

The primary purpose of an NA group is to carry the message of recovery to the addict who still suffers. The group provides each member with the opportunity to share and to hear the experience of other addicts who are learning to live a better way of life without the use of drugs. The group is the primary vehicle by which our message is carried. It provides a setting in which a newcomer can identify with recovering addicts and find an atmosphere of recovery.

The Group Booklet



Useful questions to consider in our discussions:

- What is our experience?
- What does our literature say?
- Where can we find more information about this?
- Do any of our groups have related strengths we can build on?

Useful resources for groups:

- *The Group Booklet*: www.na.org/?ID=ips-eng-index
- Service Pamphlets: www.na.org/?ID=servicemat-svc-pamphlets
- Group Support Forum (GSF) Tools: www.na.org/servicesystem

Resources for Workshops: www.na.org/IDT

Input from Workshops: Send to worldboard@na.org

Unity of action and purpose makes possible what seemed impossible for us—recovery.

Basic Text, Tradition Five

Group Support Forums (GSFs)

The group support forum is a place to discuss group problems and successes away from budgets and motions. It is the service equivalent of one addict helping another. Here, newer members can get introductory or basic information about NA, including how the service system works.

Group support forums can also be a place for literature distribution, workshops, and training sessions, and for finding members to serve on H&I panels, planning picnics, and other neighborhood-based activities. The exact activities of a group support forum will vary from place to place, but the key is that it focuses on the needs of the groups.

All interested members, not just group representatives, are encouraged to come. It's a friendly, discussion-based gathering where newer members can get their feet wet and learn more about NA, and veterans can share their experiences and actively mentor others.

The Service System Proposals describe group support forums as neighborhood-sized—the idea was that each local service conference as described in the proposals (or today's area service committees) would have several small GSFs within it. A smaller-sized group support forum means less distance to travel for those who are interested, and it can be easier to keep discussion informal and more like a conversation in a small group. After field testing, however, we found that some communities prefer a group-focused meeting that includes all of the groups in their community to improve communication across the community. In these communities, holding a group support forum has simply meant changing the focus of the majority of what were their area service committee meetings, leaving four meetings a year for planning and business and the others for group support.

In communities with smaller group support forums, many of those GSFs have a delegate who attends the local service conference and reports on the groups in the GSF. In some cases, groups have elected to attend the group support forum and not the local service conference, delegating that responsibility to the GSF delegate. More often, groups attend both the group support forum and the local service conference. Along with being group-focused, flexibility is one of the foundational principles of the proposals, and again, each community will adapt the ideas according to their needs.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A GSF

Essential

- Discussion-oriented
- Group-focused Focused on the needs of the group; decisions related to area business are not made here. Some limited functions like finding volunteers for H&I panels, planning picnics, etc., may take place.
- Training-oriented This is a venue ideal for orienting new members, holding workshops, and training trusted servants.
- Open to all All interested members, not just group representatives, are encouraged to attend.

Recommended

- Neighborhood-sized The original Service System Proposals see group support forums as significantly smaller than local service conferences or area service committees. There would be several for each LSC. However, we have found through field testing that some communities prefer to bring all of the groups and interested members together for one communitywide group support forum.

Meets monthly Again, the original Service System Proposals suggest monthly meetings of the group support forum, but in field testing many communities adopted a different meeting schedule. Some had group support forums meeting eight times a year in months when there was no quarterly local service conference. Others alternated GSF and LSC meetings, with each meeting six times a year.