

Area to Convention Relationship Task Force 2017 Spring Assembly Presentation



This Task Force was formed based on a vote at the 2016 Fall Assembly. There is a distinct difference between this Task Force and the actual Convention Committee. The Task Force is charged with examining the relationship of the Convention to the Area, and reporting and making recommendations to the Assembly. The Convention Committee carries out the Convention planning and events. This presentation is a view of our research and work thus far. Other opportunities to participate will be at the 2017 Convention open Task Force meeting and through direct contact with Task Force members via email. The goal of this presentation is to bring our

findings to the Assembly to be transparent with up-to-date reporting. More frequent reporting can be found at AWSC meetings, to which all are welcomed and encouraged to attend.

Thumbs

Tradition 1: “Our common welfare should come first; personal progress for the greatest number depends upon unity.”

Unity means that we work together for our common goal of supporting a convention. Placing our trust in a Higher Power leads us to decisions for our common good. Within a loving spiritual community, each of us has the best chance for personal progress; Tradition 1 sets the foundation for creating and maintaining that community.

Mission: Creating a mission statement will support our joining hands in unity putting Tradition 1 into practice, providing clarity and understanding of the purpose of the convention.

Possible elements to be included in a Mission Statement:

- (from NH) a convention devoted to fellowship, sharing, and personal growth.
- (from WSO) fun, fellowship, celebration, and enhancing understanding of the fellowship.
- Enhance service, nourish the spirit of cooperation, and broaden recovery.
- An opportunity to reach out to the entire Al-Anon community to extend hope and to be all-inclusive.

Pointer Fingers

Tradition 4: “Each group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting another group or Al-Anon or AA as a whole.”

The relationship between the Convention Planning Committee and the Area had fallen into disharmony. We are looking at what needs to happen to restore harmony to that relationship, and having clear guidelines all our groups can turn to seems to be a crucial element in that restoration process.

Guidelines: The WSO has already crafted an Al-Anon Convention Guideline (G-20) available on their website. The guideline is thorough and could easily be adapted for our purposes here in Vermont. Why reinvent the wheel when we don't have to?

Middle Fingers

Tradition 9: “Our groups, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.”

Communication is key to our ability to be directly responsible to those we serve. Common sense, experience and a loving Higher Power guide us to Al-Anon principles. Creating a strong spiritual foundation with mutual trust and willingness helps us to participate as equals. Committees, as trusted servants, listen to and carry out the voice of the fellowship as expressed in group conscience.

Communication: Creating a dynamic communication process will assist in reaching out our hands to all, putting Tradition 9 into practice in being directly responsible to those we serve as we work together to have a convention. With effective communication the left hand does know what the right hand is doing.

Possible elements of an effective communication process may include:

- Specific reporting links among Convention, Area, Districts, groups, and members
- Clearly defined service responsibilities
- Drawing on the strengths of our trusted servants

Ring Fingers

Concept 1: “The ultimate responsibility and authority for Al-Anon world services belongs to the Al-Anon groups.”

Concept One refers to Tradition Two's statement “Our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern.” Our group conscience does. Concept

1 provides uniformity via steps and traditions – we adhere to the principles, we enforce the unenforceable. With autonomy, we adapt the WSO convention guidelines for Vermont's needs. Celebrating experience, strength and hope and recovery, our purpose becomes clear. Past convention history needs to be accessible; right now there is no real system.

Relation to Area: When we leave the results in God's hands, we get the guidance and room to grow healthy relationships with clear boundaries. Members are looking for clarity and inclusion. Members want a clear path with healthy, visible boundaries. Transparency – no secrets, no surprises, no questions. Reinforcing using links of service keeps us attached to our purpose.

Pinky Fingers

Concept 4: “Participation is the key to harmony.”

When many hands are working together, the work becomes lighter and easier. Participation encourages others to pitch in, often resulting in enthusiasm and excitement.

Self -Supporting is usually considered financial support. Further study helps us realize it also means supporting physically, spiritually and mentally. When we leave all the work to be done by others, the impact is burdensome and results are limited.

Tradition 7 also urges us to be “fully self-supporting.” Two currencies are important here: time and money. Time returns us to “participation.” With a Convention, there are many opportunities for service. The link to the AWSC ensures that the Convention Committee will be accountable and that the Convention Committee will work within the Links of Service. This should minimize “chaos” and “urgency” and maximize “inclusion.”

Let me make some connections to the WSO Convention Guidelines (G-20) that you have as a handout. On page one, second column “Al-Anon conventions adhere to the principles of the program and are financially accountable to the fellowship which they serve.” “Convention Committee members should have a sound understanding of the Traditions and Concepts

as well as the ability to work and cooperate with others.” Thus, the work of the Committee should always be informed by principles of the program.

With regard to money, “A convention is usually self-supporting.” The various conventions we researched have different approaches to handling the money from and for conventions. We hope to bring a recommendation to you in the fall that will address handling of funds to ensure that every convention is self-supporting and the AWSC is not put at risk of having to cover convention expenses.

In summary, the success of each convention is in our “hands.” To link to two quotations we heard earlier today: “The hope for recovery and our future lies in our hands.” “The vitality of the Al-Anon family is in our hands!”

Conclusion

In conclusion of this presentation, the Task Force suggests all groups share information from our presentation; review the WSO Guidelines and ask "What fits Vermont?/What doesn't fit Vermont?" Please read the resources posted to our Area Website: vermontalanonlateen.org. You're invited and encouraged to join in the ongoing conversation during the Task Force Open Meeting at 2017 Vermont Convention at 3pm Saturday. Attend Fall Assembly Oct 21st: we hope to come with recommendations (possibly for vote)! Encourage members to contact the Task Force with questions/comments/suggestions!

To contact the Task Force click here taskforce@vermontalanonlateen.org.