day
- Language meeting is conducted in, and translation/interpretation services if provided
- Format and topic

### **Meeting Etiquette**

A few simple, and commonly agreed upon, standards for behavior can help to preserve the atmosphere of recovery in a meeting. Many of these are the same as would be expected in an in-person meeting, such as not tolerating drugs or drug paraphernalia, or abusive and predatory behavior. (See IP #29: *An Introduction to NA Meetings*, for more information about general NA meeting etiquette: [www.na.org/ips](http://www.na.org/ips))

Other options for virtual meetings that groups might wish to request include:

- Avoiding constant movement or other visual distractions
- Not eating, smoking, or vaping on-screen
- Remaining muted when not sharing
- Raising hands to share
- Limiting the use of chat during the meeting to avoid distractions

### Tips for attending a virtual meeting

#### Common practices:

- Mute your microphone when not speaking
- Use first name and initial for your screen name
- Familiarize yourself with the meeting platform before the meeting time
- Be aware that different meetings may have different practices regarding the use of cameras, sharing, features like chat boxes, and how to make financial contributions
- Join the meeting early and ask questions if you need to

#### Tips for dealing with an unstable connection:

- Turn off the camera to preserve bandwidth
- Connect to the router via a wired connection as opposed to Wi-Fi
- Use the phone to access the audio part of a meeting
- Leave and rejoin the meeting or try a different device
- Ensure updates have been installed

#### Suggestions for groups:

- Include a brief technical orientation in the meeting format
- Always create a co-host in case the host loses their connection and to assist in the meeting
- Designate experienced group trusted servants to assist before and during the meeting
- Provide links to training tools such as pamphlets, training videos, PowerPoints, and workshops on the basic features of the chosen platform and tips for using it successfully

### **Keeping a virtual meeting secure and dealing with disruption**

The procedures for dealing with disruptive or abusive members in a meeting, and people that are not NA members who log in to meetings with the intent to disrupt them, are largely the same. Virtual meetings can be set up to provide a number of safeguards to minimize issues before they occur. These may include:

- Disable any features that allow attendees except for the meeting's trusted servants to share content on the screen
- Disable recording options
- Disable virtual backgrounds or turn off participant's video if necessary
- Ensure all attendees are muted when they join the meeting
- Do not allow attendees to unmute themselves – this may be particularly necessary in larger meetings to avoid audio chaos. Assign task of unmuting to a co-host.
- Disable or limit the use of the chat feature

These actions can be taken before a meeting:

- Discuss and agree on standards of behavior for the meeting, and on measures to deal with disruption and abusive behavior
- Assign the task of monitoring the meeting to trusted servants from the group
- Provide training for the group's trusted servants
- Stay current on changes to platform features

And these can be taken during the meeting:

- Include guidance for acceptable behavior in the meeting format
- Communicate privately with disruptive members using the chat feature
- Place disruptive people in a waiting room if the platform provides this feature
- Remove the person from the meeting – this option should be reserved for disruptive non-members, or only as a last resort for NA members
- Report disruptive non-members to the platform provider

### **Maintaining personal anonymity**

This topic applies to both an individual's privacy, and to the privacy of the other members attending the meeting.

Settings that record the meeting and save it to a cloud should be disabled, as should the ability for attendees to record. Disabling the option to save the chat could also be considered.

Members may be asked to attend the meeting in a private place and to use headphones to protect the privacy of others.

Some groups may disable the use of cameras to ensure that member's identities are kept private, while others may ask for cameras to be turned on (in some cases only for a short time) to verify their identity. Groups are encouraged to discuss these options and determine what is most appropriate for their meetings.

Log in to a meeting using first name and initial only, rather than a full name. This can both preserve a member's personal anonymity, and help to avoid unwelcome advances.

If allowing attendees to rename themselves results in people using inappropriate or obscene names then it might be advisable to disable this feature and assign this task to a trusted servant.

#### **Group decisions:**

- List meeting information as publicly as possible so it can be found easily by any addict wishing to attend or list meeting information only on NA websites and in private social media groups to discourage disruptive intruders
- Provide one-click link to join meetings or list meeting IDs and passwords separately
- Restrict the ability for attendees to rename themselves or require members to name themselves appropriately
- Cameras on to confirm identities or cameras off to allow members to protect their privacy and to prevent inappropriate profile pictures being shown
- Disabling chat feature to avoid distraction and inappropriate messages or leaving chat feature enabled so it can be used to share phone numbers with newcomers and welcome them.

### **Welcoming newcomers and helping them get connected**

New members may need some extra help to get connected and start building relationships in NA. This can be thought of as "in-reach" (as opposed to outreach) and can help to strengthen and grow a group. Suggestions for this include:

- Create service positions or tasks aimed at welcoming new members

- Include a verbal welcome to newcomers in the format and reference the Third Tradition
- Structure the meeting so there is time before and after it to talk with new members
- Share phone numbers and other contact information with new members via the chat feature
- Show new members where NA materials and links to other meetings can be found online
- Send welcome packs of literature via the mail
- Use social media or chat groups to communicate outside of the meeting
- Organize social activities that can be virtual or in-person where possible

### **Sponsorship**

In addition to the suggestions offered to help new members get connected, meetings can also use these additional ideas to encourage sponsorship:

- Ask those willing to sponsor to identify themselves and stay after the meeting
- Create a list of potential sponsors that can be shared with members upon request
- Encourage sharing about sponsorship and use IP #11, *Sponsorship*, as a meeting topic
- Allow sponsors to use the meeting platform to meet with their sponsees, including the breakout room feature if available
- Share information about long-distance sponsorship services provided by service bodies

### **Signing meeting attendance cards**

Groups may choose to provide some form of verification that a member attended one of their meetings. One simple method employed is to create an email address for the group that can be used for this purpose. Many email providers offer the option to set up automatic replies to emails. This can be activated during the meeting time and set to send a simple response with the meeting's information.

Other methods include sending a text or manually sending an email in response to requests for attendance verification.

Additional guidance for groups on this topic can be found in NAWS Bulletin #31, *Meeting Attendance Cards*, which is available here [www.na.org/bulletins](http://www.na.org/bulletins).

### **Making meetings accessible for members with additional needs**

Virtual meetings can provide a unique opportunity to carry the message to addicts who would otherwise find it difficult to attend NA meetings. This may be due to being physically unable to attend an in-person meeting, because of impaired vision and hearing, or other personal circumstances. In particular, blind and deaf members may need extra help to fully participate in virtual meetings. This help may include some of these ideas:

- Post readings in text format rather than as images so that text-to-voice software used by blind members can read them
- Provide American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation in meetings
- Provide subtitles during meetings
- Provide information about literature in audio and ASL formats
- Ask members with additional needs how the group can help
- Designate a contact person in the meeting who can help provide additional assistance

Virtual meetings that are accessible may also wish to consider cooperating with service bodies that are attempting to build relationships with organizations that provide services to addicts with additional needs.

### **Practicing the Seventh Tradition**

Practicing the Seventh Tradition in a virtual environment requires some different approaches to passing a basket in an in-person meeting, but these can be managed successfully. Different methods are available in different parts of the world that enable members to send contributions directly to group treasurers, or to a group's bank account if one exists.

The guidance contained in NA service material related to the qualities of a treasurer and the prudent financial procedures they should follow still apply in virtual meetings. It may not be possible to have two members count the Seventh Tradition collection as suggested in the *Treasurer's Handbook* if contributions are sent directly to a personal bank account. If this is the case, care should be taken to closely adhere to the other suggestions offered in the handbook.

Groups may suggest that contributions be sent directly to service bodies if the group is unable to manage electronic payments, or if they have minimal expenses. Some service bodies have created contribute buttons on websites to make this easier. Instructions for how to make payments may be displayed onscreen during the meeting or via the chat feature. Groups may choose to encourage members to participate by including a self-support statement in the meeting format or periodically choosing the Seventh Tradition as a discussion topic for the meeting.

### **Distributing literature and keytags**

Several options for distributing literature and keytags can be used in virtual meetings:

- NA pamphlets and booklets are posted in multiple languages at [www.na.org/ips](http://www.na.org/ips) and can be accessed by members and shown onscreen during meetings as needed
- Hard copies and electronic versions of literature, and keytags and medallions, can be sent directly to members by groups
- Literature, keytags, and medallions can be purchased directly from NA service offices and other outlets

When reproducing and distributing electronic versions of literature, care should be taken to follow the guidelines for these practices agreed upon by the Fellowship. Information about this can be found here [www.na.org/fipt](http://www.na.org/fipt). The most common caution is not to distribute NA copyrighted material outside of the meeting.

### **Additional service positions for virtual meetings**

Most virtual meetings have multiple hosts to assist with the technical administration of the meeting and to take over the host role if the host has technical problems. Other tasks may include:

- Muting and unmuting attendees
- Screen-sharing literature
- Checking for raised hands
- Monitoring the waiting room and the chat feature

Monitoring the meeting to minimize disruptions and greeting new members are also commonly assigned tasks.

Other additional positions or tasks may include:

- A literature person who mails welcome packets, literature, and key tags and manages literature sales
- A virtual trainer to ensure the group's trusted servants know how to use the platform
- Someone to manage keeping the meeting's information updated on websites and other places where it is posted
- A coordinator for virtual activities organized by the group
- A social network coordinator

### **Additional suggestions for virtual meetings**

Meeting formats: In general, virtual meetings adopt similar formats to in-person meetings, although groups may consider simplifying these where possible. Many virtual meetings choose to focus their meetings around a piece of NA literature.

Business meetings: Just like in-person meetings, virtual meetings that are held regularly benefit from regular business meetings to ensure that any decisions made about how the meeting is run are made through a process based in group conscience.

### **Hybrid meetings**

The term "hybrid" describes meetings that have both in-person and remote attendees. Hybrid meetings allow groups to increase their attendance by having members from other places attend virtually, and to provide outreach to addicts who not otherwise be able to attend an NA meeting.

These are a few simple steps to set up a hybrid meeting:

- Establish accessibility – does the meeting location have telephone or internet capabilities?
- Choose a host device based on accessibility – this device is responsible for streaming the audio and video signal to and from remote participants and could be a laptop or a smart phone
- Establish quality audio input by choosing the right type of microphone - audio quality is the highest priority, and sometimes the biggest challenge, for a hybrid meeting:
  - cardioid and dynamic microphones gather sound from directly in front of the microphone
  - omni-directional and condenser microphones gather sound from the whole room and may be more suitable for a hybrid meeting
- Establish clear audio output – the type of speaker varies depending on the size of the room and the host device
- Decide whether video of the meeting will be provided to remote participants, and whether they will be visible to the in-person meeting

Groups are encouraged to work with the resources they have, and to experiment and test different set-ups. More detailed experience from groups that are successfully providing hybrid meetings, can be found here [www.na.org/virtual](http://www.na.org/virtual).

## Best Practices for NA Meetings – Input Workshop Outline

This document contains an outline for organizing and hosting a workshop to provide input on the draft of the Best Practices for Virtual NA meetings service tool that has been created as part of the local service toolbox project.

### Before the Workshop

Sharing information about the topic in advance of a workshop will help it to be an effective event. Here are some points to convey to members that cover the basics.

Creating service tools for virtual meetings was selected as a top priority by the 2020 WSC. The World Board and interested members around the world have been working hard all cycle to meet this need.

A review draft of Best Practices for Virtual NA Meetings has been posted on the project webpage here [www.na.org/toolbox](http://www.na.org/toolbox), and the Board is looking for help to spread the word and generate participation in providing input. The draft offers practical guidance on running virtual meetings. Topics cover getting the meeting set up and listed, and ensuring it runs smoothly. Suggestions are offered on some of the topics NA World Services gets asked about most frequently – including keeping meetings secure from disruption, ensuring a safe and welcoming atmosphere, practicing the Seventh Tradition, and verifying meeting attendance.

Providing background information about virtual meetings could be helpful:

- Virtual meetings have existed in NA for many years and have been online since the creation of the internet in the 1990s.
- The term “virtual meetings” refers to online, phone, and chat-based meetings—really any meetings that do not meet in person or that are hybrid and have some remote attendees.
- Developing tools to support online meetings was prioritized at WSC 2018, and decisions were made at WSC 2020 that further prioritized the topic, including the approval and focus of the local service toolbox project.

Ensure everyone knows where to find the tool and the input survey on the toolbox project webpage so members can read it in advance of any workshops that may happen locally, or so they can participate on their own. **Reading the material before the workshop will enable it to focus on discussing the content and reaching agreement on providing input on it, rather than simply reading it together.**

### **PowerPoint Slide 1 - Hosting a workshop**

Once everyone understands why the topic is being discussed and is familiar with the new tool, local workshops can be organized. These may be online or in-person, depending on preference and any relevant local health orders.

### **PowerPoint Slide 2, 3 and 4 - Review what was shared before the workshop...**

Begin the workshop by briefly recapping the background information above. Provide clarity as needed so that everyone is clear why the topic is being discussed and what the purpose of the workshop is.

### **PowerPoint Slide 5 – Has everyone read it?**

Check that everyone has read the draft of the tool. If a significant number of attendees have not then it may be necessary to refocus the workshop to spend the bulk of the time reviewing some or all of the draft's content. If this is the case, attendees would be asked to complete the survey after the workshop.

### **PowerPoint Slide 6 – Discussion questions**

Review the discussion questions from the survey posted at [www.surveymonkey.com/r/bestNApractices](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/bestNApractices), again providing clarity if needed.

The survey offers three main questions:

1. Do you think this format is the most helpful way to present the information? Or is there value in breaking this into separate tools based on topic?
2. Does this piece provide the guidance that the Fellowship is looking for? Are there topics you would like to see expanded or changed in some way?
3. Do you have any additional thoughts or ideas you would like to share?

Discuss the questions one at a time. Allow everyone time to speak, and ensure that no-one dominates the discussion. Listen for common themes and ideas. If different perspectives are shared, look for ways to find the middle ground between them and to build a consensus.

### **PowerPoint Slide 7 – Submit input via the survey**

Complete the survey, either during the workshop, or afterwards as individuals, groups, or service bodies.

Remember that the survey will be available until the end of November, and that the finished resource will be Board-approved service material. This means that a draft will be posted and sent to Conference participants for a 90-day review period before being finalized.

Contact information for members with experience organizing virtual meetings and services is always welcome and can be sent to [toolbox@na.org](mailto:toolbox@na.org).

