

WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE OF NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS



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April 24, 1988

To: World Service Conference 1987-88
From: Bill Zimmerman, Chairperson
WSC Additional Needs Ad-Hoc Committee
Re: Committee Report

Greetings from the Additional Needs Committee--the committee that boldly goes where no other committee has gone before. Before I forget, I would like to extend a personal thanks to you, the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous, including the Ad-Hoc Committee members, WSO and the committee coordinator for all their help and love in the past year. As you read, portions of this report may sound familiar. A year end report was given to the conference chair in January. In addition, some committee findings were also published in February's Fellowship Report. In any case, put your feet up, sit back and relax. Okay?

Operating under the current Conference motion, we took direction from the Fellowship and began our work. Here is the motion under which the Committee was created as well as our task for this Conference year:

"To establish an ad-hoc committee of the World Service Conference to investigate and disperse the current information on accessibility of N.A. meetings to those individuals for whom the message of recovery is limited, impaired or inaccessible due to physical, audiological or linguistic difficulties or handicaps."

This Committee met a total of three times. Once in Van Nuys at the Conference, once at the first WSC quarterly meeting in Newark, and the last time was in Denver. Even though we began under a cloud of confusion as to our function and purpose, this Committee completed its task.

The World Service Office had already begun to make materials available to the Fellowship before this Committee was established. Literature in braille (White Booklet and many I.P.'s), recovery material on cassette tapes (Book One of the Basic Text, as well as the White Booklet and I.P.'s), and materials in large print (White Booklet and many I.P.'s) have been available for some time. Our thanks again to the WSO for a job well done and also for making our task this year a lot easier. The following achievements were realized either due directly to this Committee or as the result of the increased awareness in this area. Much of this work was also done due to the emergence of a number of regional additional needs committees.

1. A questionnaire was developed by this Committee and distributed Fellowship-wide by the World Service Office. This questionnaire was distributed for the purpose of aiding us in our task.
2. This Committee inputted, upon request, to the H&I Guidelines regarding addicts in institutions with additional needs.
3. A beginning draft of a questionnaire for professionals who may interface with the addict with additional needs. This has been sent to the World P.I. Committee.
4. We also have drafted a paragraph for the Starter Kit and an I.P. concerning accessibility.
5. The awareness level has been greatly raised within the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous as a result of this Committee.
6. A number of regional and area committees have been established to help in addressing this need.

VOTING PARTICIPANTS: The Committee is composed of fifteen voting members, one Vice-Chairperson, one BOD member and one WSB member for a total of eighteen voting members. If you were to look at our membership list, you would also see a wide geographical cross section among our members. We also have a number of members who also serve as voting members on WSC Standing Committees.

QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS: Using the questionnaire as a tool for gathering information, we sat down in Denver and began to formulate our conclusions. A tally sheet of all the questionnaires received up until April 6 is attached to this report. Even though the sample is small, we felt the response was strong enough to make the following recommendations:

1. This Committee recommends the development of a guide, based on question one from the questionnaire, which explains what the following services are and how to obtain them.
 - a. Sign language interpreters
 - b. Deaf/blind interpreters
 - c. Foreign language interpreters
 - d. Computer monitored meetings for the deaf
 - e. Special seating arrangements
 - f. Telecommunication device for the deaf (TDD)
2. This Committee recommends that because the financial situation of many groups is poor and the need and desire to make the above services available to the addict with additional needs is great, we recommend that further research be undertaken to find a solution to the question of funding these services.
3. This Committee recommends that an informational pamphlet be developed which defines and explains accessibility to N.A. meetings. (We have a draft that has been submitted to the World Literature Committee.)
4. The questionnaire has revealed that 28% of the responding groups had the potential for becoming more accessible.

