

GROUP BUSINESS MEETINGS

PURPOSE

Carrying the NA message of recovery is a group's greatest responsibility. Groups that take time to have discussions are often better able to create an atmosphere in which this message can be shared. Meeting together allows members to address group problems, connect with one another, and get a sense of the group as a whole. Group business meetings (sometimes called group conscience meetings) also allow groups to discuss business in a way that keeps the recovery meeting focused on effectively carrying the NA message.

SAMPLE GROUP BUSINESS MEETING FORMAT

Group business meetings are usually held before or after the recovery meeting, so the recovery meeting remains focused on its primary purpose. Group members are encouraged to attend, raise questions, and participate in discussion. This sample agenda is meant to give groups a sense of how a typical group business meeting is run. There are many ways to conduct a group business meeting. The size and personality of a group usually dictate how structured the business meeting will be.

1. The member leading the group (usually the secretary) opens the business meeting with a prayer.
2. Group problems and solutions are discussed. These discussions typically involve topics such as the group's relationship with the meeting facility, how well the group is carrying the NA message, or any other issues of concern.
3. The treasurer gives a report about the group's financial state and makes a recommendation about contributing to the area, region, and world services.
4. The GSR gives a report about any area, regional, zonal, or world service items of importance to the group.

5. Other group trusted servants report on their areas of responsibility.
6. The group addresses any open positions or tasks that need to be accomplished.
7. The meeting is closed with a prayer.

Some groups hold business meetings on a regular basis (coinciding with the area service committee [ASC] meeting), while others conduct them when there is a specific issue that needs the group's attention. Group business meetings are meant to give members an opportunity to discuss subjects of importance to the group.

Group conscience can be thought of in much the same way as personal conscience. Group conscience reflects a collective awareness of, understanding of, and surrender to spiritual principles. The conscience of the group takes shape and is revealed when its members take the time to talk with each other about their personal needs, the needs of the group, and the needs of NA as a whole.

It Works: How and Why

GROUP CONSCIENCE

Group conscience is the means by which we collectively invite the ongoing guidance of a Higher Power into our decision-making process. A group conscience is when addicts whose individual consciences have been awakened come together to consider service-related questions. This conscience is demonstrated when group members listen to one another and make compromises. Calm discussion, mutual respect, and a reliance on the group's conscience helps groups fulfill their primary purpose.

We sometimes use the vote as a rough tool for translating that spiritual guidance into clear, decisive terms. Many times a vote is not needed after a thoughtful and attentive discussion because the group's conscience becomes perfectly apparent, with the group leader asking if there are any objections to the group's consensus. No matter how a group decides to conduct business—either with or with-

out voting—taking time to openly discuss group matters is essential.

One of the best ways a group can solve the various issues that may arise is to remain focused on our primary purpose of carrying the NA message of recovery to addicts who still suffer. Practicing the spiritual principles contained in the Twelve Traditions and the Twelve Steps can solve most groups' problems. In other cases, the group may seek suggestions from neighboring groups or through its group service representative (GSR) at the area service committee.

MAINTAINING STRONG HOME GROUPS

There are many ways for groups to talk about important issues outside of a business meeting. What's important is that groups make the time to develop a group conscience, either during a regular business meeting or during a separately scheduled meeting. Some groups take a regular inventory of the group's effort to carry the NA message, while others address situations as they arise. The *Building Strong Home Groups Worksheet* is one resource members can use to strengthen their home groups. Groups can also answer some of the following questions in their discussions about how to build stronger home groups:

- ◆ How effectively is the group carrying the NA message of recovery?
- ◆ How can the group become more welcoming and accessible to more addicts in the community?
- ◆ How is the group striving to create a safe environment for newcomers? Are newcomers subjected to sexually or financially inappropriate advances?
- ◆ Is the meeting format suitable for the group?
- ◆ Does the leader, chairperson, or secretary set a tone of recovery at the meeting?
- ◆ Do group members live NA's principles and share about them in the group?

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- ◆ Is attendance steady or growing?
- ◆ How is the group maintaining strong public relations with the meeting facility?
- ◆ How is the group considering its public image within the larger community?
- ◆ Is the group practicing the Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts of Narcotics Anonymous?
- ◆ Are the group's funds being used wisely? How is the group using its funds to further the NA message?
- ◆ Has the area, region, zone, or world services asked the group for input?
- ◆ Does the group introduce new members to group service?
- ◆ How does the group prepare trusted servants for other service positions?

As our trust in a Higher Power grows, it gets easier to let go of our personal desires and stop fighting for what we want. With an attitude of surrender, working together in a group becomes easier.

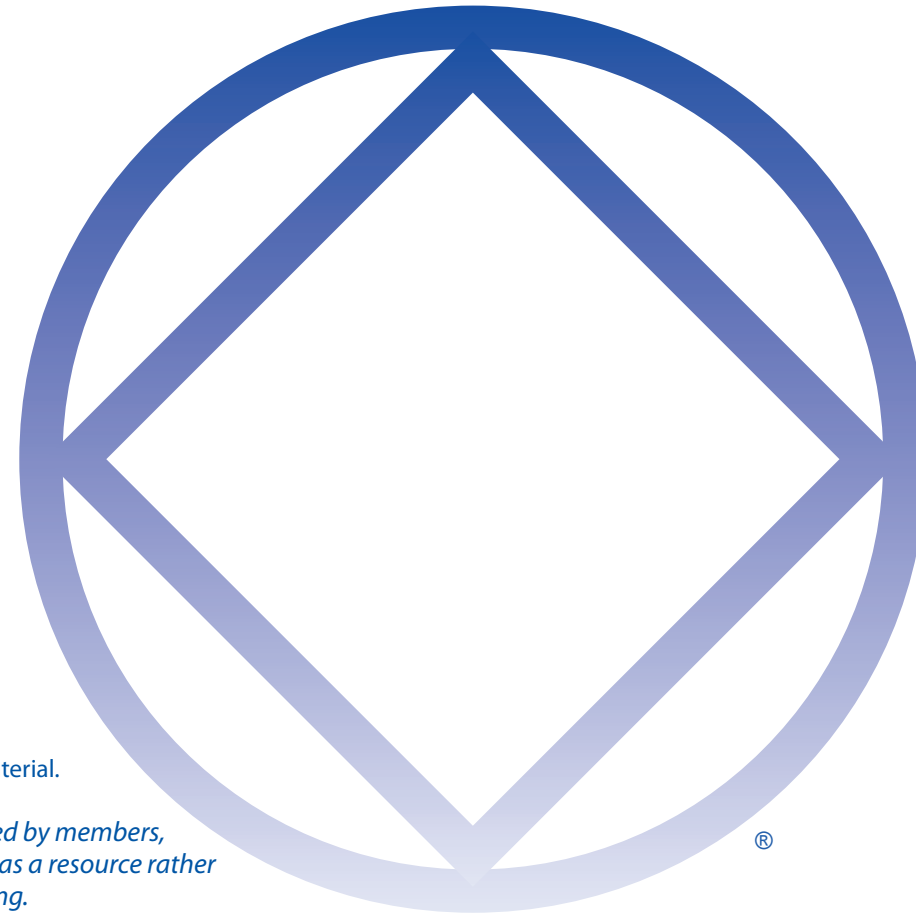
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This is Board-approved service material.

Service pamphlets should be used by members, groups, and service committees as a resource rather than being read in an NA meeting.

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