

**Preconference – Northern Districts and Zoom Meeting
3-14-2020**

Approximately 71 AAers in attendance via Zoom meeting.

Feedback is broken down by question. In some cases discussion is then categorized into DCM/Alt DCM comments and GSR/Alt. GSR and other members because that was the order in which discussion occurred. Comments are generally in the order spoken. Not all comments were captured but most were.

1. Create a pamphlet for mental health professionals

DCMS and Alt. DCMS

- Pamphlet gives help and mitigates confusion with the mental health.
- Thought AA was focusing on getting a web presence. I think we should focus our energy on the web and not pamphlet. Didn't think we needed a different pamphlet. How do you get the pamphlet to the professionals and how do you get them to read it?
- Personal experience talking to mental health professions – take a meeting into different facilities – some mental health professionals are in tune with what we do and others who have a misconception. Having things specific to mental health is good – there is a lot of overlap with behavior help and this could help reduce confusion and misinformation as to what AA is about.
- Really good idea – but also like the web presence. Mental health should also be able to find it on the web. Also target it to education professionals because see same client base. Good idea but question about if this is the right way to go about it.
- Use the LinkedIn page as a place to disseminate the information.
- A lot of the information given to us in the background could just be put into the LinkedIn page. Maybe the words need to be wordsmithed to be more helpful.

GSRs, Alt. GSR and anyone else

- Can we add a section to the Health Care professional pamphlet to add the mental health professionals? Just update one pamphlet instead of making a new one.
- Does AA have an opinion on distinguished between the mental health professional vs health professional.
- Sounded like there is a pamphlet available – curious to see if there was a decrease in disinformation when that came out.
- Everyone should think hard – mental health professionals have a different role. Some mental health professionals, mental therapist, pretty involved in someone's life. People see them more often than general health care professional and may hear more information than an a GP. Suggestion for content – address the misconceptions and general misconceptions – what general members say is AA is not AA. AA is not what just one person says. Differentiate the program from the people.
- The professionals don't always like what we have to say because we are perceived that they think we are the bottom-line authority about alcoholism. The idea is to repair a broken relationship that we have with mental health. Replace ourselves (AA) in a relationship with mental health professionals.
- We might incorporate this with another existing pamphlet. A pamphlet to Medical Professionals. Should we create a new one or expand the existing one.
- P-23 - AA as a Resource for the Health Care Professional is good just needs updated.

2. Make an edit to the AA preamble to use pronouns which do not denote gender.

Preamble Discussion

- I think my first thoughts have to do with when I first got to the program my sponsor explained its from 1939 but the grapevine is where you can find stuff from today that was more relevant. The grapevine owns this- the copyright they don't have to ask but they are because they want to change it. I think it should be updated. Instead of it's a fellowship of people – just call it a fellowship.
- Yes, the grapevine owns the preamble and can change it- but the collective conscience is within the groups and the final authority for AA. Wouldn't dream of changing it without the groups input.
- Why not change it to be more inclusive? This is service material and is not in the big book. Most groups would just go to the aa website and print it off. If this was made – the groups what a new preamble would have it the groups who don't want it wouldn't make the change.
- PRAASA changed my mind or maybe changed me. I'm having problem wrapping my head around how I was taught to address people. But I believe we need to be more inclusive. We could take three words and change it into 1 – keeping in line with Dr. Bob's vision of keeping it simple.
- Like just making the word – fellowship
- This would require all pamphlets to be changed because the preamble is in them.
- Loving what I am hearing – pamphlet needing to be changed makes sense.
- Like the word fellowship is a good idea. The execution of it – pamphlets are updated periodically and maybe the pamphlet would be updated when it needed to be reprinted. Don't need to change all pamphlet at once.
- No problem changing the verbiage of people is incorrect. Grammar is incorrect.
- Another fellowship uses – fellowship of individuals

Big Book –

- Don't want the big book changed – needs to stay original.
- The preamble is one thing but going to the big book is another. Once we make one change then other changes will happen. We are in a time we say we don't understand the big book – gives you a reason to get a big book. No, you may not understand the big book by yourself which is why need a sponsor.
- Agree about not changing the big book. Talking about a plain language book maybe make it more gender neutral but making the original text as is. Make changes in it not there.
- Remember this is a historical document.
- Agree with changing the pronouns in the preamble but do not agree with changing anything except the stories in the back. Put the gender-neutral pronouns in the plain language translation version.
- Are going down the same path as the bible. The language has changed since writing it that it needs to be updated. Things that are outdated a little. For the most part I can relate to people work the steps and how they feel about drinking.
- We really need to think about changing – especially the “Too the Wives”. Maybe add an asterisk that explains when it was written and why we haven't changed it.
- Will we change God from Him?
- How are men and women outdated or offensive? Why do we need to change it?
- Political correctness is a charged term - need to be careful when using the term – it's not about being polite or correct – but to keep it even more simple – keep it just accurate. Our fellowship is not just men and women.
- Is this effecting our primary purpose? Are people not getting sober because of this? I had good sponsor ship who explained it to me. I wouldn't want to change our big book because it saved my life.
- changing to gender would be inclusive to those who do not identify with a gender.
- Still don't understand what is wrong with denoting gender. What else is there other than man and woman?

