

ISSUES DISCUSSION WORKSHOP

PUBLIC IMAGE

*Lone Star Regional Convention XX
March 24-27, 2005*

Facilitators: Dickie D. & Steve S.

There was discussion how talking about topics promotes answers. Information or opinions are needed from those who don't think they have any say. It was stated that one idea leads to another and that creativity has no limits, so be creative. The WSO has conducted meetings regarding our image, and there should be even more discussion.

What is NA's image with the public?

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|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| • Non-professional | • Loving & caring | • Sexual predators |
| • No religious affiliation | • Confused messages | • Helpful |
| • Responsible conduct | • Orders to attend from drug courts | • -"Dually Addicted / "And a" |
| • Irresponsible | • Asset / of service to community | • Positive misidentification |
| • Misidentified / Part of AA | • Poor & confusing terminology: | • No clean time |
| • Criminals / Lack of Integrity | • Public isn't as forgiving | • Public remembers the negative longer than the positive |
| • Needed & lifesaving | | |
| | | |

Discussion:

"The community really doesn't know about NA, they know about AA because of how long that fellowship has been around. There is a lack of information – Public Information. Some people think it is a treatment center. We could do more, and there is a need for more assistance from Public Information."

"Groups in rural areas have had old timers leave, leaving a void in knowledge, lack of sponsorship and a lack of recovery and guidance. Attendance is down. Treatments centers don't attend NA meetings much anymore and have moved to AA because of the lack of leadership in NA."

"Members with clean time have made a bad impression during H&I presentations. Guidelines for PI & and H&I have not been followed, therefore polluting the message. People with clean time are polluting the message. There has been poor conduct and language during PI presentations. Renegades not using guidelines spread confusion in and out of the fellowship. There should be no debating or outside issues during PI presentations. Professionals giving out wrong information (not their job)."

"The public has heard negative news about NA (Dallas shooting). Probation / parole know NA better. Our image is seen as conducted with maturity."

“Fellowship is not like it was before. We don’t have the unity we used to and we need to get back to basics. If we clean up our house, the public will see us with a better image.”

What is working?

- Millions of addicts staying clean
- Public Service Announcements
- PI / H&I presentations
- Phonelines
- Carrying a clear & concise message
- Responsible professional addicts living clean
- Setting a good example
- Respect of facility properties
- Maintaining good “personal” image
- Using the traditions & concepts
- Old-timers staying involved
- Substantial fellowship growth
- Wealth of literature available
- Round table discussions
- Health fairs / getting the word out to schools / parents / health professionals

What is not working??

- Confused messages
- Using other fellowships literature
- Irresponsible conduct
- PI guidelines out of date
- Unskilled, unqualified members working with the public
- Service workers spread to thin
- Gossip
- Holding “warm body” elections
- Waiving of clean time for service positions
Not effective / not enough experience
- Exclusion of addicts because of medications
Newcomers on meds need to be embraced
- Not following guidelines
- There is no accountability / no one showing up at H&I presentations
- Not following through with commitments
- Area inventories
- Professional trouble
- Autonomous groups
- Competition between groups, areas & regions
- Need more brainstorming
- Phonenumber / shifts not being covered
- Conflict with facility rules
- Not stressing the importance of PI

Discussion:

“We are more tolerant than we used to be. We learn about these through not being responsible. NA is the same way. Changing some of the above mentioned aspects are up to the individual and the groups. Disruptiveness needs to be looked at from a group and individual stand point.”

“Member stated that groups sometimes think that they stand alone and forget about the word “except” when it affects NA as a whole.”

“*Language* – deliver clear NA message. Language should be addressed in opening statement at any meeting.”

“*Dress* – Inappropriate subject matter on T-shirts. Members in the fellowship should be responsible for their family members also attending the meeting.”

“*Religious issues* – especially in the jails. Facilitators need to know that discussing religious issues is unacceptable.”

“*Meeting facility* – cigarette butts being put out in inappropriate places. Trusted servants shouldn’t “plug the holes”, when it comes to service.”

“Home groups need to discuss housekeeping issues and hold it’s service members accountable.”

“Anonymity and guidelines should apply to all.” Member talked about individual, as well as group and area inventories. “

“*Public Information* – more youths are coming into the fellowship. Lots of problems with the groups being over run by kids. Not enough members with time sticking around to deal with these/their issues. We can’t just turn a blind eye to. The fellowship needs to address. Disruptive.”

“Some groups have used babysitters / serenity keeps in the meetings. We need to be the ones to deal with such issues. Use the old-timers.”

“Some people have been in the service structure too long. Members with less clean time need to be cultivated into wanting to participate in service work. No one wants to do any service work. It’s our responsibility to vacate service positions to allow others to move into these positions.”

“Younger kids staying clean. Predators are hanging out with them. If you do hang out with them (younger kids), you get categorized as a predator. How do you mentor the younger generation? We have to make this about attraction, and the old-timers need to show them how to do it.”

“Look at the possibility of having meetings for the younger kids, like AA does. They are trying to find the similarities. Find avenues to help them relate.”