**Best Practices for Virtual  
NA Meetings**  
Review and Input workshop  
October 2021



# Best Practices for Virtual NA Meetings

**Review what was shared before the workshop...**

Help to needed to raise awareness of the Local Service Toolbox Project that is developing the tools

Review draft of Best Practices for Virtual NA Meetings posted at [www.na.org/toolbox](http://www.na.org/toolbox)

Looking for help to spread the word and generate participation in providing input.

Survey being used to submit input



# Best Practices for Virtual NA Meetings

## Review what was shared before the workshop...

Best Practices for Virtual NA Meetings offers practical guidance on running virtual meetings.

Topics cover getting the meeting set up and listed, and ensuring it runs smoothly.

Suggestions are offered on some of the topics we get asked about the most at NA World Services – keeping meetings secure from disruption, ensuring a safe and welcoming atmosphere, practicing the Seventh Tradition, and verifying meeting attendance are just some of these.



# Best Practices for Virtual NA Meetings

## Review what was shared before the workshop...

- Virtual meetings in existence for many years – online, phone, or chat-based
- Virtual means any meeting that does not meet in person, or is hybrid with some remote attendees
- Virtual meetings prioritized for discussion at WSC 2018
- Creating service tools for virtual meetings was selected as a top priority at WSC 2020



Has everyone read the tool?



**Virtual  
Meetings:  
Carrying  
the Message  
Effectively  
and Virtually**

# Best Practices for Virtual NA Meetings

## Survey Questions

1. Do you think this format is the most helpful way to present the information? Or is there value in breaking this into separate tools based on topic?
2. Does this piece provide the guidance that the Fellowship is looking for? Are there topics you would like to see expanded or changed in some way?
3. Do you have any additional thoughts or ideas you would like to share?



**Please submit your input  
via the survey**

**[www.surveymonkey.com/r/bestNApractices](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/bestNApractices)**



**Virtual  
Meetings:  
Carrying  
the Message  
Effectively  
and Virtually**

## **Best Practices for Virtual NA Meetings – Draft for review**

**September 2021**

This document is the second draft of a new piece of service material for virtual meetings.

The Local Service Toolbox Project has two current focuses: 1. best practices for virtual meetings and 2. how virtual meetings are connecting to the wider world of NA, including service delivery. This draft is related to the first focus.

We have posted a short survey to gather input on this draft and posted it here [www.na.org/toolbox](http://www.na.org/toolbox) until the end of November, 2021.

This draft contains guidance on a range of topics related to virtual meetings that we believe the Fellowship is looking for shared experience about. Please view what follows as a work in progress. Your input will continue to improve this draft.

### **Contents**

- **Introduction**
- **Choosing a meeting platform**
- **Listing meeting information**
- **Meeting etiquette**
- **Tips for attending a virtual meeting**
- **Keeping a virtual meeting secure and dealing with disruption**
- **Maintaining personal anonymity**
- **Welcoming newcomers and helping them get connected**
- **Sponsorship**
- **Signing meeting attendance cards**
- **Making meetings accessible for members with additional needs**
- **Practicing the Seventh Tradition**
- **Distributing literature and keytags**
- **Additional service positions for virtual meetings**
- **Additional suggestions for virtual meetings**
- **Hybrid meetings**

### **Introduction**

This pamphlet uses the term “virtual meetings” to mean any NA meeting that is not held in person. This includes meetings that meet on the internet and via phones. Virtual meetings can be offered by NA groups, by service bodies, and may also occur informally between friends.

Virtual meetings have been in existence for many years in NA. Before the creation of the internet, meetings took place over the phone and through the mail. Online platforms have expanded the availability of virtual meetings and allowed for a more conventional structure, but the basic function of providing meetings to addicts who are unable to attend them in person remains the same. For geographically isolated members, those who may have physical difficulties, or those who do not speak the dominant language of the community in which they reside, virtual meetings provide a viable option

for recovery. Many members have also found that virtual meetings enable them to connect with other addicts and NA communities that they would otherwise not be able to do.

The 2020 pandemic resulted in virtual meetings being the only option for recovery meetings in many NA communities and heightened the need for new service material to provide guidance. This pamphlet is intended to provide suggestions for best practices in virtual meetings based on the experience of NA members. These may not all apply to every type of virtual meeting platform. *The Group Booklet* is also a useful source of guidance for organizing virtual meetings as many of the suggestions in the booklet are relevant to all NA meetings regardless of where or how they take place.

Virtual meetings can help to carry the message in the same way as in-person NA meetings, or as a service provided by a service body. The role of virtual meetings within the service system is not discussed in this piece of service material, which instead focuses on providing guidance for hosting an NA meeting in a virtual environment.

### **Choosing a meeting platform**

There are many options for platforms to host a virtual meeting, just as there are many options for venues for in-person meetings. It is advisable to discuss the choice of platform as a group, rather than have an individual make the decision. It may also be a good idea to attend other virtual meetings before making a choice so as to gain experience of how the various platforms function.

There are several factors to consider when choosing a meeting platform:

- Is the cost of the platform reasonable?
- Will meetings be accessible in a range of geographical locations and on various types of devices?
- Are members, and potential members, familiar with the platform and is it easy to use?
- Does the platform have a large enough meeting capacity for the expected attendance?

Desirable features may include:

- The meeting can be joined simply by clicking on a hyperlink
- The audio portion of the meeting can be accessed without internet service
- There are features on the platform that help to secure the meeting from disruption
- A screen-sharing feature to enable literature and other material to be shown

### **Listing meeting information**

Groups may wish to consider potential security issues when deciding where to list information about meetings. Disruption in meetings can result from listing a meeting too publicly, but it should also be easy for an addict to find one when they need it. Some options for where information about virtual meetings can be listed include:

- NA websites, including the options on this page [www.na.org/virtual](http://www.na.org/virtual)
- Social media groups
- In a cloud-based document that can be shared
- Meeting flyers (hard copies and electronic) that can be distributed

Information to include in a listing:

- Type of meeting platform
- Meeting ID, password, and phone number for audio-only connections

September 2021

- Time (including time zone) and day
- Language meeting is conducted in, and translation/interpretation services if provided
- Format and topic

It may also be advisable to provide basic instructions on how to use the platform alongside the list of meetings. Links to short instructional videos, pamphlets, PowerPoints, and workshops on the basic features of the chosen platform and tips for using it successfully are all options to achieve this.

### **Meeting Etiquette**

A few simple, and commonly agreed upon, standards for behavior can help to preserve the atmosphere of recovery in a meeting. Many of these are the same as would be expected in an in-person meeting, such as not tolerating drugs or drug paraphernalia, or abusive and predatory behavior. (See IP #29: *An Introduction to NA Meetings*, for more information about general NA meeting etiquette:

[www.na.org/ips](http://www.na.org/ips))

Other options that could be requested in virtual meetings include:

- Avoiding constant movement or other visual distractions
- Muting microphones when not sharing
- Raising hands to share
- Limiting the use of the chat feature during the meeting to avoid distractions
- Not eating, smoking, or vaping on-screen

### **Keeping a virtual meeting secure and dealing with disruption**

It is an unfortunate reality that virtual meetings can be subject to disruption more easily than in-person meetings. This may simply be due to a member's unfamiliarity with the meeting platform, but may also be a deliberate effort by non-members and can involve highly disturbing images and sounds. By planning ahead and becoming familiar with the features of the meeting platform, virtual meetings can be set up to provide a number of safeguards to minimize or eradicate these issues before they occur. The procedures for dealing with disruptive or abusive members in a meeting, and people that are not NA members who log in to meetings with the intent to disrupt them, are largely the same. Three essential precautions are:

- Disable any features that allow attendees except for the meeting's trusted servants to share content on the screen
- Disable the ability to record the meeting
- Ensure all attendees are muted when they first join the meeting

Other options include:

- Disable virtual backgrounds or turn off participant's video if necessary
- Do not allow attendees to unmute themselves – this may be particularly necessary in larger meetings to avoid audio chaos. Assign task of unmuting to a co-host.
- Disable or limit the use of the chat feature

These actions can be taken before a meeting:

- Discuss and agree on standards of behavior for the meeting, and on measures to deal with disruption and abusive behavior
- Assign the task of monitoring the meeting for disruptive behavior to trusted servants

- Provide training for the meeting's trusted servants
- Stay current on changes to the platform features

And these actions can be taken during the meeting:

- Include guidance for acceptable behavior in the meeting format
- Communicate privately with disruptive members using the chat feature
- Place disruptive people in a waiting room if the platform provides this feature
- Remove the person from the meeting – this option should be reserved for disruptive non-members, or only as a last resort for NA members
- Report disruptive non-members to the platform provider

#### Tips for attending a virtual meeting

Common practices:

- Mute your microphone when not speaking
- Use first name and initial for your screen name
- Familiarize yourself with the meeting platform before the meeting time
- Be aware that different meetings may have different practices regarding the use of cameras, sharing, features like chat boxes, and how to make financial contributions
- Join the meeting early and ask questions if you need to

Tips for dealing with an unstable internet connection:

- Turn off the camera to preserve bandwidth
- Connect to the router via a wired connection as opposed to Wi-Fi
- Use a phone to access the audio part of a meeting
- Leave and rejoin the meeting or try a different device
- Ensure updates to the meeting platform software have been installed

#### Maintaining personal anonymity

The guidance in this section applies to both an individual's privacy, and to the privacy of the other members attending the meeting. Hosting an NA meeting on the internet does not necessarily present a conflict with the Eleventh Tradition as not everything that is online can be considered as being "at the level of press, radio, and films", but there is a concern for some members that the ease with which a virtual meeting can be accessed makes it difficult to maintain a reasonable level of privacy for those attending it. It clearly requires less effort for a person that is not an addict to join a meeting on a virtual platform than it does for them to walk in to an in-person meeting, but neither method of hosting can be considered entirely private. In fact, some NA meetings are held in public places such as parks, while others are held in more private places. The same choices are available to virtual meetings by adjusting the settings of the platform. If these concerns exist then there are steps that can be taken to make meetings more private.

- Settings that record the meeting and save it to a cloud or to the host's computer should always be disabled, as should the ability for attendees to record. Disabling the option to save the chat could also be considered.
- Members may be asked to attend the meeting in a private place and to use headphones to protect the privacy of others.

- Some groups may disable the use of cameras to ensure that member's identities are kept private, while others may ask for cameras to be turned on (in some cases only for a short time) to verify their identity.
- Log in to a meeting using a first name and initial only, rather than a full name. This can both preserve a member's personal privacy, and help to avoid unwelcome advances. If allowing attendees to rename themselves results in people using inappropriate or obscene names then it might be advisable to disable this feature and assign this task to a trusted servant.

Groups are encouraged to discuss these options and determine what is most appropriate for their meetings:

- List the meeting information as publicly as possible so it can be found easily by any addict wishing to attend or list the meeting information only on NA websites and in private social media groups to discourage disruptive intruders
- Provide a one-click link to join meetings or list meeting IDs and passwords separately
- Restrict the ability for attendees to rename themselves or require members to name themselves appropriately
- Ask for cameras to be turned on to confirm identities or turn cameras off to allow members to protect their privacy and to prevent inappropriate profile pictures being shown
- Disabling chat feature to avoid distraction and inappropriate messages or leaving chat feature enabled so it can be used to share phone numbers with newcomers and welcome them.

### **Welcoming newcomers and helping them get connected**

New members may need some extra help to get connected and start building relationships in NA. This can be thought of as "in-reach" (as opposed to outreach) and can help to strengthen and grow the meeting. Suggestions for this include:

- Create service positions or tasks aimed at welcoming new members
- Include a verbal welcome to newcomers in the format and reference the Third Tradition
- Structure the meeting so there is time before and after it to talk with new members
- Share phone numbers and other contact information with new members via the chat feature or by emailing them as a document
- Show new members where NA materials and links to other meetings can be found online
- Send welcome packs of literature and keytags via the mail
- Use social media or chat groups to communicate outside of the meeting
- Organize social activities that can be virtual or in-person where possible

### **Sponsorship**

In addition to the suggestions offered to help new members get connected, meetings can also use these additional ideas to encourage sponsorship:

- Ask those willing to sponsor to identify themselves and stay after the meeting
- Create a list of potential sponsors that can be shared with members upon request
- Encourage sharing about sponsorship and use IP #11, *Sponsorship*, as a meeting topic
- Allow sponsors to use the meeting platform to meet with their sponsees, including the breakout room feature if available

- Share information about long-distance sponsorship services provided by service bodies

### **Signing meeting attendance cards**

Meetings may choose to provide some form of verification that a member attended. One simple method employed is to create an email address that can be used for this purpose. Many email providers offer the option to set up automatic replies to emails. This can be activated during the meeting time and set to send a simple response with the meeting's information.

Other methods include sending a text or manually sending an email in response to requests for attendance verification.

Additional guidance on this topic can be found in NAWS Bulletin #31, *Meeting Attendance Cards*, which is available here [www.na.org/bulletins](http://www.na.org/bulletins).

### **Making meetings accessible for members with additional needs**

Virtual meetings can provide a unique opportunity to carry the message to addicts who would otherwise find it difficult to attend NA meetings. This may be due to being physically unable to attend an in-person meeting, because of impaired vision and hearing, or other personal circumstances. In particular, blind and deaf members may need extra help to fully participate in virtual meetings. This help may include some of these ideas:

- Post readings in text format rather than as images so that text-to-voice software used by blind members can read them
- Provide American Sign Language (ASL) or other forms of sign language interpretation in meetings and include instructions in the meeting format for how to access the service
- Provide subtitles during meetings
- Provide information about literature in audio and ASL formats posted at [www.na.org/asl](http://www.na.org/asl) and [www.na.org/audio](http://www.na.org/audio)
- Ask members with additional needs how the group can help
- Designate a contact person in the meeting who can help provide additional assistance

Virtual meetings that are accessible may also wish to consider cooperating with service bodies that are attempting to build relationships with organizations that provide services to addicts with additional needs.

### **Practicing the Seventh Tradition**

However a virtual meeting is hosted, whether by an NA group or by a service body, or even as an informal gathering of friends, there are opportunities to practice the principal of self-support. Practicing the Seventh Tradition in a virtual environment requires some different approaches to passing a basket in an in-person meeting, but these can be managed successfully. The guidance contained in NA service material related to the qualities of a treasurer and the prudent financial procedures they should follow still apply in virtual meetings. It may not always be possible to follow all the suggestions, such as having two members count the Seventh Tradition collection. If this is the case, care should be taken to closely adhere to the other guidance offered, particularly when electing a treasurer.

