

GSR University

Course 401

Western Washington Area 72
General Service Representative



This document is meant to be a guide only. Most of the information contained herein may be found, in greater detail, in the A.A. Service Manual, the Handbook for the Western Washington Area Committee, and the other A.A. literature. In no manner whatsoever is this document intended to supersede the above-mentioned references or any A.A. General Service Conference approved literature.

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Additional Considerations

ROTATION

In most Groups, the GSR is elected to a two-year term, which usually runs concurrent with the Area rotation. DCMs and Area officers likewise serve two-year terms. Rotation is frequently referred to as “anonymity in action” because it is one vital method we have of avoiding power, prestige and personal recognition from distorting our best intentions.

COMMITMENT AND PRINCIPLES

As members of the general service structure, principles that we must now demonstrate as a trusted servant include willingness, self-sacrifice, honesty, consideration of others, thoughtfulness, love, tolerance and, most of all, basic etiquette.

- Do we show up, on time, when we say we will?
- Do we mark our A.A. commitments on the calendar and then work around them, or do we attend only if it doesn't interfere with our own pleasure?
- When we are unable to make an event that the GSR should attend, do we arrange for our alternate to be there?
- Do we keep our alternates well informed and involved?
- Do we attend as many service activities as possible in order to become better informed, or do we do the least possible required?
- Are we able to offer criticism lovingly and based on the application of our three legacies, or do we let personalities get in the way?

THE INFORMED GROUP CONSCIENCE

Concept XII, Warranty Four:

“That all important decisions should be reached by discussion, vote, and whenever possible, by substantial unanimity.”

“Here on the one hand we erect a safeguard against any hasty or overbearing authority of a simple majority; and, on the other hand, it takes notice of the rights and the frequent wisdom of minorities, however small. This principle further guarantees that all matters of importance, time permitting, will be extensively debated, and that such debates will continue until a really heavy majority can support every critical decision ...”

The Group Conscience strives for unanimity through enlightenment, spirituality, and the practice of our principles. To be fully informed requires a willingness to listen to minority opinions through full discussion. On sensitive issues, the Group works slowly, discouraging formal motions until the Group has a clear sense of its views. Placing principles before personalities, the Group is wary of dominant opinions. The Group Conscience is the aggregate of experience a Group develops after applying the Traditions and Concepts to a question. The difference between a Group Conscience and a majority vote or Group opinion is that one or more of the elements described above are missing.

SPONSORSHIP IN SERVICE

A service sponsor is an alcoholic who has made some progress in recovery and performance in service, who shares this experience with another alcoholic who is just starting this journey (or possibly with someone that has been around a while). A service sponsor is someone knowledgeable in A.A. history and who has a strong background in the service structure. A service sponsor's duty is help their service sponsee learn about A.A. service, the traditions, the concepts, and help the service sponsee think though critical issues affecting their Group.

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A new GSR should have a service sponsor whom they can speak with about any of their service related activities, interests, and challenges.

LOCAL INTERGROUPS AND CENTRAL OFFICES

Intergroups and Central Offices provide services for local A.A. Groups and members and are supported by the Groups in the communities they serve. If the Group does not have an Intergroup or Central Office Liaison, the GSR should consider keeping in touch with their local Intergroup/Central Office.

These offices provide such services as:

- Receiving, arranging, and following up Twelfth Step calls.
- Answering inquiries about AA
- Establishing local Public Information committees.
- Maintaining information about local hospitals and recovery facilities for alcoholics.
- Publishing local AA meeting lists.
- Providing a newsletter.
- Ordering, selling and distributing AA Conference-approved literature.

Tips and Tools

REFERENCE TOOLS FOR THE G.S.R

- The A.A. Service Manual Combined With The Twelve Concepts for World Service (booklet)
- The A.A. Group (pamphlet)
- A.A. Comes of Age (book)
- A.A. Tradition - How it Developed (pamphlet)
- Supporting The A.A. Support System (pamphlet)
- Circles of love and Service (pamphlet)
- Inside A.A. (pamphlet)
- The GSR May Be The Most Important Job In A.A. (pamphlet)
- The Twelve Concepts For World Service Illustrated (pamphlet)
- The "White Sheet," What A.A. Does and Does Not Do (one page flyer)
- A.A. Literature Catalog
- Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions (book)

USEFULL LINKS

- Click this link to see [information for new trusted servants](#) . Although it is possible to update contact information directly with GSO through the GSO records department, our best practice is engage the area registrar to update those records.
- Click these links to get digital versions of available committee workbooks and kits from GSO (aa.org) :
 - [Archives Workbook](#)
 - [Corrections Workbook ... Corrections Kit](#)
 - [Cooperation with the Professional Community Workbook ... CPC Kit](#)
 - Literature Workbook and Kit ... (these items are not identified online at [aa.org](#); but, they are listed here to let

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you know that effort was made to find them)

- [Public Information Workbook ... PI Kit](#)
- [Special Needs/Accessibilities Workbook ... SN/Accessibilities Kit](#)
- [Treatment Workbook ... Treatment Kit](#)

Note 1: The [AA Service Committees](#) page enables interested members to obtain specific, additional, resources for various kinds of AA service work.

