

Groups Considering Reopening – Questions to Consider

Using Knowledge Based Decision Making

Area 57 - July 2020

1. What do we know?

- State of Virginia Executive Orders - <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/>
- Our meeting location requirements/restrictions are –

2. What do we know about what our members or prospective members need and want?

- Have we conducted a group conscience to determine if the group wants to discuss making a change? (Service Manual, p.51)
- Have we formed a Thought Force to gather information to assist in informed decision making? (Service Manual, p.71)
- Have newcomers found our meeting and continue to participate?
- Do we have “forgotten” members who are unable or unwilling to participate electronically and don’t have a voice in the group decision? How can we encourage their participation in a group conscience?
- What are our members’ concerns about anonymity and how might those concerns affect our decisions?

3. What do we know about the resources and our vision for our organization that is relevant to the discussion?

- WSO currently considers meetings either “face-to-face (FTF)” or “electronic”. There isn’t a permanent electronic-only meeting, or ‘hybrid,’ option. Groups can choose to meet electronically temporarily and remain part of Area service structure, or become a permanent electronic meeting. Keep in mind that a permanent electronic meeting no longer belongs to a District or an Area, nor do they have a GR. Are we willing to lose our connection to the District and Area links of service if we decide to remain electronic permanently? See the Service Manual on Electronic Meetings, pages 88-89.
- The Area recommends that a group consider a ‘hybrid’ status. That means that the group continues to remain registered as a FTF meeting, but meet in a manner that suits the group’s needs as things change, i.e. meet at their regular meeting place when it reopens and some members can join in via phone or computer.
- WSO is investing in resources to determine how best to attract more diversity in our membership (age, race, etc.) Does our decision support that goal?
- How do we communicate meeting changes to WSO and to Area for website updates?

- Area 57 provides free access to WebEx platform that can be used free of charge by groups. Do we want to consider moving to WebEx or other platform?
- Groups and Districts may currently have an expense for Zoom subscriptions. Can our group afford to maintain our Zoom or other platform account?
- Does our meeting location have enough space to accommodate social distancing requirements? Are there other meeting space options we may need to consider?
- If we are ready to go back to our meeting location, do we have the resources necessary to ensure a clean environment before the start of the meeting and to leave the meeting area clean at the end of the meeting?
- Do we need additional service positions for in-person meetings, electronic meetings, “hybrid” meetings and do we have enough members willing to fill those positions?

4. What do we know about the current realities (membership, culture, etc,) and our fellowship’s environment (technology, spiritual principles, our Steps, Traditions, and Concepts) that is relevant to this topic? What are the Pros and Cons?

The following are some topics for Groups to potentially consider when holding a Group Conscience. These may vary from FTF and Hybrid meetings:

- Are we making decisions via group conscience, protecting minority voices, without dominance? (Traditions 2&4, Concepts 4&5, Warranty 3)
- Does the group decision affect another group, Al-Anon or A. A. as a whole? (Tradition 4)?
- Do other groups (A. A., Alateen) meet at the same location? Should we consider inviting to participate on Thought Force? (Tradition 6)
- Does the decision serve our primary purpose of helping families of alcoholics? (Tradition 5)
- Do we clarify who has voice/vote in our group as it relates to group, District and Area votes? (Concept 10, Warranties 3&5)
- For FTF meetings, how will we conduct opening/closing where we have shared folders or literature we pass around for reading?
- If we choose to conduct both FTF and electronic meetings or a “hybrid” meeting, are enough members willing to step into service roles to support FTF (cleaning, room arranging, etc) and electronic meetings (chairing and “hosting”)?(Concept 4)
- What are steps the Group can take to manage the potential spread of the virus?
- Have we considered the need for signage that specifies any group guidelines regarding social distancing, room capacity, masks, etc?
- If our group meets it’s “maximum number of attendees”, how will we handle overflow? Are members willing to give up a seat for a newcomer? (Tradition 5)
- How will we handle situations where members do not comply with group requirements regarding masks, social distancing, etc? (Concepts 3&4, Warranty 2)

- Is our group willing to set up additional meeting days/times to accommodate all?
 - What technology will be needed if we choose to become a “hybrid” meeting where some members are meeting FTF and others are joining the same meeting electronically?
 - Do we have members who are capable and willing to support technology needs for electronic and/or “hybrid” meetings?
 - Would members be willing to participate in “listen only” mode via phone if that is the best option available?
 - Is anonymity protected if we choose to meet at an outdoor location? (Tradition 12)
 - If we choose to meet only electronically or as “hybrid”, do we have the ability to collect donations from members? (7th Tradition)
5. What do we wish we knew, but don't? (What else do we need to know before moving forward?)