There are three main approaches to the Seventh Tradition in virtual meetings. The first is most similar to in-person meetings – members send their contributions either directly to the treasurer or to a group bank account via one of several cash transfer apps. Members are encouraged to review the settings of

these apps to determine if an option is available to make donations without revealing their full name if they have concerns about their privacy. The challenge for meetings with members attending from more than one country is that not all apps are available in every country. It can also be prohibitively expensive to transfer funds internationally. Some meetings offer multiple methods of making contributions to get around this challenge.

One word of caution is to carefully consider local tax laws if a personal bank account is used to receive contributions as some personal tax liability may result from this.

The second approach is that members can send contributions directly to service bodies. This may be a local service body, particularly if the meeting is using a platform paid for by that body, or directly to NA World Services. Some Fellowship websites have created contribute buttons to make this easier. Instructions for how to make payments may be displayed onscreen during the meeting or via the chat feature. Members may be encouraged to participate by including a self-support statement in the meeting format or periodically choosing the Seventh Tradition as a discussion topic for the meeting.

The third approach is simply not to collect financial contributions during the meeting, and instead ask the members attending to find other ways to support NA.

There are several locally created resources posted here under the “Seventh Tradition” heading that may be helpful – [www.na.org/virtual](http://www.na.org/virtual).

### **Distributing literature and keytags**

Several options for distributing literature and keytags can be used in virtual meetings:

- NA pamphlets and booklets are posted in multiple languages at [www.na.org/ips](http://www.na.org/ips) and can be accessed by members and shown onscreen during meetings as needed
- Hard copies and electronic versions of literature, and keytags and medallions, can be sent directly to members by mail and email
- Literature, keytags, and medallions can be purchased directly from NA service offices and other outlets, including NA World Services at [www.na.org/orderlit](http://www.na.org/orderlit).
- Members may be directed to in-person meetings to obtain hard copies of literature

Please remember that the NA Fellowship has determined that posting and distributing pdfs of literature is not appropriate and jeopardizes the protection of the Fellowship’s intellectual property. Please honor this group conscience and only post links to the material posted on na.org rather than posting the material directly on local websites or distributing it via email.

### **Additional service positions for virtual meetings**

Most virtual meetings have multiple co-hosts to assist with the technical administration of the meeting and to take over the host role if the host has technical problems. Other co-host tasks may include:

- Muting and unmuting attendees
- Screen-sharing literature and keytag images
- Checking for raised hands
- Monitoring the waiting room and the chat feature
- Monitoring the meeting screen to minimize disturbances
- Greeting new members.

Other additional positions or tasks may include:

- A literature person who mails welcome packets, literature, and key tags and manages literature sales
- A virtual trainer to ensure the trusted servants in the meeting know how to use the platform
- Someone to manage keeping the meeting's information updated on websites and other places where it is posted
- A coordinator for virtual activities
- A social network coordinator

### **Additional suggestions for virtual meetings**

Meeting formats: In general, virtual meetings adopt similar formats to in-person meetings, although groups may consider simplifying these where possible. Many virtual meetings choose to focus their meetings around a piece of NA literature. It may also be helpful to include a brief technical orientation in the meeting format.

Business meetings: Just like in-person meetings, virtual meetings that are held regularly benefit from regular business meetings to ensure that any decisions made about how the meeting is run are made through a process based in group conscience.

### **Hybrid meetings**

The term "hybrid" describes meetings that have both in-person and remote attendees. Hybrid meetings allow groups to increase their attendance by having members from other places attend virtually, and to provide outreach to addicts who would not otherwise be able to attend an NA meeting.

These are a few simple steps to set up a hybrid meeting:

- Establish accessibility – does the meeting location have telephone or internet capabilities?
- Choose a host device based on accessibility – this device is responsible for streaming the audio and video signal to and from remote participants and could be a laptop or a smart phone
- Establish quality audio input by choosing the right type of microphone - audio quality is the highest priority, and sometimes the biggest challenge, for a hybrid meeting:
  - cardioid and dynamic microphones gather sound from directly in front of the microphone
  - omni-directional and condenser microphones gather sound from the whole room and may be more suitable for a hybrid meeting
- Establish clear audio output – the type of speaker needed varies depending on the size of the room and the host device
- Decide whether video of the meeting will be provided to remote participants, and whether they will be visible to the in-person meeting

Groups are encouraged to work with the resources they have, and to experiment and test different set-ups. More detailed experience from groups that are successfully providing hybrid meetings, can be found here [www.na.org/virtual](http://www.na.org/virtual).



## What is consensus-based decision making?

In Narcotics Anonymous, we make decisions by seeking direction from a loving Higher Power as it expresses itself in our group conscience. The principle of anonymity in NA means we serve as equals, and consensus-based decision making (CBDM) is one method for a service body, as a team of equals, to hear that group conscience. The heart of consensus is a cooperative intent, where members are willing to work together to find or create the solution that meets the needs of the group. The cooperative nature of consensus building is a different mindset from pro/con debate.

**Tradition 2:** For our group purpose, there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.

**Tradition 12:** Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

CBDM rests on the fundamental belief that each member of the body holds a piece of the larger truth. In this spirit, we strive for consensus to affirm the principles inherent in both the Seventh and Ninth Concepts. A decision reached by a consensus-based process may not mean total unanimity, but in CBDM, consensus can exist when each member of the service body is able to say:

- ✓ I had the opportunity to voice my opinions.
- ✓ I believe the team has heard me.
- ✓ I can accept the team's decision, even if it is not what I would choose as an individual.

**Concept 7:** All members of a service body bear substantial responsibility for that body's decisions and should be allowed to fully participate in its decision-making processes.

**Concept 9:** All elements of our service structure have the responsibility to carefully consider all viewpoints in their decision-making processes.

## Why consensus-based decision making?

CBDM isn't just about particular policies or rules, or one or two specific Concepts or Traditions. It's about a group conscience process that connects us with a Higher Power and offers a potentially more inclusive process than parliamentary procedure. Our service bodies' meetings should be forums where trusted servants can be heard, and CBDM is about listening. With its emphasis on inclusion, collaboration, and consensus building, CBDM is in harmony with our spiritual principles. The consensus process is how we manifest the idea "together we can do what we cannot do alone" in a service setting.

## What types of decisions can we make with CBDM?

CBDM can be used to reach agreement on the types of decisions that are also made using parliamentary procedure. It can also be used to hold broader discussions that may not result in a specific decision. Each community is free to determine when a CBDM process will be most effective for them. Elections are one type of decision where it is common to simply seek a majority or a two-thirds vote rather than utilize a consensus-based decision making process.

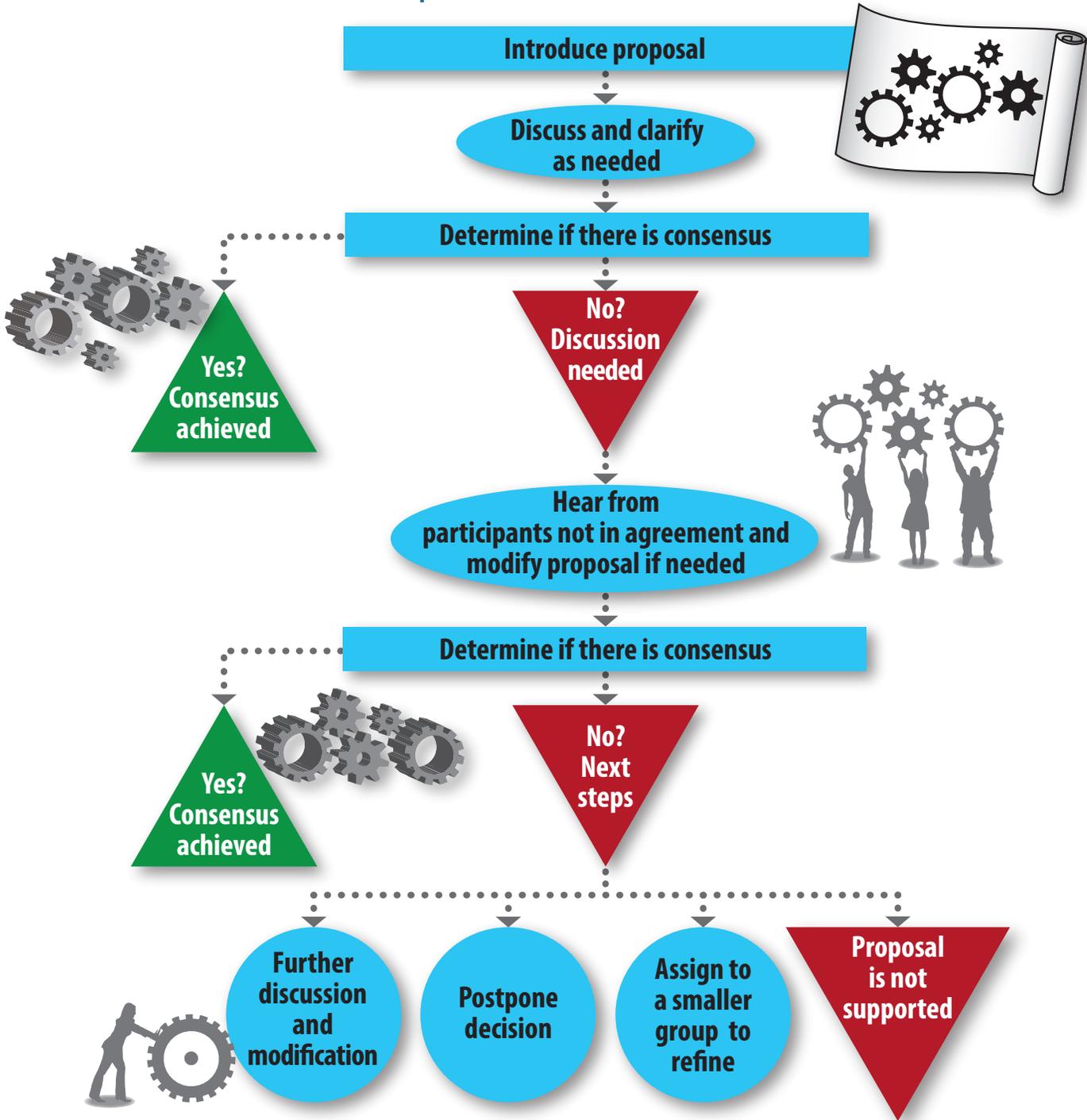
## How does CBDM work?

There are different variations of CBDM, but the basic steps are fairly consistent and simple to follow. Within those basic steps there is a great deal of variety depending on the individual service body's process and the type of decision being made. The material in this section is intended to help service bodies understand how the basics of a consensus-based process work, and can be adapted to fit local needs. Each NA community is free to create a process that works for them.

Using CBDM doesn't have to mean a service body has to change the order of the agenda it is accustomed to using. What it does mean is that instead of making a decision by first making a motion, proposals are introduced and can be adapted to include ideas and concerns offered by participants in the course of the discussion.



Here are some details of a CBDM process.



**Introduce proposal**

- Provide relevant details including:
- ✦ Where did the proposal come from?
  - ✦ Why is the proposal necessary?
  - ✦ What are the specific objectives of the proposal?
  - ✦ What human and financial resources are required?

**Community decision:** Who can introduce an idea or proposal?

- ✦ Most bodies allow only trusted servants (including delegates) to make proposals.
- ✦ In some bodies, only delegates (GSRs, RCMs, and RDs) can make proposals.
- ✦ Other bodies will allow anyone present to make a proposal.



**Discuss and clarify as needed**

Asking questions, sharing resources, and offering experience and ideas are all parts of this phase of the process. Newer members may need extra time to catch up with previous discussions on the topic.

**Community decision:** Who can speak to an idea or proposal? It's common for consensus-based bodies to allow anyone present to speak, though some recognize trusted servants before hearing from interested members.

**Determine if there is consensus**

A simple way to do this is to ask the room, "Is everyone comfortable moving forward with this proposal?" If everyone is not in agreement, then a show of hands (a straw poll) can be used to determine the level of support.

**Community decision:** Who can participate in a straw poll? It's common for any interested member to have a voice, but less common for everyone to participate in polls.

Some communities take a simple "for" and "against" vote to determine if consensus exists and a decision can be made.

Others include options such as:

- ✦ "Agree with reservation" for members who accept the proposal even if it is not what they would choose as an individual.
- ✦ "Stand aside" for members who do not agree with the proposal but will not stand in the way of it moving forward.

**Community decision:** What is the threshold for achieving consensus? Some options include:

- ✦ Two-thirds majority
- ✦ 80%
- ✦ More?

If consensus isn't achieved in the straw poll, then further discussion may be required. A very low level of support may indicate that no further discussion is needed, although care should be taken to ensure that the minority voice has been heard.

**Hear from participants not in agreement and modify proposal if needed**

This phase allows those not in agreement to share their concerns. All participants are encouraged to listen and offer ideas for modifying the proposal. Not all concerns will lead to changes. Compromise is an essential part of the process.

In strict consensus, everyone agrees or gives their consent; a single dissenter can block a decision. Most NA service bodies, however, use some form of consensus-*based* decision making rather than strict consensus. Any participant that believes a decision is in conflict with NA's guiding principles should have the opportunity to explain the details of their objection so the body can carefully consider whether it is appropriate to move forward.

**No? Next steps**

The role of the facilitator is to suggest possible next steps in the process and to help the body determine which are appropriate.

**Assign to a smaller group to refine**

This may be a workgroup or an ad-hoc committee, a number of the service body's trusted servants, or any other group that has the experience to suggest a way forward. Providing clear guidance to this group is particularly important.

**Further discussion and modification**

An effective facilitator can help the body determine when to continue discussion and when to try something else.

**Proposal is not supported**

Not every idea or proposal is supported, but CBDM allows all participants to be heard and to work together rather than argue opposing sides of a decision.

**Postpone decision**

A simple option is to take a short break or to postpone the decision until the next service meeting.



## Facilitating a CBDM body

CBDM requires a skilled facilitator who can guide the body in its decision-making process. A good facilitator can prevent a discussion from turning into an open sharing session and help everyone reach a decision they can all agree with in a timely manner. Facilitators may lead discussions, but they do not govern them.