3. Establish a Grapevine Instagram account **DCMS and Alt. DCMS**

- First thought is why not. Daily routine – I read the daily quote emailed to me. It wouldn't be difficult to produce just putting what is produced onto a different format.
- Ever since I was at PRAASA – my opinion changed – I feel like even though I have friends who are shut in and how lonely and isolating can be – anything we can do to connect more electronically is good. Anything we can do to be more relevant is good. The places where young people go to get information is places like YouTube and Instagram.

GSRs, Alt. GSR and anyone else

- Not techy and don't use it. I really only use it for pictures. I don't understand how Instagram could be used.
- Don't understand Instagram. But I know that my younger sponsees are on Instagram and Twitter.
- I don't want to limit the way we can be helpful. If I don't understand it, I should educate myself more.
- Misgivings as grapevine communication. It could compromise people's anonymity.
- Concern about anonymity on these platforms. They have a YouTube channel that the comments are disabled to prevent people from breaking their anonymity.
- Most social media platforms have terms and conditions that specifically state that they have the right to change their terms and conditions at point in time. Some can even do it with notifications. That means they can change how they use our information. Does that conform to our 12 Traditions?

4. Consider several Big Book it related to accessibility and relatability

Create a new translation of the Big Book, into Plain Language

- There are things we already make like Grapevine in today's language.
- Put asterisk in it about this was written in 1939
- Suggestion about how you should read this with another AA or sponsor.
- Look at this as an accessibility issue. Remote communities in Alaska reading level low- it doesn't replace the big book or sponsorship but there is a need for an easier big book to read. It's an introduction to the program and how to read the big book. The steps are laid out in the big book and would help make it easier to understand. None of this replaces but is a good introduction for people to find out what aa is about.
- Make a disclaimer to the big book about it being written in a different era.
- Maybe a new preface that directs people how to read it.
- Maybe a pamphlet on how to use the big book.
- It's an accessibility issue – lot of people who don't read at the level of the big book and a translation – not changing the big book – can help. It doesn't change the idea of working with a sponsor.
- Different take all together – the big book should stay as a big book and a companion workbook would be the way to go. Then they have the workbook and simplified language in one place.
- We are pretty well educated and there are lots of meetings. The background made me think and that other places need a translation.
- Yes there is an accessibility issue but it's also a treatment issue. When you first come in I didn't function at my potential. I think a translation is important but also an audio so people can understand it better. A lot of times when in treatment you can't get to your sponsor – an audio version would help with that. Simplified method.
- There are words in the big book people do not understand. There is not AA approved dictionary, but some done by other publishers. Make a cliff note of the big book.
- Grapevine is for people today. What if grapevine did a book on the members experience with the big book. There already a breath of articles written on the big book – so maybe already a possibility.
- Other people are already doing it – so if AA wants to control the message they should put one out. We are going to lose control of the message because other people are already doing it.

Create a Big Book workbook or study guide

- No opinions about having a big book.
- Think when a lot of us come in here think we can do this on their own and a workbook could encourage that.
- At first not a good idea – until I read the comments from the past trustee. The newcomer doesn't need someone to think for them – not true – when you first come in – your thoughts are not altogether.
- If you were like me when I got to AA you were hiding from everyone – changing the book doesn't the program.
- Alternative – AA approved dictionary.
- We have talked about indexing the Big Book before.
- Most sponsors use non-conference approved workbooks. Does aa want to control its own narrative?
- There are lots of resources out there already. Do we want to control the narrative? Not sure this is something we want to get in on or let others do it?
- Is it different if its conference approved vs not?

5. Update the pamphlet AA for the Black and African-American Alcoholic

- The quotes in the background are unfortunate. Any problem society has will be in the rooms. I'm not a person of color so I can't relate.
- It should be written from the perspective of one alcoholic talking to another alcoholic.
- Hasn't been updated in 20 years – it's time to update it.
- It's about giving hope to African American alcoholic that long term recovery is possible.
- Who are we writing this literature too?
- Can be used for groups who have no African Americans to help show a pathway into AA.
- Our literature that is specific needs to be written for everybody.
- Should this pamphlet be revised? Yes. But then there is the underlying issues of diversity and inclusion. Does AA have a diversity and inclusion pamphlet?
- General diversity pamphlet is a great idea.
- This should be a pamphlet aimed at AA members about being inclusive.
- It's been 20 years and so much has changed in 20 years – it's time to update.

6. Create an AAWS podcast comprised of existing materials?

- Pod cast are awesome.
- AA grapevine https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCI9uFLJ__aXT3-At0PIPWUQ/featured stories are already recorded. We have the meeting guide AA – they have the daily reflection there – why not add a podcast spot on that night.
- There is an AA pod cast from New Zealand that they do a radio show and meeting. Someone
- Very much in favor of this!
- Does it cost money? No. They are free.
- We should ask the grapevine to produce podcast.
- Podcast could stray away from AA's message so concerned about the ability to have an ongoing series of discussion and stick with the message of AA.
- Not sure I would listen, but they could be a valuable tool because they are so open and broad. Be like listening to a speaker tape. Could be more produced and have a discussion. It's an open medium that could be used for people who are driving or isolated.
- Grapevine has a YouTube channel – it's a lot like a pod cast. They have really good talks on there.

Need responses back from the groups by April 15, 2020.

Just a note this was a great experience and went well.

Meeting closed at 3:10