

12 Concepts of NA Service — from 9/17/89 draft

general comment: I think the concepts are evolving nicely keep going!!!

12 Some comments on the principles themselves

concept #1 — stands pretty well — (maybe a little awkward in "rests ultimately" — is that correct or should it be "ultimately rests"? — we need to start with a statement of how the group relates to the rest of the structure, (maybe we should ^{include} the concept of member here as well)

I flinch a little as I read the word authority so many times through the concepts I support the idea that this symbolizes however I wish we could find another word to use — particularly in this 12th concept — where we have also the word ultimately + which could be interpreted as a contradiction to our 2nd tradition.

Also — In reading 1, 2, + 3 I think these would be more powerful + concise if we combined them into 2 concepts one stating the role of the group and one stating the responsibility/authority/liaison of service boards + committees —

I might suggest:

- ① Narcotics Anonymous Groups and their members are responsible for the services of Narcotics Anonymous
- ② Narcotics Anonymous Groups establish (maybe create or initiate) Service Boards and Committees to fill specific service needs, and assign to these the responsibility and authority to complete their tasks ~~for which they were created~~. (maybe "to achieve the purposes for which they were created")

I know I said that the term authority bothered me but when combined into the phrase "responsibility and authority" I don't get the same feeling of contradiction to the idea of a loving God being our Ultimate authority

To these 2 concepts in place I would go to the Principles of unity - of which I like #s 2, 4, 5

~~Prior to conference - NOT Confuses - diverts attention
from Agenda report + workshops - etc -
a series of questions - 20 or 30 is wonderful
Topics for discussion~~

Concept #4 - the concept itself needs to be developed or eliminated - it should stand on its own at least to some degree

The phrase "single point of decision and accountability" doesn't mean much to me.

Concepts #5

Group conscience is the spiritual means by which we make our decisions; it assures the presence of a loving God in our service efforts.

Concept #6 not really a concept - it is a true statement but doesn't really express our philosophy about leadership or experience - develop concept of leadership being a function of service as implied in traditions. Those who lead = those who serve - talk about the qualities necessary to fulfill the leadership role to which they are elected.

Concept #7 I have problems with this one as it is - this is a good place to talk about the concept of policy vs procedure or function vs. implementation

Concept #8

All Those charged with the responsibility for our services should have the right to participate in the decisions affecting the fulfillment of their responsibilities

Concept #9

Service boards + committees have the responsibility to carefully consider all viewpoints in their decision making process as well as their individual + collective ~~conscience~~ + understanding of spiritual principles — These last two points are important not to forget but they could be better stated.

Concept #10 ^{add} fear of reprisal), express an unpopular position, request a reconsideration, or make petition

Concept #11 (add) and shall be held strictly accountable for those funds

Concept #12 (add) except in their direct responsibility to those they serve

ALTERNATIVE CONCEPTS OF SERVICE

(submitted in June, 1988)

1. Service is a Spiritual Principle. It is through giving freely of ourselves that we receive. In N.A. we believe that service does not equal recovery, but rather that service is an integral part of personal recovery. It is one of the ways that we fulfill our ninth, eleventh, and twelfth Steps. We have established a participatory service structure where the opportunity to serve is both a privilege and right of Membership. The right to serve is guaranteed to each of us; however, the way we choose to serve depends on our desire and abilities. Some members are wonderful as trusted servants, while others flourish best in the one-to-one services we give each other. Through service, we begin to feel better about ourselves and find meaning for our lives.

2. Service should be inclusive not exclusive. We believe that all N.A. members have a responsibility to serve in some way and something positive to offer to the addict who still suffers. There are many ways to serve; they include carrying the message, sponsoring, setting up a meeting hall, being a group officer, being part of a committee, chairing a conference or convention, and everything in between. We actively strive to involve as many members as possible in our service efforts. Individually, we do not claim credit for the results of our service, each of us contributes our small part; we understand that, ultimately, it is a loving God working through us that makes it possible for us to achieve our goals. God makes the results of our service greater than our individual efforts.

3. Our services are initiated and completed by our members. Part of being an N.A. member is being of service, our program is based on this. When we find a service need beyond our individual ability we pool our efforts and our resources. Members, aware of a need beyond their combined ability, establish service boards or committees to fulfill that need. Our service structure, therefore, begins and ends with the member; it is a closed loop. Our members begin the process with an idea of what needs to be done, or could be done to help fulfill our primary purpose. Our service boards and committees are responsible for implementation of the idea, which is finally achieved by members working directly with the addict who still suffers. Without the member there would be no service and no need for service.