### What does the facilitator do?

The role of the facilitator is to help a group or service body reach consensus on an issue. Certain actions are recommended to accomplish this:

- ✦ Invite a loving Higher Power into the process, often by opening the meeting with an NA prayer or a short excerpt from NA literature.
- ✦ Ensure that everyone has a clear understanding of the process being used and the issue being discussed. This may include distributing relevant materials in advance of the discussion or making information available at the meeting.
- ✦ Help everyone to participate, including the quieter members in the room, and discourage domination of the discussion by one or two members.
- ✦ Listen for common ground and points of agreement, and share these with the body.
- ✦ Repeat ideas that are shared to be sure everyone has a common understanding of them.
- ✦ Suggest ways to combine ideas to build consensus.
- ✦ Manage the time available and ensure enough is allocated for the proposal.
- ✦ Keep the conversation focused and move it forward toward a decision when needed.
- ✦ Confirm that everyone has a clear understanding of decisions made and further actions required, and that these are recorded.

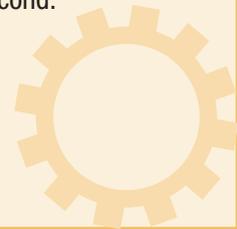
Different communities will expect different levels of participation from their facilitator. Some require them simply to facilitate the meeting, while others encourage the facilitator to share information relevant to the discussion. Many facilitators find it easier to maintain the respect of the entire body by remaining neutral and providing information but not opinions.

#### Tips for Facilitators:

- Make eye contact, smile, and be enthusiastic.
- Be who you are – let your own style come through.
- Remember that communication isn't just the spoken word; for example, try to avoid "closed" body language such as crossing your arms or turning your back on your audience.
- Remember that listening is a key part of successful facilitation—listen first and speak second.
- Speak clearly so that everyone can hear, use a positive tone, and remember to breathe!

#### Useful questions for facilitators include:

- What have we tried before that works?
- If we tried this, what would happen next?
- Can anyone add anything to these ideas?



### What qualities does a facilitator need?

CBDM bodies need to think carefully when electing a facilitator and may find the Fourth Concept a useful resource. A good facilitator can feel the sense of the body and earn the trust needed to guide discussion toward a decision. Some of the qualities to look for include:

- ✦ Familiarity with the group or service body and an understanding of the experience level of those attending.
- ✦ Some experience with CBDM and a clear understanding of the details of the process being used locally.
- ✦ Being prepared with information about the issues to be discussed and any relevant resources, such as guidelines, handbooks, and Traditions and Concepts materials.
- ✦ Commitment to the CBDM process and a willingness to focus on more than just their own ideas.
- ✦ The ability to earn the trust of a body by guiding rather than controlling discussions.
- ✦ Flexibility, patience, and the understanding that some participants may need more time to reach a decision than others do.



## What spiritual principles can facilitators apply?

As with all NA service, applying spiritual principles helps a CBDM body to be more successful. Some of the principles that we can focus on when facilitating are:

- ✦ **Integrity**—Honesty, consistency, and trustworthiness are all elements of this principle and are essential for successful facilitation.
- ✦ **Humility**—An attitude of service rather than government allows a facilitator to focus on helping the body reach consensus.
- ✦ **Open-mindedness**—Being open to new ideas is essential in helping to build consensus.
- ✦ **Accountability**—A CBDM facilitator is a trusted servant and is accountable to the body they serve.
- ✦ **Cooperation**—The facilitator helps create an environment in which everyone can work together to understand and consider the proposal.
- ✦ **Trust**—A CBDM facilitator needs to both trust the process and the body they are serving.

Developing a collective conscience provides us with the spiritual guidance we need for making service decisions. We pray or meditate together, we share with one another, we consider our traditions, and we seek direction from a Higher Power. Our groups, service boards, and committees often use the vote as a rough tool for translating that spiritual guidance into clear, decisive terms. Sometimes, however, no vote is needed; following thoughtful, attentive discussion, it is perfectly apparent what our collective conscience would have us do in a given service situation.



*Twelve Concepts for NA Service,  
Sixth Concept*

## Participating in a CBDM body

The Seventh Concept essay reminds us, “NA service is a team effort. Our service representatives are responsible to the NA Fellowship as a whole rather than any special constituency; so are all the other trusted servants on the team. The full participation of each member of the team is of great value as we seek to express the collective conscience of the whole.”

Being an effective participant in a CBDM body is, in some respects, easier than being an effective participant in a parliamentary procedure-based body as there is no need to be proficient at Robert’s Rules of Order or some other set of parliamentary guidelines. However, CBDM also requires some skills that parliamentary procedure does not.

## What do participants do?

Members of a CBDM body are required to work together to make decisions that can be supported by the entire body. To be successful in this, certain actions are required:

- ✦ Contribute toward a positive and respectful meeting environment where everyone feels comfortable contributing.
- ✦ Be prepared with the necessary information in advance of the discussion.
- ✦ Participate in the entire discussion process so that a clear understanding of all viewpoints can be gained.
- ✦ Ask questions when more information is needed.
- ✦ Consider what best serves our primary purpose rather than our personal preferences.
- ✦ Commit to the process and actively support the consensus of the body.

## What qualities do participants need?

Participating in CBDM should help evolve a proposal, so it is important to be flexible and to be a good listener. Some qualities that will help participants fulfill their roles are:

- ✦ A focus on creating solutions rather than on finding fault with ideas.
- ✦ The willingness to share ideas and let go of the outcome. Remember that compromise may be required and decisions can be revisited if needed.
- ✦ The ability to pass on speaking when someone else has already made the same point.
- ✦ An awareness of personal characteristics and circumstances, and how these may affect participation in the CBDM process. Examples of these include irritability when tired or hungry, impatience with a slower decision-making process, or intolerance of certain ideas.







This tool is designed to provide support and solutions to common problems that NA members, groups, and service bodies face in rural or isolated areas and in developing Narcotics Anonymous communities. While these problems often occur because meetings are far apart or the population is sparse, not every issue or solution offered here may apply to every isolated NA community. Members are encouraged to try the ideas that seem appropriate for their needs and adapt them when necessary. This tool is intended to be combined with existing service materials, online resources, and regularly-scheduled web meetings, as a coordinated approach to providing support to these communities.

## What should we strive for when serving in rural or isolated NA communities?

**Consistency and persistence:** Because it may take some time before an addict seeking help finds NA—especially in an isolated community—letting go of expectations is essential. Simply showing up on time each week to open the doors and set up the meeting is an opportunity for us to practice consistency and persistence. Members often commit to a new meeting for a year or more—even if it means waiting alone, using the time to read NA literature or do stepwork.

**Patience:** We strive to encourage, mentor, and practice patience with newcomers who might not know how NA works. Smaller, isolated NA communities tend to grow at a slower pace, and each newcomer is a precious resource for growing NA, so it is important to take particular care with newcomers. Practicing patience can also be useful as we find our place in a smaller community where the options for meetings and services might be limited.

**Tolerance, kindness, and compassion:** These principles don't just apply when dealing with newer members; they apply when dealing with all members. Practicing tolerance, kindness, and compassion usually aids our service efforts better than an overbearing approach.

**Inclusiveness:** "Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions," so we welcome any addict who attends NA. Each of us has an equal opportunity to recover, and our principles should always come before our personalities.

**Attraction:** We embody the principle of attraction when we offer a hug, a cup of coffee, or a conversation. A positive and willing attitude can go a long way to create an inclusive and attractive atmosphere that encourages members to keep coming back.

**Focusing on our primary purpose to carry the message to the addict who still suffers:** In some isolated communities where there isn't an NA meeting every night of the week, some members may attend more than one fellowship, and this increases the potential for mixed messages. Kindly encouraging a focus on our primary purpose, which is the foundation of NA groups and service bodies, can help us carry a clear message of recovery. In addition, encouraging members with more NA experience who live in larger communities to travel to more isolated areas to share or to take service commitments can help support our primary purpose.

**Effective communication:** When we are consistent and clear in our message of recovery, our efforts to reach suffering addicts are enhanced.

**Prudence:** Practicing prudence can help us overcome our limited human and financial resources. We can begin to think more prudently by asking, "What do we need to do first to better carry the NA message?" With this intention, we can cultivate sustainable growth in rural or isolated communities by taking small steps and avoiding over-committing and wasting limited resources.

**Self-support:** Being self-supporting is a key element of unity in all NA groups, but it can be difficult in less densely populated areas. Participation from members who contribute with a spirit of generosity can help overcome this challenge.

**Awareness:** Not every NA community has the same level of resources and member experience, so it's important for a developing community to be aware of its own limitations. Being willing to ask for help from neighboring groups and service bodies can help deliver services as well as create unity and connection in the NA community.

Remember that rural and isolated groups are just as important as any other group and are a part of the overall NA service system.



## These excerpts from *The Group Booklet* may help address some common challenges:

**What is an NA group?** When two or more addicts come together to help each other stay clean, they may form a Narcotics Anonymous group. Here are six points<sup>1</sup> based on our traditions which describe an NA group:

1. All members of a group are drug addicts, and all drug addicts are eligible for membership.
2. As a group, they are self-supporting.
3. As a group, their single goal is to help drug addicts recover through application of the Twelve Steps of Narcotics Anonymous.
4. As a group, they have no affiliation outside Narcotics Anonymous.
5. As a group, they express no opinion on outside issues.
6. As a group, their public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion.

**Where can we hold meetings?** NA meetings can be held almost anywhere. Groups usually want to find an easily accessible public place where they can hold their meetings on a weekly basis.

Holding regular NA group meetings in some types of facilities—addiction treatment centers, clubhouses, or political party headquarters, for instance—can compromise the independent identity of the group.

### What kinds of literature should we use?

...only NA-approved literature is appropriate for reading in Narcotics Anonymous meetings.

...literature of any sort produced by other twelve-step fellowships or other organizations outside NA is inappropriate for display on our literature tables or reading at our meetings. To do either implies an endorsement of an outside enterprise, directly contradicting NA's Sixth Tradition.

<sup>1</sup> The six points describing a group have been adapted from "The AA Group," published by Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. Reprinted by permission.

## What else is in this tool?

On the following pages we have divided the content into three groups: *For Members*, *For Groups*, and *For Service Bodies*. These sections will be updated as experience and resources for solutions are gathered.

## Ongoing support

Consider joining the quarterly Rural Service web meetings (which are also accessible by phone) that focus on connecting rural and isolated members and groups, and discuss solutions to common challenges. You can get the details for these web meetings by emailing [ruralservice@na.org](mailto:ruralservice@na.org).



## Resources – where to find more information

- \* [www.na.org/ruralservice](http://www.na.org/ruralservice) – Recordings and materials from Rural Service web meetings and locally developed resources related to rural and isolated service
- \* [www.na.org/localresources](http://www.na.org/localresources) – General service resources, including many locally developed materials
- \* [www.na.org/ips](http://www.na.org/ips) – Informational pamphlets and booklets in various languages, including *The Group Booklet*
- \* [www.na.org/servicemat](http://www.na.org/servicemat) – A wide range of NA service material, including service pamphlets that offer guidance to groups on commonly encountered challenges
- \* [www.na.org/handbooks](http://www.na.org/handbooks) – Service handbooks, including a section on "Area Committees in Rural Communities" on page 65 of *A Guide to Local Services in NA*
- \* [www.na.org/meetingsearch](http://www.na.org/meetingsearch) – Meeting information, local websites, and helplines. (For phone- or web-based meetings, choose "Phone" or "Web" from the Country drop-down menu in the "NA Meeting Search" window.)
- \* [www.na.org/subscribe](http://www.na.org/subscribe) – Subscribe to NAWS periodicals and email updates
- \* [www.na.org/?ID=elit](http://www.na.org/?ID=elit) – Links to purchase electronic versions of NA books
- \* [www.na.org/pr](http://www.na.org/pr) – Public relations materials to assist in developing relationships with organizations and professionals that refer addicts to NA
- \* [www.na.org/IDT](http://www.na.org/IDT) – Materials to help facilitate discussions on topics of interest to the NA Fellowship and its members and service bodies



# Serving NA in Rural & Isolated Communities *(continued)*



## Common challenges and potential solutions for rural and isolated communities

**Note:** Some of these sections need further development. The symbol [?] denotes a request for additional resources or solutions. Please email these to [ruralservice@na.org](mailto:ruralservice@na.org). If there is a resource available online at [www.na.org/ruralservice](http://www.na.org/ruralservice) this will be indicated with [W].

### For Members

- Some members move from a place with many meetings and robust service opportunities to an area where both are very limited. Here are some dos and don'ts on how to be a leader in the spirit of the Second Tradition, and avoid becoming “the authority” in a rural community:

DO 	DON'T 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ DO consider spiritual principles, particularly those that apply to rural and isolated service.</li> <li>✓ DO allow a group to have its own identity.</li> <li>✓ DO focus on carrying a clear NA message.</li> <li>✓ DO encourage sponsees and other addicts to get involved in service with you.</li> <li>✓ DO ask local members to share their service experience to understand what has and has not worked in the past.</li> <li>✓ DO become a local member first. Attend as many different meetings as possible in your new community before becoming involved in service.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ DON'T try to force new ideas—remember the principle of attraction.</li> <li>✗ DON'T assume that there is a “quick fix” or a simple solution to long-standing issues.</li> <li>✗ DON'T forget that our behavior can affect others in NA, and NA services generally.</li> <li>✗ DON'T create or use complex guidelines or methods for delivering simple services—keep things simple.</li> <li>✗ DON'T assume there is only one way to organize NA services—practice open-mindedness.</li> </ul>

- Finding ways to maintain personal anonymity in a small community can be challenging.
  - Ask trusted servants at your area or regional service committee, or at neighboring ASCs to deliver services that require identifying as an NA member.
  - Include an anonymity statement in meeting formats.
  - For members who work in local treatment programs and are concerned about keeping their recovery and professional lives separate, Chapter 7 of the *Public Relations Handbook* suggests:
    - When working with treatment professionals, respect the anonymity of professionals and staff who may also be members of NA. Treatment centers are separate from NA; not all employees may be aware of their coworkers' involvement in NA.*
    - Members who are also treatment professionals may need to consider that their role as a treatment professional is separate from their role as an NA member. In the role of a treatment professional, an individual is usually following treatment protocols instead of acting as an NA member talking about their personal recovery in NA.*
- Access to meetings can be limited due to geographical distance, terrain, inclement weather, and/or a small number of available groups.
  - Explore online or telephone-based meetings. Many platforms offer the ability to meet at little or no cost. Some face-to-face groups also offer the ability to participate remotely in meetings via phone or online. [W]
  - Carpool and take road trips to meetings in neighboring communities to find meetings for yourself and to reach out to isolated groups or members in need due to illness or disability. [W]
  - Use audio versions of literature and speaker recordings.
  - Participate in online NA meetings. [W]





# Serving NA in Rural & Isolated Communities *(continued)*



## Common challenges and potential solutions for rural and isolated communities

**Note:** Some of these sections need further development. The symbol [?] denotes a request for additional resources or solutions. Please email these to [ruralservice@na.org](mailto:ruralservice@na.org). If there is a resource available online at [www.na.org/ruralservice](http://www.na.org/ruralservice) this will be indicated with [W].