5. This Committee recommends that each question from the questionnaire be further explained to those being asked to respond.
6. This Committee recommends that N.A. meeting lists be clearly coded to indicate accessibility.
7. This Committee recommends that a paragraph on accessibility be included in the *Group Starter Kit*. (We drafted a paragraph for insertion.)
8. This Committee recommends that our basic recovery materials, such as the Basic Text, White Book and I.P.'s, (also any service oriented materials) be put on closed captioned video tape with an interpreter and voice for the hearing and visually impaired.
9. This Committee recommends that when phonelines are being established in areas and regions, they consider making available TDD (telecommunication devices for the deaf) numbers along with the regular phone numbers.
10. The questionnaire has revealed that further investigation is needed regarding interpreters of all kinds.
11. This Committee recommends that our service centers consider providing materials which are already available for addicts with additional needs (braille literature, tapes, etc.)
12. This Committee recommends that addicts with additional needs be added to the Loner Group list to help improve communication to those addicts.

INTERNAL GOALS AND DIRECTION: These items are for committee use only or for whatever service body or bodies may deal with additional needs.

1. A contact list should be continued and developed which is informative and specific for referrals upon inquiry. This would allow for a blind addict to contact another blind addict, etc.
2. Finalize a draft for specific materials on a guide to accessibility for addicts with additional needs, an I.P. concerning recovery in N.A. for addicts with additional needs, an I.P. addressing mobility and an I.P. addressing deafness in recovery.
3. Continue to collate and disperse information in a fact-finding way.
4. Continue to develop and add to a base of information for use by regions.
5. Participate in up to two workshops during a Conference year on addicts with additional needs within geographical areas which have expressed the need and desire for more information.
6. Develop specific suggestions for P.I., H&I, convention committees and other committees for consideration in their work with addicts with additional needs. This would include suggestions for phonline handbooks regarding telecommunications for the deaf.
7. Suggestions for group registration forms and new meeting information to further gather information about meetings which provide any of the services needed by addicts with additional needs.

The following motion was passed by a vote of 9-yes, 0-no, and 1 abstention at the WSC Additional Needs Ad-Hoc Committee meeting held on October 24, 1987, in Denver. It reads as follows:

That the WSC Additional Needs Ad-Hoc Committee be allowed by the WSC Administrative Committee to continue to operate with the following purpose to function as a means of reaching those addicts who, for whatever reason, are unable to receive the message of N.A. in the conventional ways. The scope of this work shall include:

1. To investigate and gather current information on the accessibility of N.A. meetings to those individuals for whom the message of recovery is limited, impaired or inaccessible.
2. To compile and disseminate information to the Fellowship.
3. To evaluate and review materials which relate to additional needs and when appropriate make recommendations on these materials.
4. When a need exists, this committee may create draft materials directly related to addicts with additional needs.
5. To interface with other WSC Committees and the WSO.
6. To act as a centralized contact for any area or regional additional needs committee.

AREA AND REGIONAL ADDITIONAL NEEDS COMMITTEES: Each year, more and more is being done in the area of additional needs, and you, the Fellowship, are responsible for this. The past year has been no different. During the last twelve months, this committee has watched the number of area and regional additional needs committees grow at a steady pace. These committees are much more than just committees in name only. They are working committees.

1. Regional Committees
 - a. New England
 - b. Chesapeake/Potomac
 - c. Lone Star (Texas)
 - d. Volunteer
 - e. New Jersey
 - f. Florida
 - g. Arizona
2. Area Committees
 - a. South Shore, MA
 - b. Cape Cod, MA
 - c. New Hampshire
 - d. Cape May, NJ
 - e. Bay Area, MD
 - f. South Dade, FL

As Chair, I would like to offer some personal thoughts and observations as well as ask you, the 1988-89 World Service Conference, to help us again this year. Please help us to serve you. This Committee and its members have been a joy to work with as we all watched our dreams become a reality. We worked well together. Even though much has been done, we feel that this is only the beginning.

The Vice-Chairperson and myself have specific suggestions for the continuance of this work. We believe that this committee, if it is continued, should be streamlined to a total of six members plus the WSO staff person assigned. This would include three members from the past year's group, one trustee, one chairperson, and one vice-chairperson. (Our proposed budget includes a line item which allows funds for the participation of the chair, vice-chair, and three previous members.) If the motion passes, we are asking the conference to support the Administrative Committee in appointing these members.

We have only to await the direction and guidance of a loving God given to us by you, the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous. As always, we remain dedicated to the proposition that no addict, anywhere, need die without knowing a better way of life.

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