Note 2: Printing a single copy of these items is permitted in accordance with the AA World Services, Inc [FAIR USE POLICY](#)

- Click the following link to get a digital copy of the [current literature catalog](#).

TIPS / SUGGESTIONS FOR A GSR at the HOME GROUP MEETING

- Attend your Home Group regularly
- Guardian of the Traditions – know where to find the answers
- Share information from GSO, such as Box 459, etc..
- Give regular reports to the groups regarding the district, the area and GSO.
- Explain issues to be voted upon and find out how the group wants you to vote on matters of importance to all AA.
- Be the group contact for the area committee and GSO and AA directories, etc.
- Insure your group is offering all the sobriety tools available, including conference -approved pamphlets and books.
- Seventh Tradition – be able to talk about the 7th tradition and what contributions are used for.
- Be familiar with the AA Service Manual, Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, Circles of Love and Service, and The AA Home Group pamphlet.
- Supply the DCM with up to date group information
- Write down questions and comments from group members and bring to district meetings and area assembly meetings.

***If you are unfamiliar with the above information reach out to your DCM, Alt DCM or any AREA Trusted servant.*

TIPS / SUGGESTIONS FOR A GSR at the DISTRICT MEETING

- Bring up issues or concerns from your group for discussion with other GSRs
- Bring with you and give GSR report.
- Take information back to your group – nobody else will.
- Bring a notebook and a planning calendar – or use your phone.
- Know what your DCM responsibilities are.
- Call DCM to put items on the agenda for district meeting – when you have something.
- Bring group conscience to district meeting.
- Give everyone your attention.

WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN YOU ATTEND THE DISTRICT MEETING:

Before the meeting begins

- Pick up written reports usually located on a table in the room (Meeting agenda, Treasurer, DCM, committee etc...)
- Pick up any flyers for upcoming evenings in your District/Area
- Sit with someone new. Make a friend.

During the District meeting

- The agenda that is either mailed or e-mailed with the minutes from the previous meeting to all GSRs and interested parties.
- Secretary usually brings extra copies left up at the front table.
- The majority of the District meeting consists of verbal and written reports from the various trusted servants.
- Give your GSR report. (See an example – it's just an example you do what feels good to you.)
- Hi-light or **make notes** during each report as to what you think your group will find important.
- Also, make a note of what positions are open and add them to your announcements to read.
- Take notes on what is said during open forum to add to your GSR report.
- Take notes on all motions under new and old business.
- Pay close attention to any motions that are sent backs to the groups to vote on.
- At the next District meeting you will need to vote the conscious of your group.

After the Meeting

- Remember to network with other GSRs and committee members
- Go up and ask questions.
- Go back to your Group and update the flyers with new ones you may have received at the District Meeting.

REPORTING BACK TO YOUR HOME GROUP

- Your report should consist of highlights from each report presented at the previous District meeting:
 - Topics under open forum,
 - Treasurer Reports (keep it simple)
 - Any motions voted on at the District,
 - Any new motions to be voted on by the group, and anything else that you think is noteworthy.
- Make sure that any motions to be voted on by the group are brought up under new business at the group's business meeting or during regular meeting for those that have no business meeting.
- When these motions are brought up at the next District, vote the group's conscious.
- **Some meetings do not have a Business meeting and you can asked to give the GSR report during the meeting, keep notes brief to avoid taking up too much meeting time, have all reports available for any member to read.**

HOW TO MAKE A GSR REPORT:

Home Group

It's important to get your group used to hearing a GSR report.

- Be positive!!!!
- For a start, we suggest that you make District and Group Event announcements at your meetings when there is a call for AA related announcements.
- During the Group's regular business meeting, break down the information into short bullet points.
- Your report should consist of highlights from each report presented at the previous District meeting:
 - Topics under open forum,
 - Treasurer Reports (keep it simple),
 - Any motions voted on at the District,
 - Any new motions to be voted on by the group, and
 - Anything else that you think is noteworthy.
- If an informed group conscience is needed so that you can vote on behalf of your group, then you will need to give more in-depth information.
- Suggested you have more detailed reports you may have collected at the District meeting that available if someone would like to review them at the business meeting.
- Be prepared.

