

Discussion Notes from June 26, 2021 “Reasoning Things Out” Workshop

Below is a summary of some of the major discussion points from the June 26 Southern California World Service (SCWS) workshop.

- **What health requirements can groups set?** Remember the 4th Tradition; “Each group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting another group or Al-Anon or AA as a whole.” Groups should consider decisions that allow them to maintain the safety of their group and to abide by requirements of the meeting facility, state, and local city/county requirements. Al-Anon is not above the law. Remember our primary purpose of being welcoming to our members, especially the newcomer.
- **Can groups have some meetings virtual and some face-to-face, such as in alternating weeks.** This type of meeting structure is not sustainable. Eventually groups will likely have to make a decision to remain completely face-to-face, permanently electronic, or hybrid. However, this is not a decision that has to be made right away. Groups can have a ‘trial’ of a meeting type to see if it will work for them, and if it does not, have another business meeting and group conscience to try another type of meeting.
- **What if a group has a large amount of money in their treasury.** What can the group do to not give the appearance that all of that money belongs to the treasurer? A group can set up a bank account where the Venmo (or other electronic transfer) can go directly to the checking account. Group bank accounts are discussed in the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*. Remember to consult the *Service Manual* for group questions.
- **Group Zoom accounts versus a member using their personal Zoom account.** By our Traditions, groups should be fully self-supporting. Having a group Zoom account is part of self-supporting and considered a group expense. There are meetings where a member does use their personal Zoom account and considers that part of their personal 7th Tradition. This is part of a group’s ‘reasoning things out’ with a group conscience.’
- **There were several questions regarding use of Conference Approved Literature (CAL) with electronic meetings.** A document will be posted on the SCWS website that goes into detail about how and when CAL can be used at electronic meetings. Please use CAL at electronic meetings only in this way. This sharing is meant for use during meetings only. CAL cannot be copied and pasted or typed into chat forums or any other type of electronic forum. All CAL is copyrighted. This allows the funds for purchased literature to go back into the World Service Office (WSO) for our fellowship.
- **The questions on the slides from the workshop can be used as a starting point for discussion in group business meetings.** Such as discussions about what groups wish to do regarding future meetings, e.g., face-to-face, remaining temporary electronic for now, becoming permanent electronic, or hybrid. The workshop slides are posted on the SCWS website. Again, remember that these decisions do not have to be made immediately. There is time, and encouragement, for group discussion and group conscience.
- **Many questions were raised about anonymity and how to handle this with hybrid and electronic meetings so members can feel safe, especially the newcomer.** Some suggestions from members included the member’s choice to not use their camera during Zoom meetings and when sharing on Zoom; if a hybrid meeting, have a location in the room where members can sit who do not wish to be seen on camera; let newcomers know the

meeting logistics when they arrive so they know and will not be surprised by being on camera when they do not want to be (if a hybrid type of meeting).

- **Who votes at your meeting?** Groups will need to decide this during a business meeting and group conscience. Should it be the regular attendees? Only local geographic members? These are questions that groups need to ask and discuss, and come to agreement via a group conscience.
- **Is there any word on how this affects Alateen meetings?** So far there has been nothing specific to Alateen. The Area Alateen Coordinators will keep informed about any new information that comes forward.
- **There were questions about group finances.** Remember to refer to the *Service Manual* about group expenses, and pamphlet S-21, and the G41 guideline.
- **There were questions and discussion about insurance requirements for groups.** One member shared that their meeting location is requiring a waiver of 'release from liability' that members must sign for the meeting. Other locations may require an attendance roster of some sort kept by the meeting. If meeting locations require a waiver as a requirement, perhaps they might be more lenient if a designated group member has a discussion with them about our Traditions. However if not, the group will have to abide by the meeting location requirements. Any requirements such as these can be listed by the Group Records Coordinator on the website so newcomers know they would be asked for this. Each member must make a personal decision about whether or not to sign a waiver. Group members can only present the facts to the newcomer and let them know the requirements. If they do not want to sign a waiver, let them know there are other meetings they can go to where waivers are not required. We want to give the newcomer options and let them know there are many meetings (and meeting types) to choose from.
- For hybrid meetings, there was discussion about checking with the meeting location to see if they will let the group use their wifi or a hard-wired connection.

If you have additional questions/concerns, please contact the SCWS Area Officers at groupandmemberconcerns@scws-al-anon.org