

ISSUES DISCUSSION WORKSHOP

INFRASTRUCTURE

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

Facilitators: Dickie D. & Steve S.

What is working with communication?

- Workshops like this
- Face to face communication
- Getting facts straight / precise information
- Asking questions about qualification in regards to service commitments
- Being able to communicate without an opinion
- Being able to write something about your opinion
- Positive attitude
- Descriptions of service positions / knowing what is expected of the position
- Effective simple and readable reports
- Communicate by agreeing and disagreeing / more comes out
- Clear & concise (to the point)

What is not working?

- What is brought to floor at the RSC & ASC's are not being taken back to the groups
- RCM's not knowing what the area wants from them
- Stressing the importance of being able to communicate from one level of service to another
- Having skilled people who are able to listen and understand the importance of the issues being discussed, and who are effectively able to communicate that
- New GSR's / GSRA's are not being trained and are being "thrown to the wolves"
- Making sure that decisions and motions stay intact

Discussion:

"In the past, hasn't Outreach helped train the new GSR's and GSRA's? Is this still done?"

"Communication is every aspect of NA carrying the message. Has the ball been dropped because we don't have people?"

"People in the groups don't think that Area is listening and they don't think that their opinion counts, so they don't vote or give their opinion. If my opinion doesn't count, why should I bother? Why would someone want to go to area?"

Facilitator asked "How many people at your home group really care? How many people are actually getting involved and are encouraging?"

“GSR workshops are being held, but only a few people are showing up. They are taking service positions because they are thinking that they only have to go once a month. A form was developed to help GSR’s to take better notes. There needs to be more honesty in whether that person has the time or resources to hold the position. There needs to be more following through with these commitments. People are in a hurry to get out of group conscience. Try and put people in positions that can keep things “flowing.”

Why is communication important?

- We can’t do it by ourselves
- We’ve learned that some things work better than others
- Guidelines are important
- Group guidelines are sometimes vague / or not available
- To let the newcomers know it’s important to be of service

What issues keep coming up?

- There are positions that there are no needs for
- There is a lack of resources / training for such positions
- Positions are being created to free up resources, and it’s not working
- Guide to Local Area Service has created problems
- Needs to be an understanding that the guide is just a “guide”
- Guide is a very important resource

Discussion:

“There needs to be more discussion about what’s moving our lives. These types of workshops are working.”

“Consensus based decision making works. It’s easy. It’s hard to break the mold and to get people to think outside the box. Communication should be a loop, not a tennis match. If we have good facilitators, it will work. Cooperation can be a tough thing to get going. We are a very under utilized resource. Consensus based decision making works in small groups, but at an area or regional level it is not working. “

“Why fix something that works? Time is a resource and a lot of us don’t have it. Some things don’t need to be talked about, and it doesn’t seem as if anything gets accomplished. Don’t waste time. Take care of business.”

“Stop making service work unattractive. Make service work more inviting and attractive. Stop putting negative spins on it and make service something positive. If it sounds fun and interesting, maybe the ones who “think about it” will show up. Service needs to be passed on. It’s a sponsor’s responsibility to guide their sponsees into service. No one wants to hear about all the negative stuff.”

How do we cultivate leadership?

- Sponsorship
- Principles before personalities
- Stop “warm body” elections
- Members of homegroups showing the newcomers by example
- People will collect, we can’t force people to get involved
- Discussion 6 months before service commitment elections
- Follow through on commitments
- Don’t tear down leadership
- Look to see who is qualified and has the resources to serve
- Do our best
- Be more encouraging
- Ask questions that are pertinent to service positions
- Give people a taste, dangle a hook
- One on one communication works

Discussion:

“Too many times we stick people in positions who haven’t been involved in service. They’ve only been going to meetings. It’s a disservice to the area, because other members have to take up the slack. Area chair should have had some type of committee experience. We are putting people on check signing accounts, who don’t even know what they are signing.”

“Service commitments are clearly defined. If people don’t know something is wrong, how can they change? It hurts the fellowship and that individual if we don’t hold them accountable.”

What could help? What can help people get more involved?

- Best players don’t always become the best coaches
- When people are quiet, it doesn’t mean they are listening
- Become an active listener
- Watch people for their good qualities
- Let them know what is expected from them

Discussion:

“How do we teach about “group conscience”? What is it really? Keeping a group conscience and opinions separate are important”

“ State the purpose of the report in every report you submit. Let the newcomer know that their opinion is valid. Hold a “How to be a chairperson” workshop. Do a group inventory. Do step studies and tradition studies.”

“Know the difference between being a member of NA and a member of a home group. It is our responsibility because we have the knowledge. There are old-timers who continue to control. They are not allowing the newcomer to be a part of. Ask how to help. Workshops are very important.