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Sample GSR Report (just a suggestion)

My name is _____ and I'm an alcoholic. I am honored to serve as your GSR. A GSR is a "General Service Representative" and is the link between an individual AA group and AA as a whole. It is my responsibility to bring you news and issues that concern AA as a whole, and to bring this group's vote and opinions on issues being decided by the whole of AA.

The District Meeting Occurred on _____ at _____ (location).

Items of interest Discussed: _____

Items needing Group Conscious: _____

Upcoming Events: _____

Other information: _____

Thank you for letting me be of service.

Sample Report to at the District Meeting (just a suggestion)

My name is _____ My home group _____ and I'm an alcoholic.

Our meeting place/time/ format: _____.

Service positions filled within the Group: (Report openings or if they are all filled)
_____ + _____.

Group Contributions: (Report if you have made any distributions to intergroup, district, area or world) ?
_____.

Upcoming Group Events: _____.

Other Information: _(Concerns or things that are going really great)_____.

Thank you for letting me be of service.

GROUP CONSCIENCE PROCESS

(Written from the perspective of the person chairing the meeting)

Before you start:

Thoroughly explain the voting process: who may vote, how the vote will be cast etc...

Then:

Present the issue

When presenting an issue or topic its recommended to remain neutral.

Sometimes the issue will be presented by the maker of the topic or by the DCM there is no rule.

Then:

Allow time for discussion (Listen to hear if you are having a balance of pros and cons)

Listen – when you start hearing people repeating the same information ask the following question "Does anyone have any new information?"

Next:

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Call for a Vote.

For something to pass substantial unanimity is sought (typically this is two-thirds)

If your group conscience calls for something other than substantial unanimity, then go with the group conscience.

After the Vote:

Ask for the Minority Opinion and if they would like to speak

If no one from the minority wants to speak then the vote is over.

or

If someone or multiple people speak from the minority opinion. Someone for the majority can call for a reconsideration of the vote if they have been swayed by the minority position

If a reconsideration is requested, then vote on whether to reconsider the vote. This is usually a simple majority.

If passed, then the issue that had been voted on is reopened again for discussion and the voting process will start over.

BRIEF ROBERT RULES OF ORDER GUIDE

*****Remember we use these loosely! They are not to be used so rigidly we cannot communicate from the heart.***

When recognized by the chairperson:

1. Stand, clearly state your name and the Group you represent.
2. Speak as clearly and as briefly as possible your remarks must be pertinent to the business at hand or items you wish to bring to the floor.

You want to:	You say:	Second required	Debatable	Vote
Adjourn	I move we adjourn	Yes	No	Majority
Register a complaint	Point of privilege	No	No	No vote, chair decides
Table a matter	I move we table this matter	Yes	No	Majority
End a discussion or debate of a matter	I move the previous question	Yes	No	2/3
Have further study of a matter	I move we refer this to a committee	Yes	Yes	Majority
Amend a motion	I move this motion be amended to read...	Yes	Yes	Majority
Introduce a matter of business	I move that	Yes	Yes	Majority
Object to an error in procedure	I move that the order of the day or point of order	No	No	No vote, chair decides
Request information	Point of information	No	No	No vote
Take up a matter previously tabled	I move we take from the table	Yes	No	Majority
Reconsider an item already disposed of (Maker must have been on the prevailing side on the original motion)	I move we reconsider the vote on our action relative to...	Yes	If the original motion was debatable, yes	Majority
Consider an item out of its scheduled order	I move we suspend the rules and consider...	Yes	No	2/3
Delay an action indefinitely	I move to postpone indefinitely...	Yes	Yes	Majority

MOTION		Requires a "Second"?	Is Debatable?	Vote Required for Approval	Minority Voice Heard?
Committee Recommendation	Presented in the committee report.	Automaticall y seconded	YES	Two-thirds	YES
Amending a Motion	A motion on the floor is owned by the entire Conference body, no longer by the Committee which recommended it. The committee is not asked to vote on the motion to amend; any motion to amend a main motion depends on the approval of the Conference.	YES	YES	Two-thirds	YES
Tabling a Motion	Made without comment.	YES	NO	Simple Majority	NO
Moving to Recommit	Made without comment.	YES	YES	Two-thirds	NO
Calling the Question	Made without comment.	YES	NO	Two-thirds	NO
Reconsidering a Vote	May only be made by a member who voted with the prevailing side. No action may be reconsidered twice.	YES May be seconded by either side.	NO	Simple Majority	NO
Making a Floor Action	Made without comment. Introduced any time during the Conference except at the Sharing Sessions. Is submitted in writing by the maker to the Conference secretary.	YES	YES	Two-thirds	YES
Declining to Consider a Floor Action	Made without comment. May be made after the maker of a floor action is provided time to state the rationale for it.	YES	NO	Two-thirds	NO

Special thank you to District 9, 29, 44,45, and 54 in helping make the handbook more exciting with graphics that they had created.