### For Groups

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- ✳ Starting and nurturing new groups in smaller NA communities can be challenging, but are essential for these communities to grow.
  - Remember some basic principles:
    - Begin with a core group of committed members, which sometimes may be just one or two people.
    - Focus group service on actively seeking new members.
    - Share information about the meeting time and place via local ads and posters and business cards.
  - Broaden the experience shared in meetings:
    - Listen to recordings of members' shares from NA events when no in-person speaker is available.
    - Read stories from the Basic Text.
    - Read and discuss other NA literature.
    - Invite speakers to share using internet technology. [W]
    - Ask visiting members to share.
    - Connect to online meetings that are happening at the same time.
  - Create a list of the group members' phone numbers.
  - Encourage open participation in home-group business meetings.
  - Maintain contact with the ASC, either in person (when possible), by submitting a written report, or by attending virtually.
  - Engage in group-to-group activities such as capture the flag/rock, road trips, and group anniversary potlucks. [W]
  - Plan family-based activities and functions like picnics and potlucks.
  - Utilize services provided by your ASC and RSC:
    - Keep meeting time and place information up-to-date on local meeting lists.
    - Request funding for local ads.
    - Plan where new groups are needed.
    - Ask if regional or area websites are able to help host online meetings. [W]
  - Assist newer groups with support from more established groups (group-to-group "sponsorship").
  - Organize mobile or "flash" meetings, to temporarily respond to unmet needs, where resources are not available to start a new group. [W]
- ✳ Carrying a clear NA message in smaller communities can be difficult.
  - Hold NA literature study meetings.
- ✳ Rural or isolated NA communities often face limited human resources in groups because there may be few NA meetings or members:
  - Bring enthusiasm and demonstrate positive change to create a welcoming and encouraging atmosphere of recovery.
  - Change group formats to encourage attendance.
  - Plan group-hosted events such as anniversary celebrations and speaker jams to encourage attendance.
  - Use recordings of members' shares from NA events and audio versions of literature during meetings to demonstrate the diversity of our members and their messages.
  - Ask your area or region to organize a local unity or learning day. [W]
  - Utilize distance sponsorship services. [W]
  - Have home groups host service meetings to bring out-of-town members to the meeting.



- ✱ In addition to a lack of human resources, groups in rural communities may also face limited financial resources.
  - Ask for funds or resources like literature or keytags from your ASC when financial resources aren't available.
  - Host service meetings at group locations so that the service body's rent allocation can be added to the group's treasury.
- ✱ Isolated areas might have limited options for purchasing literature.
  - Groups can share information with others about where they purchase their literature.
  - Established groups might include extra materials in their literature orders to assist groups that don't have easy access to a literature source.
  - Access informational pamphlets and booklets online.
  - Access literature via NA apps or electronic literature.
- ✱ Rural and isolated areas, just like any NA community, may face a variety of challenges with new members.
  - Orient new members:
    - Incorporate newcomer and "ask-it basket" meeting formats.
    - Use IP #29, *An Introduction to NA Meetings*, to share information about how NA meetings work.
    - Create a video orientation tool.
    - Create posters that show key facts about NA.
  - Provide PR presentations to organizations that refer addicts to NA:
    - Explain what NA can and cannot do.
    - Provide information about which meetings are best suited to welcome new members.
    - Establish ongoing relationships with local professionals and agencies.
    - Use PR resources such as *Narcotics Anonymous and Persons Receiving Medication-Assisted Treatment*, and *NA: A Resource in Your Community*.
  - Strengthen groups:
    - Organize workshops on building strong home groups and other relevant topics. [W]
    - Review and discuss service pamphlets and other relevant literature during business meetings.
- ✱ With limited human resources, dealing with a lack of experience, training, and mentoring can be challenging for groups in small NA communities.
  - Encourage mentorship as a part of sponsorship.
  - Incorporate literature- and Tradition-study meetings (e.g., *Guiding Principles: The Spirit of Our Traditions and It Works: How and Why*).
- ✱ Vast distances between NA communities can make it difficult to maintain a connection with the nearest service body.
  - Organize group support forums (GSFs) or rural co-ops to enable a collection of groups to send one GSR to the ASC on their behalf. [W]
  - Consider hosting a workshop or recovery meeting at a nearby convention or service event to build a sense of belonging with the wider NA community.

[?] Finding an appropriate, affordable venue can be difficult in a small community. Are you aware of any options for groups that are struggling with this challenge?

 **Notes**

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# Serving NA in Rural & Isolated Communities (continued)



## Common challenges and potential solutions for rural and isolated communities

**Note:** Some of these sections need further development. The symbol [?] denotes a request for additional resources or solutions. Please email these to [ruralservice@na.org](mailto:ruralservice@na.org). If there is a resource available online at [www.na.org/ruralservice](http://www.na.org/ruralservice) this will be indicated with [W].

### For Service Bodies

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- ✦ Communities that are spread out, with very few NA members, may have a limited number of trusted servants available to provide the services needed.
  - Train and mentor new trusted servants.
    - Organize workshops and learning days.
    - Explore overlapping service terms.
    - Make service resources available (e.g., *A Guide to Local Services in NA*, other service handbooks, and service pamphlets). [W]
    - Identify the potential trainers/mentors who succeed in creating an atmosphere of recovery.
  - Encourage attendance and participation.
    - Provide refreshments, support open participation, and hold recovery meetings at service events.
    - Match talents to tasks.
    - Explore project-based service with shorter commitment periods.
    - Use online technology to facilitate communication and virtual attendance. [W]
    - Consider the location of service meetings to allow access to as many members as possible.
    - Create a supportive atmosphere and communicate positively.
  - Pool resources between area subcommittees.
    - Utilize an umbrella structure as described in Chapter Three of the *Public Relations Handbook*. [W]
    - Collaborate on learning days and other events with other area subcommittees.
    - Share services with neighboring areas such as helplines and meeting lists.
  - Build a base of experienced members.
    - Organize Traditions-based recovery meetings and workshops.
    - Utilize existing resources such as *A Guide to Local Services in NA* and locally created materials. [W]
  - Utilize planning and prioritization processes at the local level.
- ✦ It can be challenging to create unity and strengthen the connection among groups in a rural or isolated community.
  - Facilitate group-to-group activities.
    - Capture the flag/rock. [W]
    - Develop social activities with service-oriented workshops.
  - Provide urban outreach to rural communities.
    - Organize carpools and road trips to outlying meetings and consider leaving a seat open for a local member in need of a ride. [W]
  - Organize group support forums (GSFs) or a rural co-op. [W]
  - Use technology so groups can attend recovery events virtually. [?]
  - Encourage communication by using email, social media, and online discussion areas.
  - Publish newsletters, especially if there is limited internet availability for some groups.
- ✦ Vast geographical distances, terrain, and inclement weather can make participating in service meetings and decision-making processes difficult.
  - Utilize virtual attendance at service meetings. [W]
  - Rotate the location of service meetings to increase member involvement and create unity and trust.
  - Hold service meetings in a central location for consistency and equal accessibility for outlying groups.
  - Send minutes via mail and/or email.
  - Create an outreach workgroup or committee to seek out and assist isolated communities. [W]

[?] Let us know if you have experience with remote participation at service meetings. We would like to compile experience and guidelines and share them with others.



- ✱ Providing public relations service can be particularly challenging in rural and isolated communities due to geography and limited human resources.
  - Carefully plan service delivery to prioritize service efforts and use limited resources more effectively.
  - Only commit to what can be consistently delivered.
    - Organize one-time or monthly H&I events instead of weekly panels.
    - Provide literature and meeting information if a panel is not possible.
  - Cooperate between subcommittees by utilizing an umbrella structure as described in Chapter Three of the *Public Relations Handbook*. [W]
  - Train trusted servants.
    - Encourage attendance at NAWS web meetings.
    - Make *PR Basics*, *H&I Basics*, and other service resources available. [W]
  - Use available regional resources, including:
    - Trusted servants
    - Funds
    - Literature for professionals and incarcerated addicts
    - Experience
    - Prison sponsorship programs
  - Air public service announcements on local media.
  - Consider how the NA community and the general community usually receive information.
  - Add/adopt isolated groups to the nearest existing service body.
  - Keep PR service simple such as holding a flyer-hanging day to distribute information about local NA meetings.
  - Develop cooperative relationships with local authorities, the court system, police departments, social agencies, etc.
  - Keep in mind what it might have been like in the beginning of NA when no structure existed.
- ✱ Dealing with a lack of experience, training, and mentoring can be challenging for service bodies in small NA communities because of limited human resources.
  - Organize regularly-scheduled learning days. [W]
  - Dedicate time to review and discuss sections of guidelines and service material.
  - Allow members to take service positions without having prior experience, then support and guide them.
  - Reach out to more experienced service bodies to learn how to mentor.
  - Organize short workshops before meetings on relevant topics.
  - Create short plays or skits about service *dos* and *don'ts* to perform at local events.
  - Create a pool of experienced members to assist with training and mentoring.
  - Create opportunities for members' ideas to be heard, and don't assume that what didn't work before couldn't work now.
  - Acknowledge different views of what "isolated" and "rural" mean in different parts of the world, and try to assist any group or member that seeks help.
  - Share personal recovery in mentoring roles to gain the trust of those less experienced.

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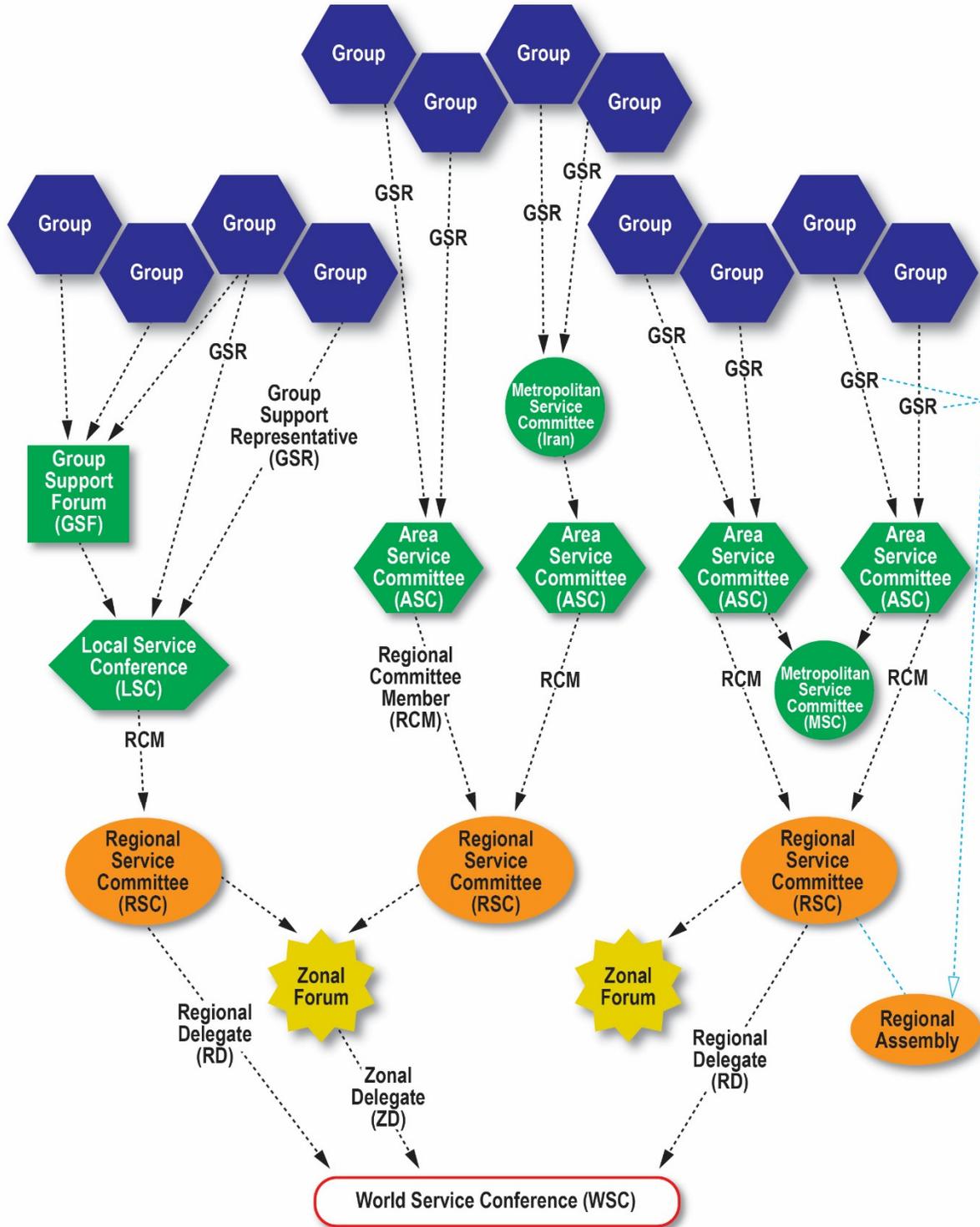
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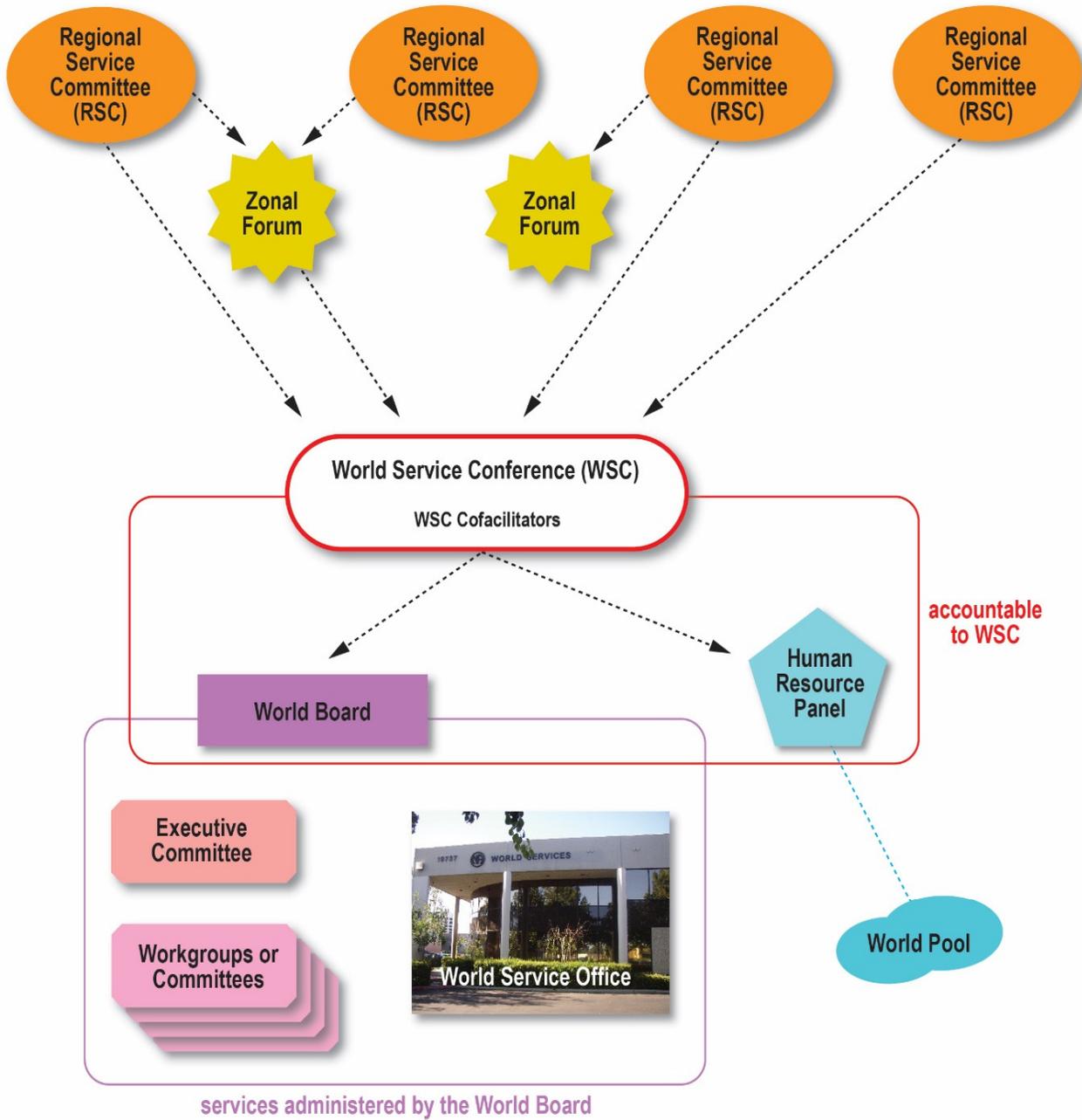