4. Our service is for the addict who still suffers. We believe that the N.A. member is the most important part of our service structure. "The therapeutic value of one addict helping another is without parallel." The N.A. group provides an "Atmosphere of Recovery" where the N.A. message is manifest. All the other elements of our service structure have been created to assist, support, and serve our groups and members in the fulfillment of our primary purpose, and are directly responsible to our groups and members. We believe that the "point of delivery" of our service should be as close to the recipient as possible; our service structure (Member-Group-Area-Region-World) was designed to reflect this principle.

5. Our Service Structure is a tool. Our ninth Tradition tells us that we create service boards or committees; we call these boards and committees, and the way that they relate to each other, our "service structure". Its purpose is to do those things for our members and Groups which might compromise their spiritual integrity or distract them from their primary purpose. We try to keep the "recovery" aspects of N.A. separate from the "business" aspects of N.A. The "business" of N.A. begins in the Group and is carried through the rest of our service structure, which is neither separate from nor strictly a part of the Narcotics Anonymous program. Because our service structure is only a tool, it is only as effective as the members who use it and take care of it. A tool does not work by itself, and only has meaning in relationship to the job it is designed to do.

6. The principle of Practical Spirituality is at the heart of our service. Spirituality is not theoretical; spiritual principles only work for us when we accept them and apply them. Our eleventh Step teaches us to seek knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry that out. We discriminate between "self-will" and "God's will" by applying this principle. We believe that if it is not practical then it is not spiritual; "self-will" is like swimming upstream and "God's will" is like swimming downstream. When our service efforts encounter significant problems or resistance, they are usually based on "self-will";

when they proceed smoothly and naturally, they are usually "God's will". A loving God is at the center of our service and this God has the power to make all things possible and practical.

7. The resources we need to fulfill our service projects will always be available when the time is right. We believe that God gives us opportunities when the time is right. If a service project is spiritually correct then the finances, manpower, and emotional support necessary to complete the task will be available. These things have never been a problem for us when the service project we were working on was in keeping with God's will for us as expressed in our group conscience. It is only when we try to make things happen the way we want that we experience failure; when we let them happen in their own way and in their own time, we succeed. Our service is like our recovery; dependant on the same spiritual principles and the same loving God.

8. Our service should be simple and straightforward. Ongoing recovery is a process of simplification and likewise in our services we should strive for simplicity. "This is a simple program for complicated people." Our natural inclination seems to be to complicate any project, think it to death, get overwhelmed, and give up. If our service efforts are in tune with God's will then they do not need to be complicated. When service is in harmony with God's will it is automatically in tune with reality and there is no need for secrecy, dishonesty, manipulation, or complicated schemes; the spiritual correctness of the service and our willingness to follow through is all that is necessary for success.

9. All service should be open and aboveboard. Communication is inherent in the principle of direct responsibility. Open information and full accountability are implicit in our approach to service. Secrecy is part of our disease, when we were active in our addiction it seemed necessary; but in recovery, it is a contradiction to our principles. "In our secrets, lie our sickness." In order to maintain the integrity of our services we openly monitor our motives and inventory our methods. When we maintain our focus on our "primary purpose" and keep our actions consistent with spiritual principles then we have nothing to fear, and nothing to hide from each other.

10. The services we provide within our Service Structure should always be guided by principle. "True spiritual principles are never in conflict" and the spiritual principles embodied in our Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions should be respected and maintained throughout our services. Our Twelve Steps literally apply to the member seeking recovery, our Twelve Traditions literally apply to our Groups, and these Concepts of Service literally apply to our Service Structure. However, the underlying principles or "spirit" of our Steps, Traditions, and Concepts apply universally. Surrender to, awareness of, and application of spiritual principles are necessary for us to survive, grow, and provide service based on God's will.

11. Selfless service is our ideal. The disease of addiction is our greatest strength because it brings us together, it is also our greatest weakness because it tends to tear us apart. Our disease is one of obsessiveness and compulsivity; it is physical, mental, and spiritual in nature. We recognize that there is a direct relationship between quality of service and personal recovery. We stress the need for each member involved in service to keep their personal recovery (physical, mental, and spiritual) as their first priority. When individuals get distracted by their disease, fail, or fall short in their service we treat them with compassion and love rather than rejection, exclusion, or punitive action. We strive for progress and do not demand perfection of each other.

12. Ultimately, our service projects are in God's hands. We trust in God. Trust is a key principle for us, and essential in our service efforts. The trust that N.A. members give those who serve is equal to the trust that those who serve have in the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous, in spiritual principles, and in God. As individuals, we trust our will and our lives to the care of a loving God. Our Groups trust in a loving God as their ultimate authority. Likewise, in our Service Structure we trust a loving God as the source and strength of our service. Trusting in God does not relieve us of the responsibility to take appropriate action. God gives us opportunities, we follow through with our effort, and God takes care of the results. All we are, all we have, and all we do is in God's care.