GLOSSARY OF COMMON A.A. TERMS

- **Alternate:** A general service worker who, according to local autonomy and needs, is elected at the Group, District or Area levels to participate with, assist in and, in appropriate circumstances, assume the duties of a principal office holder, i.e., alternate GSR, alternate Delegate.
- **Archives:** A collection of A.A. memorabilia. The Archivist's functions might include collection, indexing, storing and exhibiting original and reproduced local, national and international A.A. material.
- **Area:** A geographical division within a state or Province. Normally there is one Area for each state or Province. Where there is high population, a state or Province may divide into two or more Areas.
- **Area Assembly:** A periodic meeting of the GSRs, DCMs, Area service committee chairs and Area officers. All A.A. members are encouraged to attend, but only the above listed members of the Assembly are entitled to vote. The Assembly elects the Delegate and other officers. The Assembly is a basic unit of the general service structure and conducts or helps coordinate most of the business for the Area.
- **Box 4-5-9:** A bimonthly publication of the General Service Office, the title of which is also the New York mailing address of G.S.O. (Grand Central Station, New York, NY. 10136). The masthead of this informative mini-magazine consists of the words "News and Notes from the General Service Office of A.A." It includes such items of interest as: a calendar of important local, national and international events; questions and problems about A.A.; vignettes and anecdotes from A.A. people, history and events; as well as much other information of interest to the dedicated and/or curious member.
- **Conference:** Delegates, the Board of Trustees, A.A.W.S. and Grapevine Directors, and the G.S.O. and Grapevine Staff make up the Conference. This meeting keeps the individual A.A. member and G.S.O. in close, supportive contact with each other through the general service chain. This chain is made up of several links: the Trustees' Committees working closely with the comparable Delegates' committees (such as P.I., C.P.C., Treatment Facilities, Finance, etc.), the Delegate from and back to the Area; and the individual A.A. member through the G.S.R. In the Conference, each Area has one representative Delegate who confers with the ninety-three other Delegates, twenty-one Trustees, G.S.O. staff members and directors from the two corporations — A.A. World Services, Inc. and the A.A. Grapevine, Inc.
- **Delegate:** The person elected, for a two-year term, at the Area general assembly to represent the Area at the annual meeting of the General Service Conference in New York.
- **District Committee Member (D.C.M.):** The D.C.M. is primarily responsible for coordinating and assisting the efforts of the G.S.R.s in the District and being a member of the Area Committee.
- **General Service Representative (G.S.R.):** An AA member who is elected by a Group to represent that Group's conscience in discussions at the District and Area levels. The G.S.R. also keeps the Group as fully informed as possible of important decisions, discussions and events occurring within A.A. at the District, Area, Regional, national and international levels.
- **Region:** A grouping of several states or Provinces from which a Regional Trustee is elected to the Board of Trustees. There are eight Regions in the conference — six in the United States and two in Canada.
- **Third Legacy:** Recovery and unity are our first two legacies. Our Third Legacy is Service: the sum total of all AA services, from the twelfth step call to AA's coast-to-coast and worldwide activities.
- **Third Legacy Procedure:** A voting procedure, unique to A.A, designed to help reduce some of the negative aspects of elections — such as personality clashes, ego battles and dissatisfied minorities. See "What is 'Third Legacy Procedure?' " in The A.A. Service Manual.
- **Trustee:** The usual term, or name, for a member of A.A.'s General Service Board of Trustees. Currently the board is made up of twenty-one trustees including eight Regional Trustees.
- **Twelve Concepts:** As the Twelve Traditions are to the preservation and unity of Alcoholics Anonymous; so are the Twelve Concepts to General Service. They are a set of principles and practices intended to preserve service to A.A. and the still suffering alcoholic. They also protect the structure by which such service is made possible. (See The Twelve Concepts for World Service in the back portion of The A.A. Service Manual.)
- **Warranties:** The Twelfth Concept of World Service consists of The Six Warranties that are also Article 12 of the Conference Charter. Some consider these Warranties to be the A.A. Bill of Rights