# NA Service Structure

with possible options that can be combined



# NA World Services



**Key**

- delegation stream    - - - - ->
- responsibility stream    - · - · - · - - - -

Meeting: Service Work Group

Date: September 9, 2021

Attendees: Sherry V, Randy D, James B, Genina A, Dennis M, Clarence A, Mat S, Kris R, Craig R

Agenda: Updates on project plans

### **Action Plan 1/ Project AZF Google Drive: Dennis M**

Statement of Work: A task team will be initiated with the purpose of creating an AZF google drive. This drive will folders set up to contain specific information as well as a common upload folder. All folders except the common upload folder will be download only except by members given admin access. The task team may suggest common places to place a link to this drive such as the AZF website.

Discussion: Google drive created with a shared folder and general upload folder; no further folders created – awaiting input for a folder structure. Would suggest linking to on AZF website primarily – and secondarily possibly fd.nezf.org and na.org

- Is there a fee?
  - o No fee for up to 15 gb
- Are the links on slack?
  - o Yes
- What was the part about linking to AZF or any other site
  - o The google drive links would be posted as links – likely the shared resource folder being shared more widely with the upload folder being on the AZF website primarily
- Main folder – view + download, no edit
- Upload folder – anyone can edit
- Are these folders on another google drive?
  - o No, there is a dedicated gmail account created for this called [azfna.drive@gmail.com](mailto:azfna.drive@gmail.com)
- The links are shared only in slack right now?
  - o Yes, these are in slack only right now until ready to rock on AZF

Decision: Schedule meeting to build out folders

### **Action Plan 2/ Project Strategic Planning: Sherry V**

Statement of Work : A task team will be initiated that will create a strategic planning roadmap that fits the Autonomy Zone. Suggested guidelines for accomplishing this will be given to the AZF with that roadmap.

Discussion:

- Report
  - o Met 9/5 – Discussed setting up a strategic planning schedule – looking at what months initially and how much time between.
    - Looked at starting in Nov, creating a task group, survey, then sending it out
    - Agreed the survey would be out 6 months

- April anyone can participate, talk about resources, financial and human, discuss information gathering and discussion
      - Discuss, categorize, prioritize, issues, goals, approaches as time allows
      - Ask for outside facilitation possibly
    - May would be task group for action plans
      - Action plans would be sent direct to regions to weigh
      - Are these action plans understandable?
      - Any questions, concerns or input?
    - Next meeting looking at first Sunday of the month @ 6PM (October 3<sup>rd</sup>)
  - Discussion
    -

Decision: Keep it moving – kick ass.

### **Action Plan 3/ Project Fellow Development Committee: Craig R**

Statement of Work: A task team will be initiated that will work to develop and expand the AZF Services Workgroup into a standing AZF Fellowship Development committee. This workgroup will continue to oversee the other project task teams initiated at the same time. It will actively seek ways to improve on its function and actively seek opportunities for collaboration, engaging service workshops, and mentorship. Guidelines will be presented by the January AZF to make this effective moving forward.

Discussion:

- Report
  - Haven't met yet because this particular task team is dependent on information flowing in from the other task teams for what this could look like.
  - This is an oversight style task team. As we move through the next months this will take shape – whether this is a standing FD committee, or a workgroup
  - Meeting not scheduled yet because the other task teams haven't met yet – so input from them will determine what the overall guidelines will look like
    - Strategic planning would be a change to AZF guidelines if approved
  - Won't take too much to pull together over the upcoming months
  - The other factor is the other task team out of the AZF – we'll hear that report on 9/20
- Discussion
  - What is the difference, if any, between standing committee and workgroup
    - One perspective is a workgroup is more project and task-oriented vs a standing subcommittee
    - Obviously NEZF FD standing subcommittee works from tasks with task teams internally
    - Workgroup would be aligned with task teams, strategic plan, etc
  - Possibly have this group have the conversation on the table about this group talk about reforming the eastern zones
    - This was thrown out there in July AZF
    - We could meet prior, but thought best to wait for reports
    - Would be a bit of a stretch to include this conversation within this task team

- Might make more sense a year or two down the line once the AZF regions get a bit more organized with zonal service
  - It is about planting seeds – having occasional talks about things
    - Haven't had a conversation with the various zones to see if other zones would be receptive either
    - Don't want to have the conversation without having an idea of how welcome this idea would be
    - Don't put it too far up on a shelf – feasibility
    - What do the other zones even think? Do we ask them officially? Needs to be a collaborative thing to start the conversation.
    - Also have the RD/AD from Mountaineer coming to AZF on 9/20
  - SEZF – the major recent pushes in the zone have been
    - 1) complete and open inclusivity – anyone that wants to come participate is open to from day one
    - 2) collaboration – we are completely open to collaboration with other zones
    - Any zone or regions come to the SEZF saying they want to join, they'd be hugged and told welcome
  - If you spend all the work to build your own process, guidelines, etc over the next year or two, then decide to merge after that would essentially scrap a lot of work and set up possible let downs – creates a lot of work that would go unused
  - Finance in the AZF is on the table – did a budget, trying to see where we fit with that – just the oversight of where we are at now it flows with EPARNA possibly disband – then AZF be down to 4. My region have not given insight with the funding / budget as is.
  - Just the idea of joining one or two of the eastern states zones – that's a big discussion – that's what was meant by "it's a stretch" – it's an involved discussion. It involves more than one zone in this. PR itself would likely be more effective with 2 zones in the eastern states rather than 3.
  - One of the ideas here could be instead of AZF creating a FD committee, just join the NEZF FD – already in place – works and collaborates with existing resources
  - Wouldn't necessarily have to scrap everything because as an example is SEZF has no FD committee – so that work could be brought to the table at that time if joined
  - The hope would be that strategic planning itself (which is about vision and looking down the road) the hope would be that strategic planning, looking down the road, in looking at PR and carrying the message then we might include the conversation with joining the other zones. This is a good conversation and one that will certainly come up on 9/20.
  - Can have a great discussion at September AZF, October NEZF, and whenever SEZF is
- Let's wait until after Sept 20<sup>th</sup> AZF meeting and then decide when this task team wants to initially meet

- Decision: Will wait until after Sept 20<sup>th</sup> AZF meeting and then decide when this task team wants to initially meet

**Action Plan 4/ Project Communication-Collaboration Development: Kris R**

Statement of Work: Task team will be initiated to explore collaboration within existing resource pools in the eastern US zones. This team will need to develop a process, map, and guidelines for how the Autonomy Zone will interact and fit within this resource collaboration.

Discussion:

- Report
  - o Haven't met yet, voiced concern that this is overlapping with the multi zonal video workgroup project
    - Ask if this can be lumped in with the MZ workgroup for asking on this
    - Sit down with each of these where they are at when we meet
    - For AZF and NEZF – ask that the AZF has access to the resource pool of the NEZF, not sure about other zones
    - Looks like a Monday night, 7PM, possibly 9/20 – hoping to have contacts for the eastern US zones to invite as well
  - o AZF has virtual business meeting 9/20
    - So possibly 9/27 instead then
- Discussion
  - o Clarify the overlap with the MZVW
    - Looking at the workgroup is already reaching out
    - There will always be overlap – but that particular workgroup is around videos, with a very targeted task than this AZF task team
    - Talking to eastern zones – and there's not that many – so you've got SEZF, NEZF, AZF covered in this meeting now – just need Southern (and maybe Midwest?)
  - o Would like members from each of those zones to sit down to discuss
  - o The video workgroup – is that the same one that started from SEZF originally? Is it something different or one and the same?
    - One and the same – started SEZF, gained NEZF, then morphed and evolved into it's current entity
    - Communication is currently based on the slack channel, accountable to the NEZF/SEZF (And any other zones that want to join)
  - o So the question is rather than 2 separate task teams contacting zones, see about contacting all at once
  - o This information that we are sharing here – will this be brought to the AZF to see how the AZF feels about joining in with the other zones in collaboration?
    - The report will be given to the AZF on the 20<sup>th</sup> – the information will be visible prior to then in a recap
    - The delegates will see all of this information and have a chance to ask about it – this workgroup is accountable to the AZF
    - Can some of the stuff here be rephrased into a question form to call out what needs to be discussed.

- Kris was alluding to tasks happening elsewhere – the video project we are talking about is not part of this AZF task group – some of the same people serve, but it is not part of the AZF task group – anyone can join
- What we need to do here is come out and engage, get involved – not everyone should have to be here all the time – but we need to keep encouraging engagement and participation – there’s a slack channel for the AZF as an example
- How would the AZF or members go about joining something like the video workgroup
  - AZF doesn’t have the same structure as NEZF – we don’t have anything formal in place
- AZF is a baby here, taking baby steps, and this task group was to help us start walking towards our goals – how engaged are the RD’s in the AZF with what we are trying to do here? Might be a better question for the AZF body.
  - From a service perspective – how can we help them be more engaged – what can we do?
- Video workgroup is free to join by anyone anywhere anytime – 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday at 8:15PM
  - Official joining by a service body is as simple as a service body sending someone saying hey we want in
  - There’s a bit less of an overlap with the video workgroup because it isn’t targeting admin, whereas this task team will specifically need to go after the admin bodies

Decision: Meeting later Sept, likely 9/27 @ 7PM

**Next Workgroup Meeting:  
October 8 7-8 PM ET**

Tentative agenda sent to all before the meeting by Dennis M

1) Vision and Purpose Statement

2) 80% or 7/8 Decision Making Threshold

3) Officially decide do we want the US Zonal Collaboration to exist

4) If yes on US Zonal Collaboration continuing, what do we do

--- As an aside on this, we do have a strategic plan with starting points laid out that have been out for nearly a year now.

5) Next steps, next meeting, who hosts, moving forward, etc.

## **US Collaboration of Zones Meeting**

**10/10/21**

- **Representatives from all US zones were in attendance.**

Autonomy Zone -Merle

Midwest Zone -Jim

Northeast Zone -Dennis

Plains States Zone -Barry

Rocky Mountain Zone -Dawn

Southern Zone -Lee

Southeastern Zone -Jeff

Western States Zone -Dave

- **The meeting was recorded and is available here: [tinyurl.com/USZonesOct21Meeting](https://tinyurl.com/USZonesOct21Meeting).**
- **Decided before the meeting began that anyone at the meeting can talk during the meeting.**
- **Shane from the SZF was the facilitator.**
- **The meeting opened at 5:05 with the Serenity Prayer.**
- **Much discussion on “Where do we want to start?”**  
Some not ready to vote on anything. Some said we should address Dave’s email first. Some ready to vote now. Some felt there should be a question sent out to zones asking do we want to have this body. After discussion the consensus with 6 in favor was to move forward with voting on 1<sup>st</sup> 2 agenda items.
- **More discussion on what do we vote on first.**  
Consensus was to vote on Vision and Purpose first.

