

—WORLD BOARD— **NEWS FLASH**

WSC Issue Topic Two:

“How can we create a bridge that builds and maintains a connection to service for home group members?”

Participants at WSC 2000 selected this topic for fellowship discussion. NA members, area committees, and regional committees can help your regional delegate prepare for a discussion of this topic at WSC 2002 in April by hosting and participating in discussions in either your area and/or your region. We hope this *News Flash* helps you join in this fellowshipwide discussion. There's no right or wrong way to discuss these topics. There are no right or wrong answers. (A second topic is: “How can we continue to provide services to our fellowship and at the same time decrease our reliance on funds from events and conventions?” See our other *News Flash* for help on that topic.)

Here are some additional questions to help stimulate discussion of the main question. Exploring these questions may be helpful, and we might each answer them differently in different situations.

1. What is your experience with the “bridge”, or the connection, between recovery and service?
2. What can individuals do to help other members get involved in service?
3. How does your home group contribute to the unity with other groups and your area?
4. What is your favorite type of NA service? Why does it attract you?
5. If you could change anything about NA service, what would it be?

At the end of discussion, the facilitators and the note takers should get together and combine their observations about the discussion. Then, information can be given to the region or the regional delegate about how well the discussion stimulated thought and interest, along with a list of the most important points made about the discussion topic. This information can help your region to prepare an issue discussion paper for the *Conference Agenda Report*. (**Deadline for papers is 15 October 2001.**) It can also help your regional assembly and delegate prepare for the WSC discussion.

NA World Services is also interested in the results of your discussion. Please consider sending the same information to the World Board, c/o WSO. It will be a great help to the board in structuring the WSC issue discussions and finalizing results at the end of the WSC issue discussion process. We hope these results can eventually be shared by the WSO in correspondence related to these topics. *Please share your solutions and ideas with us:*

- From your experience, what can groups and committees do to help members get involved in service?
- What are your ideas for “creating a bridge” and helping NA members to understand the importance of the connection between service and recovery?
- In your opinion, what can groups do to help members understand these issues better?

HELPFUL HINTS: We suggest that each discussion group or committee strive to keep the discussion simple and loosely structured. It's a good idea to set aside 60 to 90 minutes for each topic, eliminate physical barriers between people (like tables, etc), break into small groups of 10 to 20 people, and ask one person to facilitate the discussion and one person to write down important points. The facilitator should keep time (3 to 5 minutes per speaker), give everyone fair opportunity to speak, prevent domination by one person, and set the ground rules (give everyone respect, no cross talk, observe time limits, don't repeat what's been said, etc). If possible, include members with differing opinions and varying lengths of clean time in each small group. Asking each person to address just one or two points that they feel the strongest about can also help keep the discussion flowing well. The goal is to share ideas and experience, not engage in debate or argument.



- You may want to identify a local situation to use as a real life example for your discussion of the topic. The discussion could then focus on what worked and what didn't work.
- An ASC or RSC could plan a special workshop, using one or both discussion topics, before the regular committee meeting—or plan a separate Topic Discussion Learning Day or Workshop. The issue discussion question(s) could also be a topic for convention workshops.

BACKGROUND: Carrying the NA message is close to the heart of every NA member because for each of us, there is someone who took the time to help us in the same way. Someone welcomed us at our first NA meeting and asked how we were doing and what brought us in the door. Someone listened as we poured out our story. They heard our desperation, our loneliness, our fear. It usually wasn't too long before someone asked us to help in some way, setting up chairs or cleaning up after the meeting. We began to feel like we belonged.

Service in NA happens when members and groups join together to carry our message and “give it away” in order to stay clean. So often, we hear someone share in a meeting how much involvement in service has added to their own recovery. Many begin their involvement right away, serving their group by cleaning up or doing some other type of useful chore for others. Some find their niche in personal service, helping addicts one-to-one. Others prefer serving on one of the many committees at the area or regional level. Many members choose to work on phonelines because that's where their own first contact with NA was. Others who first heard the NA message in an institution through an H&I panel are drawn to participate on a panel that carries the message.

Our steps and traditions tell us that it is necessary for us to carry our message individually and as groups, and that we can create boards and committees to help us do this. Our literature also describes what happens in different ways in our groups and committees and why. Tradition One tells us that our common welfare is essential and that each of us is equally responsible for NAs well-being. The second part of Tradition One tells us that, for each of us to continue our recovery, NA meetings and services need to keep on happening, other addicts have to be able to find NA, and we must always be willing to help each other.

The First Concept describes the reason that NAs groups combine their resources and create a structure to develop, coordinate, and maintain services for them—to remain free to concentrate on the most important service, NA meetings. It also points out the need for a full range of other services and the fact that these services require more people than a single group can supply. The Second Concept gives examples of how our NA groups exercise their responsibility and authority for NA services by providing resources and direction to the service structure. The resources are ideas, money and people, and all three are essential. The Third Concept tells us that authority is delegated to the service structure by the groups that created it, so that the service structure can then be responsive to the needs of the groups. This delegation calls other Concepts into the picture: selecting trusted servants, valuing leadership, the group conscience process, communicating effectively, responsible use of funds, carefully avoiding a governing structure, etc. NA's survival depends on the recovering addicts who are members of the NA groups. We depend on each other for our recovery as much as NA services depend on our commitment to carrying the message.

No matter what one's personal experience or beliefs are about the exact nature of this relationship of recovery to service, it seems that individuals participate in service **because** they are in recovery, their participation **adds** to their recovery, and service is **necessary** in order for addicts to find recovery. Service and recovery are definitely related. There are many aspects of this relationship, and it seems important that we are able to help members find a way to participate in some type of NA service whenever they are ready to do so.

For this to happen, a connecting pathway, or “bridge”, from recovery to service must exist. We believe this connection is built in some way with people, information, and experience. Establishing this link depends on us as members asking “What needs doing?” and “How can we provide that service?”. In our service committees, we maintain the relationship to recovery by drawing on our guiding principles in our collective efforts to find out what information is needed, who needs it, and how to provide it.