- **Vision and Purpose Statement Vote**  
6 support, 2 not ready to vote. 6 out of 8 are in favor.  
Everyone was okay with describing this as strong support.
- **Next much discussion was on 80% or 7/8 Decision Making Threshold for voting.**  
Consensus to send #2 back to zones with new wording: Voting procedure of 80% consensus with an option of present not voting.  
(Two no votes and it doesn't pass)
- **Wilvena suggested a motion to form presentation group to reach out to other regions about this body (education).** There was no objection.
- **Craig suggested to give this to a small group of people as a task team who can come back and map out next steps that we look at and distribute to people.** Support by the body for this suggestion.
- **Craig asked if he was willing to facility action plan workgroup and he said yes.**  
He will set up an initial meeting. Anyone can come. The workgroup will go through strategic plan. Meet once a month. The kick-off meeting will be in a couple weeks.
- **Suggestion to create slack channel (which was done)**
- **Next meeting: Western States will host 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in January.**

ILS

Lucy

## Notes from the Fifth Virtual Meeting of Zones—1 May 2021, 1:15 pm–3:15 pm, PDT

14 of 15 zones attended the May 2021 Virtual Meeting of Zones (VMOZ), along with several Board members, a Portuguese interpreter, and a member of NAWS staff. The Russian Zonal Forum had sent regrets in advance of the meeting because the hour would be too late for their attendance. We committed to an earlier starting time for the next meeting.

The meeting began with Travis reviewing VMOZ background

- The idea to have a meeting so that all zones could interact with each other came from the WSC of the Future Project.
- The virtual meeting of all the zones in September 2019 was the first time all zones were present at a meeting together.
- At that first meeting, they discussed future plans. One of the top things they prioritized was communication together—having more meetings to learn more about other zones’ development and organization, and to develop bonds among zones.
- There were three more meetings before this cycle. Notes from all of the meetings are in the CP Dropbox.

This group of zonal delegates, alternates, and contacts is tasked with being the workgroup for the Role of Zones Project Plan, passed at WSC 2020. The project plan describes the workgroup’s job as “gathering and sharing ideas and experience to help zones become more effective service bodies and focus on their relationship to the wider Fellowship as called for in the original motion.” The two topics identified as a discussion focus in the project plan are zonal collaboration and gathering a conscience.

The remainder of the meeting focused on sharing experience and ideas related to several topics

### Zonal Collaboration:

#### **Begin compiling experience on collaborative efforts among zones—and within zones.**

[Note: Cindi suggested that collaboration be expanded to include not just zone to zone but also communities/countries collaborating within zones. There was no objection to that idea.]

Dennis: NEZF: Collaborated with SEZF and Autonomy to produce videos, such as PR training videos, and videos focused on effective communications. Challenges—no consistent interface among communities/zones. It ended up being a group of members working together, rather than representatives of each of the zones’ committees.

NEZF and Autonomy are collaborating on PR fully as a joint venture. Projects that have benefitted both and mentoring. A project came out of the second strategic planning session to rebuild guidelines to include a mechanism to collaborate with other zones as a foundation of the zone.

Louis MZF: Multi-zonal Service Symposium (MZSS) has been happening every two years in August—since 2013.

Cindi PSZF: MZSS—had initially intended LAZF would attend this year because it’s in San Antonio, but COVID changed much of the travel plans. Now we intend a Spanish-speaking track for the first time, with collaboration with the LAZF. They will put on the workshops. This really increases collaboration—now the 3 US zones that collaborate to put on MZSS are collaborating with LAZF as well. We have been successful because we had some structure and guidelines from the very beginning. And because it’s every 2 years, it’s not rushed. Planning has really helped make it successful. Planning

and guidelines have made up for the lack of consistency that always results from rotation of trusted servants.

Jeff SEZF—We've had unofficial collaboration with LAZF to help get info to Spanish speaking areas to participate in LAZF. Helps to get information out to Spanish speaking members and areas about the LAZF

Two years ago we collaborated with SZF to do a *CAR/CAT* workshop. MZSS experience helped us. The event worked well. The zones themselves facilitated the workshop (not the WB), and that worked well. It was less like just sitting and listening and more interactive. Challenges or difficulties—there is a learning curve. It takes time to figure out who has a voice or vote, who participates.

Gail RMZF—No real collaboration in the zone. We were asked by WSZF to collaborate on a *CAR/CAT* workshop, but the timing didn't work. We usually schedule the *CAR/CAT* workshop very early. We were also asked to join SEZF and other zones to go to Atlanta to collaborate, but the pandemic and the funding were considerations. So we have no immediate plans to collaborate yet.

We were thinking of reaching out to PSZF because they are closer. But everything is uncertain right now. For a long time in RMZF the same trusted servants were in place, and there was some resistance to doing something like a service symposium that was about providing services. Change can be hard for addicts.

Matthew: EDM: We've always been open to sharing best practices, guidelines, and policy work. We've existed as a successful zonal forum for a long time.

The international zones—the EDM and APF both have many countries as members of the zone, and the collaboration, as a result, is tremendous.

Ash APF: Very little collaboration between zones for us. Time zones are a challenge. I download a lot of stuff, but the times are pretty challenging. Traditionally our collaboration is with the EDM because we have some similarities. We are working together on zonal delegate roles. Our workgroups—PR and FD—are where a lot of the collaboration happens. Many of the 31 countries that are member communities of the APF collaborate there.

Travis—How does a single point of accountability for your zones when you are collaborating on something?

Jeff SEZF—Southern Zone was the single point of accountability for the collaborative *CAR/CAT* workshop because of the location: It was within that zone.

Dennis NEZF and Autonomy have collaborated a lot, and so far one of the two zones acts as the “host” and is the single point of accountability. Moving forward, we are adding guidelines for how to collaborate on an ongoing basis. The video workgroup was set up to report to the SEZF. NEZF PR didn't incorporate such a process. We didn't have a line to the video workgroup. We have set up mechanisms for the future.

### **Are there plans for future zonal collaboration?**

Collaborative *CAR/CAT* workshop in Atlanta coming up. The Georgia region will act as the single point of accountability. Usually controversy is what stirs this up as a concern.

Andrea LAZF —can we plan a webinar here for the Fellowship with polls in real time to get immediate feedback from members for future discussion. So that members feel they have input to the process and don't just think they are being talked to or decisions are not made on their behalf. This will allow

for global feedback and be a more inclusive process. Zones will present a topic and then get member feedback.

Travis adds that at World Services we often use surveys to gather member feedback because surveys can be translated and they don't need to be bound by time zones.

Matthew EDM: Not a plan but an aspiration. The EDM would like to collaborate with the African zonal forum more.

### **Update from US zones on collaboration**

Dennis emailed everyone the proposed Vision and Purpose for the meeting of US zones in advance of this meeting.

Louis—MZF—US zones created an action plan. One of the items was to create a Vision and Purpose statement. That document is now circulating with the hope that it will start a conversation about collaboration. What are the things that zones and zonal collaboration are uniquely qualified to do? They are not looking to form a new service body or replace a service body, but to act as a centralized hub to coordinate requests—communications, sharing technology, FD/outreach, PR... We will be project-based and accountable to the zones.

We could be a central point of contact and information for websites/phonelines/national conference attendance/technology. The US doesn't have a national service body, so this collaboration could improve US national communications if asked. Mentorship, training, workshops...there are lots of possibilities on a project by project basis.

The statement that Dennis emailed everyone was sent out to the zones 3 or 4 weeks ago. Waiting for the zones to weigh in.

Each meeting of US zones is hosted by a particular zone—it rotates.

Dennis—NEZF a little over a third of the members are very enthusiastic. The rest are on a spectrum ranging from—*put this on the shelf and we are overwhelmed right now to we feel we have to spend our attention locally.*

Merle—Autonomy Our zone is leery of “another level of service.” They don't understand that zones are already existing “service bodies.” The regions seem to not understand or they are afraid that another level of service is being added.

Dave—WSZF Our zone is similar. We like the idea of doing some national work like national PR work, but some of the folks in our zone feel this goes way farther than that. Building a national service structure isn't attractive to them, and this looks a little like that to them. Hopefully we can get back to what we initially talked about, which was working with each other to further carry the message in the US and increase the number of newcomers coming to our meetings.

Henry—SZF—Having all of us come together has been beneficial. We got to see what other zones were doing and exchange ideas and experience. Some in our zone are cautious that this might grow out of proportion. Some of our members in Texas don't even know what a *region* is. “Its' something we will have to grow through.”

Matthew—The EDM's focus has always been FD. We don't need a phoneline, for instance because regions have phonelines. We've always focused on FD across the *whole* zone, and that focus is part of what's made us accepted by the member regions.

### **Establish purpose of WhatsApp: What do you want the WhatsApp group to be?**

[Note: Some members are not on social media. This WhatsApp group does not have all of the ZDs, ADs, and contacts. Members agreed to keep their zonal partners updated on the WhatsApp information if they are not on the app.]

Dave—The challenge is there is only one thread on WhatsApp, but if we need something different, we can use WhatsApp to talk about how to talk to each other. Whether through some other app or site that everyone can agree on.

Andrea—LAZF has a good functional WhatsApp chat. Might not be the best platform for a conversation that is orderly. Helps with connection and love. Sharing the flow of energy. Pure vida. Also great for a fast topic—for instance, is there a speaker from each zone for an event? You can get a quick response. Maybe we can leave the large discussion for email or somewhere else but use this for announcements, quick topics. Links to polls or flyers—things that are announcements to raise awareness.

Merle—Autonomy. Let's set the table and see if more parameters or guidelines are needed.

### **Update on ZD Roles/Representation/Zonal Guidelines/etc**

***Has your zone made a decision about who the zonal delegates represent? / Do your ZDs only represent regions who are not seated at WSC?***

***Have you had to change, or create new, decision making processes at the zonal meeting because of this?***

Raimundo BZF: We have a big doubt about the role of the ZD. Our ZD was elected to represent the unseated regions. These regions have a large geographical footprint in Brazil. 6 of the 9 regions in BZF are seated; 3 are unseated. However, the seated regions are also looking to the zone for representation, so it's confusing. It raises doubt about who the ZD represents—only the unseated regions or the whole zone as well.

Our situation is complicated further by the fact that there are Brazilian regions that are also seated at LAZF to increase collaboration—to understand how the LAZF works and bring the experience to BZF. We share experiences and organize events because they are part of LAZF. The collaboration is regular. We have a monthly collaborative meeting. In these events all of the South American countries are present, but we still want to know about the ZD. Last year it was useful to hold CAR and CAT workshops with the unseated regions. We learned a lot. There were 4 unseated regions last time, but then Minas was seated. We're not sure how we will proceed this year.

Andrea LAZF—The service position isn't just about the vote—the ZD isn't just a voting machine. It's about experience—they are a resource for the zone. We need to focus on how the ZD is a resource for the zone. An over emphasis on representation or the vote is tunnel vision. We got some feedback via survey monkey to decide who the ZD is and who they serve/represent. We have to change the mindset and shift away from a political vision and shift to the moral / spiritual obligation to the zone.

Raimundo BZF—Andrea's point is very important. In our zonal forum, the experience has been so important to the unseated regions. The ZD can help them understand how to do service—in a mentorship role. It's a 2-way street. We bring these regions to the world and we bring the world to these regions.

Raimundo BZF—We are in favor of having a web meeting about ZDs—to learn more and to go into more depth.

Matthew EDM—can the zonal forums with zonal delegates bring along two other service members and meet?

EDM is in the process of reviewing the processes.

Ash APF—Like the EDM, we are still in the process of reviewing the processes like who gets a vote or voice, who makes a motion, and so on. In general the APF doesn't distinguish between seated and unseated communities, except when collecting the WSC conscience. We have lots (10) seated countries with a lot of experience that we bring to the table.

The last APF meeting was virtual, and we spent 4 days on zoom. We missed the workshops, but that's the only thing we didn't do. The workgroups seem to be picking up holding workshops.

Andrea brings up the idea that maybe regional seats should be passed to the zonal seats. There is a huge disproportion in the number of groups per region. In the end, what's most important is what we do. Each zone may have different needs and maybe the zones need the freedom for the choice.

Zeynep EDM—All of the zones seem to be figuring this out. The EDM is still trying to figure out how to get a conscience from the unseated regions. There is a workgroup working on this and another workgroup working on the role of the ZD. There are lots of questions.

There was agreement that the zones with delegates might benefit from a meeting together to talk about these issues. That meeting is being set up, and will take place before the next Virtual Meeting of Zones.

### **Topics we didn't get to that we can discuss via email or at the next meeting:**

**Zonal Roles during the Pandemic:** What roles did zones have during the pandemic? Are some of those ongoing? Has the pandemic changed some of what the zones are doing?

**Messaging about Zones:** Is there anything this group would suggest be added to the GWSNA description of zones? Is there anything else about messaging right now?

### **GWSNA Description of Zonal Forums**

Zonal forums are service-oriented sharing and/or business sessions that provide the means by which NA communities can communicate, cooperate, and grow with one another. World Services and zonal forums interact in many ways. Zonal forums are encouraged to provide written reports to the WSC and may also provide short videos that are shown at the WSC and distributed to conference participants following the WSC. In order to improve communications, they are provided with conference participant mailings and are requested to send their minutes to World Services. World Services typically attends zonal forum meetings, and may provide funding for some participants' attendance at zonal forums. Maintaining effective communication between the zonal forums and World Services is a high priority. In order to more effectively serve the Fellowship, World Services and zones should develop a partnership for the planning and conducting of workshops, and by assisting each other in the coordination of a variety of service efforts such as professional events and fellowship development activities. Zonal forums with two or more zonally seated regions or communities that are not seated at the World Service Conference may choose to send a zonal delegate to the WSC.

Although we didn't get to this topic, Dennis NEZF sent some ideas via email after the meeting: The description of zones in the GTWS is really just the first sentence in the paragraph - one sentence to say what a zone is. The entire rest of the paragraph describes a zone's potential interface with the conference.

I certainly think we can come up with a paragraph or even a short set of bullet points that can help cover a consistent message about zones to replace that single sentence - and leave the rest of the paragraph intact as to how zones interact with the conference.

Andrea LAZF shared thoughts about the topic of the role of zones during the meeting: Two goals—create a conscience about what we want to do as zones. Some zonal forums do service and others, especially in the US, are just sharing of information and connecting regions. We need a common understanding of what we want to be as zones and what we want to do in the future. Also, we need to lose the fear about language barriers. Stop asking if people speak English so much. We have interpreters, and language need not be a barrier. We are truly an international Fellowship. It's okay if it takes more time because of translation. For instance, we invite WB members to share at the LAZF even when we need to translate them into Spanish. It's worth it.

### **Input on the last CP web meeting questions**

The last CP web meeting discussed the issue of getting a picture of the Fellowship in times of covid. We are not doing a standard environmental scan this cycle because of issues discussed during the CP web meeting—the fact that the Board's plate is full in terms of project work already.

**Homework: Look over the notes from the CP web meeting and let us know if there's anything in particular you'd like to call attention to/emphasize or add.**

## Meeting Chat

13:31:47 From Sam L NEZF to Everyone:

I'd add that NEZF collaborated with the EDM to design its FD subcommittee in 2019 using the EDMs HRP model. What worked was using the experience, success and best practices of another zone to build trust in the idea and consensus within the NEZF that the model works.

13:38:19 From Matthew EDM ZD to Everyone:

el idioma no es una barrera mi companero de NA

13:38:51 From Andrea - ZD -LAZF to Everyone:

YOU RIGHTTTTTTTTTTTTTT BRO.....

13:43:17 From Andrea - ZD -LAZF to Everyone:

but we are the first responsible for practicing by example

14:04:25 From Dennis M - NEZF to Everyone:

Re - Matthew on the collaboration being in the EDM/APF DNA - agree - Considering that the EDM and APF represent approximately the same number of regions as do 8 zones in the US, you already are accustomed to broader collaboration, mentorship, development across a more diverse regional base (especially more diverse culturally and language-wise) - If the US had 3-4 zones instead of 8, the current set of collaborations that are happening and have been evolving - they would look more similar to the EDM and APF's collaborations as they would be internal zonally rather than between zones.

14:08:12 From Roxanne K- CANA/ACNA to Everyone:

We have not done any zonal collaboration either. We have continued to do collaboration within our zone/regions/members/workgroups etc. I too would like to see us expand to zonal collaboration.

14:08:14 From Matthew EDM ZD to Everyone:

Check out our European Service Learning day next weekend. It's aimed at FD and will probably give a good example of collaboration.

14:08:48 From Tina N, Vegas WSZF to Everyone:

Thank You, is that the email you sent?

14:09:13 From Matthew EDM ZD to Everyone:

Yes, sent about 5 minutes ago.

14:09:34 From Tina N, Vegas WSZF to Everyone:

Thank You

14:10:48 From Cindi B PSZF to Everyone:

Of if the US had 1 zone like Brazil, Russia, etc. We only have one language and 3 time zones.

14:11:08 From Cindi B PSZF to Everyone:

Just to put the thought out there.... :)

14:12:04 From Tina N, Vegas WSZF to Everyone:

Cindi- I have thought of that as well. Or 3 for the 3 time zones...something to ponder

14:12:09 From Cindi B PSZF to Everyone:

sorry, 4 time zones. Only a difference of 3 hours.

14:16:00 From Dennis M - NEZF to Everyone:

BTW - NEZF Fellowship development was just approved by the NEZF body to respond to any service request from anywhere that we have the resources to do so --- and we already allow members from anywhere to serve on our workgroups - for example, our Delegate Training workgroup which will have our training workshops June 26th - 27th have facilitators from Western States and Midwest already and they have played integral roles in that project

14:16:04 From Matthew EDM ZD to Everyone:

Bravo Andrea, Hermosa idea

14:17:33 From Dennis M - NEZF to Everyone:

and a world wide zonal assembly - I love it - I support that idea, but also incorporate some fun, something interactive, something creative, something intended to listen and answer questions, get fresh ideas, have fun too - as a beloved predecessor often said, if you aren't having fun doing service, you aren't doing it right :-)

14:24:37 From Andrea - ZD -LAZF to Everyone:

sure dannis every CAR remind us...WE HAVE TO SPEND TIME TOGETHER

14:26:13 From Jeff P - SEZF to Everyone:

Shouldn't newcomers shut up and listen?

14:26:16 From Jeff P - SEZF to Everyone:

:)

14:26:21 From Dennis M - NEZF to Everyone:

Plains States / Cindy  
NEZF / me  
SEZF / Jeff  
MZP / Louis  
Next up is RMZF / Gail

14:29:21 From Dennis M - NEZF to Everyone:

General temperature of the US Zones so far seems to be very similar to the NEZF

About 1/3 or just over of our members are enthusiastically ready to get going and love this

The remaining members are across the spectrum of feeling supportive but hesitant / overwhelmed to put the brakes on, stop right now, not a bad idea but put it on a shelf until we feel comfortable handling this

US Zones - about 3 or 4 enthusiastically hell yes, 4 range between hesitant, not right now, etc

NEZF - about 4 of the 11 regions hell yes, and the rest range between hesitant, not right now, put the brakes on right now

14:30:38 From Louis H MZF to Everyone:

In the MZF, there was general support for the project.

14:31:25 From Gail RMZF to Everyone:

Same with RMZF and my region - general support

14:33:02 From Dennis M - NEZF to Everyone:

A lot feel overwhelmed right now, struggling to support our areas in their services, and feel overwhelmed considering something at such a scale until local services are firmer in foundation

14:33:48 From Dennis M - NEZF to Everyone:

the smaller zonal collaborations have support more in part (I think) because they are easier to digest and carry fewer implications of that "service body"

14:34:11 From Cindi B PSZF to Everyone:

Thank you Dave!

14:34:25 From Merle S AZF to Everyone:

I do not think the people in the areas who are afraid of this realize this is an opportunity to increase participation in local service bodies.

14:34:37 From Dennis M - NEZF to Everyone:

Agreed Merle - absolutely

14:35:37 From Dennis M - NEZF to Everyone:

But we also, as a culture here in the US, have a lot of hesitation, resistance, or even outright fear regarding anything broader than regions and the word "service body" - we also culturally attach the idea of "service body" to being part of the delegation stream

14:37:46 From Matthew EDM ZD to Everyone:

How do you want us to share stuff?

14:38:05 From Matthew EDM ZD to Everyone:

New Whatsapp group? Email?

14:38:09 From Cindi B PSZF to Everyone:

Great idea!

14:39:10 From Gail RMZF to Everyone:

Agree!

14:40:13 From Matthew EDM ZD to Everyone:

Me and Zeynep are always open to the idea of coming to the US to share experience. Preferably in person and somewhere sunny!

14:40:44 From Cindi B PSZF to Everyone:

Or we could all come to the EDM! Sunny or not!

14:40:50 From Kelly SEZF to Everyone:

That would be Slack

14:41:06 From Dennis M - NEZF to Everyone:

I think how zones developed in the US are very different than the rest of the world

In EDM, APF, etc zones formed for service delivery first - to find ways to help its member communities. The idea of being a service body didn't have any negative connotations - it just was

In the US, our zones formed as discussion only with the cultural idea that if we acknowledged them as service bodies they were automatically going to be part of the delegation stream and start to replace regions at the WSC

We've slowly been overcoming that perception, especially as the motion in 2018 cleared the US Zones from being seated at the conference - but culturally we still have that hesitation or resistance that is decades old. Takes time to overcome and connect to the idea that we can come together to collaborate on services and not have to be anything more complicated - or even yes, we can be a service body, but not go off and get lost in the sunset and away from what our members want or need.

14:41:08 From Matthew EDM ZD to Everyone:

Very good Cindi

14:41:09 From Merle S AZF to Everyone:

Matthew, is there a way you could have one phone line since you represent so many different countries? I am just curious. We see it as a way to coordinate services since newcomers or professionals may not know where to look for information about NA?

14:41:12 From Jeff P - SEZF to Everyone:

Is there still a conference participant discussion board?

14:41:21 From Dennis M - NEZF to Everyone:

Slack does allow threads, channels - but is more challenging for many

14:41:35 From Kelly SEZF to Everyone:

potato Patato

14:41:37 From Dennis M - NEZF to Everyone:

WhatsApp typically is easier for more internationally to embrace

14:42:02 From Roxanne K- CANA/ACNA to Everyone:

Actually CANA was asked to participate in 2 x AZ Assembly and an AZ Region event online. Would that be considered zonal collaboration? Yes??

14:42:04 From Dennis M - NEZF to Everyone:

and I would love to see EDM at the next meeting of US Zones - and I would likewise love to attend the next EDM

14:42:40 From Tina N, Vegas WSZF to Everyone:

Yes Roxanne!!

14:43:08 From Roxanne K- CANA/ACNA to Everyone:

Cool, thanks Tina! Sometimes it's difficult to wrap my head around things with Zones :)

14:45:10 From Dennis M - NEZF to Everyone:

We can also create additional chat groups in WhatsApp for specific threads if we need to break off topic threads?

14:51:33 From Matthew EDM ZD to Everyone:

We will explore being able to invite zonal reps to our next virtual partial EDM. We will let you know and keep you all updated on whatsapp or by email.

14:52:17 From Matthew EDM ZD to Everyone:

Feel free to send an invite to us anytime. We can work with our FD committee and other experienced members to attend and share experience and resources.

14:52:49 From Gail RMZF to Everyone:

Thanks Matthew!

14:53:22 From Cindi B PSZF to Everyone:

That would be great Matt.

14:57:38 From Roxanne K- CANA/ACNA to Everyone:

We are taught to 'get outside ourselves and help someone'. That's the same ethics for us as a zone...we can share our e s h with other zones! And vice versa..

14:59:38 From Roxanne K- CANA/ACNA to Everyone:

to helps us grow and streamline our zones.

14:59:38 From Jeff P - SEZF to Everyone:

IMO, the hesitance in US Zones for Zones becoming "another level of service" is the concern about seating at the WSC, specifically...the transition from Regional seating to Zonal seating. That's the real elephant in the room, whether warranted or not.

15:00:59 From Roxanne K- CANA/ACNA to Everyone:

I agree Jeff!

15:01:42 From Dennis M - NEZF to Everyone:

Agreed Jeff - in the US we culturally attach the delegation stream to the term "service body" - meaning if we call something a service body it is automatically going to be part of the delegation stream attached to the conference at some point sooner or later.

15:03:13 From Dennis M - NEZF to Everyone:

but also I hear a lot of hesitation right now just because many regions and local communities feel overwhelmed with covid-related challenges - so the personal bandwidth needed in the delegates or local regions to even consider something as big as a US Collaboration of zones is just overwhelming to the point of members feeling like "why the hell are you even talking about this or asking us this right now?"

15:03:19 From Andrea - ZD -LAZF to Everyone:

we need a culturally change .....other wise

15:03:26 From Tina N, Vegas WSZF to Everyone:

Type it Matthew. We cannot hear you

15:04:14 From Gail RMZF to Everyone:

Right, all I hear is "we will lose our vote" too many times without really understanding - and yes it is the elephant in the room, if we are to ever have a real discussion on the future of the WSC, that elephant needs to move out of the way!

15:04:19 From Dennis M - NEZF to Everyone:

Yes Andrea - culturally change to overcome the need for excessive boundaries, guidelines, or impediments to things that, in some way, some how, help another addict find this message somewhere

15:05:36 From Dennis M - NEZF to Everyone:

and btw - as a personal aside - I have to say I absolutely love the focus and drive for connection and love in service collaboration, delivery, and assemblies - we need that :- ) we could use that more here (and everywhere really)

15:05:42 From Cindi B PSZF to Everyone:

Thank you Andrea - Stephen Lantos shared at a mentoring workshop about experienced members being "stewards" for NA. And I love that thought. When I was RD, I thought that going to the WSC and carrying the "vote" was only a very small portion of the responsibilities of being a delegate. What happens between the "votes" is where the work and commitment are....

15:06:14 From Dennis M - NEZF to Everyone:

Lol - I was on the last APF for a couple hours a night this last time, and sat in on the day before the last all the way through. Think you finished around 4-5AM here

15:06:33 From Andrea - ZD -LAZF to Everyone:

100% agreed Denis...simply is spiritual. but no more vote vote seats seats.....

15:07:01 From Matthew EDM ZD to Everyone:

And bring witnesses!

15:07:21 From Jeff P - SEZF to Everyone:

Time and a consistent message are the only ways I know of to make "cultural" changes. I don't consider the problem to be permanent. It'll just take time!!

15:07:23 From Kelly SEZF to Everyone:

Case Study: If, Alabama NW Florida decided to split into three Regions, the ability to provided continuous support to local services from Region to Areas to groups would increase. By doing this, SEZF would qualify for two unseated regions and would be allowed to submit to the process of being a seated Zone, This would GIVE groups a voice while benefiting from a more localized Region giving support to Areas.

15:07:32 From Gail RMZF to Everyone:

I love that Cindi, stewards of NA, and yes so much more work and commitment than just the WSC

15:07:58 From Dennis M - NEZF to Everyone:

<3 Yes - we get so caught up and entangled in so many guidelines, seats, votes, rules, etc forgetting very simply it is our message we all serve - our relative positions and "service bodies" simply help define our role and current responsibilities in serving that message - and getting that message to an addict who might not have picked up or even been born yet

15:08:15 From Gail RMZF to Everyone:

I need to jump off everyone, thank you so much - great stuff!

15:09:57 From Dennis M - NEZF to Everyone:

Have a workshop, webinar, assembly - or series of - about talking about our voice and how that is different than "vote"

15:11:07 From Dennis M - NEZF to Everyone:

Exciting

15:11:31 From Jeff P - SEZF to Everyone:

Yeah Matthew!!!!!!!

15:12:43 From Tina N, Vegas WSZF to Everyone:

Love it Dennis!!!

15:13:58 From Dennis M - NEZF to Everyone:

That description is actually just one sentence at the beginning of that paragraph

15:14:11 From Dennis M - NEZF to Everyone:

The rest is describing the interface with the conference

15:14:47 From Roxanne K- CANA/ACNA to Everyone:

CANA/ACNA is likely Sept 1-3rd as it is virtual this year and CCNA is Sept 3 or 4th. TBD

15:15:46 From Dennis M - NEZF to Everyone:

btw - an upcoming NEZF FD project is a video on "What is a zone" as well as "What is the NEZF"

So could use more people to participate - and don't be surprised to see emails/messages coming out asking for info and help

15:15:50 From Dennis M - NEZF to Everyone:

[fd.nezf.org](http://fd.nezf.org)