

# OUR FREEDOM, OUR RESPONSIBILITY

2008  
2010

LEADERSHIP

OUR FREEDOM, OUR  
RESPONSIBILITY

BUILDING  
COMMUNICATIONS

Discussions, questions, and session profile information for *Building Communication*, *Our Freedom, Our Responsibility*, and *Leadership* follow. This material, plus session outlines and handouts, are posted online at [www.na.org/IDT/IDT.htm](http://www.na.org/IDT/IDT.htm). Conference participants loved the new material on leadership we introduced at WSC 2008, so we're making it available for you to hold local workshops.



WWW.NA.ORG/  
IDT/IDT.HTM

## FELLOWSHIP ISSUE DISCUSSIONS

The process of fellowship issue discussions continues to grow and evolve, allowing us to continually strive to work better, both at local levels and as a worldwide organization. Over the previous cycle, we discussed *Building Strong Home Groups*, *Who Is Missing from Our Meetings and Why?*, and *Our Service System*. These discussions have provided us with ideas and input that helped in the creation of tools for the fellowship, including the Building Strong Home Groups worksheet, service pamphlets, and leadership modules. These discussions also had an impact on the projects approved at the 2008 World Service Conference.

The theme for WSC 2008, and for this conference cycle, is **“Our Freedom, Our Responsibility.”** Many of our biggest challenges seem to involve putting what we believe into action at every level. This includes taking the time to have a thorough, honest look at our home groups to see how we can improve, and being willing to step outside of our comfort zone and work extra hard to carry our message to addicts who may think that they don't belong here, because we know they do. This also means that we need to exercise the courage to step up and try new ideas in our service system. As our Basic Text states, “We learn that we are growing when we make new mistakes instead of repeating old ones.”

The Issue Discussion Topics for the 2008-2010 cycle are *Building Communication*, *Our Freedom, Our Responsibility*, and *Leadership* (sound familiar? it should!). These topics all carry forward aspects from our discussions during previous conference cycles. Communication has been one of the important elements of our discussions on *Infrastructure* (2004–2006) and *Our Service System* (2006–2008). The topic of responsibility has come up in response to the common refrain we've heard in discussions throughout the fellowship for years, that our service efforts in many places are hindered by apathy and a lack of participation. Leadership similarly has been a topic of fellowshipwide discussion for several conference cycles now and continues to be a focus of our efforts throughout the service structure.

We all need to begin to recognize our personal ownership and responsibility for the success of NA in carrying our message and achieving our vision. By improving and diversifying our communications at every level, we can broaden awareness in the fellowship about what is happening in the NA service system. And by encouraging greater personal and collective responsibility for that service system, we can begin to develop an atmosphere of leadership among our trusted servants, as well as an increased desire to support the work done on behalf of NA groups worldwide.

As we have done in the past, we have developed session profiles with step-by-step outlines to help you facilitate workshops on these topics. These profiles, information about the Issue Discussion Topics, and topic-oriented online discussion boards are all available on our website at [www.na.org/IDT/IDT.htm](http://www.na.org/IDT/IDT.htm). As we did in 2006–2008, we will use fellowship input from the first half of the conference cycle to refocus the discussions mid-way through the cycle, so be sure to check back often and watch *NAWS News* and *The NA Way Magazine* for updates.

*When we  
carefully  
consider the  
leadership  
qualities of those  
we ask to serve,  
we can  
confidently give  
them the room  
they need  
to exercise those  
qualities on  
our behalf.*

Fourth Concept

## LEADERSHIP

**O**ne of our great strengths as a fellowship is our common belief in NA's message. The message that "...an addict, any addict, can stop using drugs, lose the desire to use, and find a new way to live" defines and inspires all our actions. Our Fifth Tradition clearly states that every NA group's primary purpose is to carry this message. Whether we are welcoming a newcomer to our home group, or translating our literature into a new language, we are fulfilling this same primary purpose. To make this vision a reality we need the effective leaders spoken of in our Fourth Concept.

We have discussed this topic, as a fellowship, over the last few conference cycles, initially focusing on the qualities a leader should have. What we heard is perhaps unsurprising. The qualities most of us aspire to in our personal recovery—assets like honesty, humility, and integrity—are the ones we see in NA members we look up to and are inspired by.

When our leaders are guided by the spiritual principles of the program, our service bodies are more welcoming to all members and our committees are less chaotic and more grounded in recovery principles. A good leader provides direction and encouragement without seeking to control or dominate. In order for our fellowship to continue growing we all need to identify and nurture our leaders, and they in turn, can help make service more attractive for everyone. Leadership is something that we grow into as our recovery progresses, but it's not a magical process that happens without effort. Nurturing our leaders is our joint responsibility. As part of that effort, we have been discussing leadership cultivation for several years, both at world services and fellowshipwide.

At this past World Service Conference, we tried out a workshop session focused on these issues, and now we have taken that conference workshop and broken it in to two separate sessions. These workshops aim to highlight some of the principles of our program, relate them to leadership, and discuss how we can actually use them in our service work.

Our first leadership workshop focuses on some of the key traditions and concepts that provide the foundation of principles for the role of leadership. We examine what they teach us about leadership and how we can apply them in our leadership roles.

The second leadership session focuses first on the service structure of NA, and then on the positions that leaders occupy and the roles they play within it.

You can find the outline for both workshops, along with all of the other material related to the Issue Discussion Topics online at <http://www.na.org/IDT/IDT.htm>. We encourage you to try these workshops in your local community, and if you do so, remember, the goal is to get members talking and thinking together about these issues. The workshop outlines are very ambitious. They cover a lot of ground, and you may not get through every bit of the material. Feel free to cut pieces if you need to or to turn a small-group discussion into a large-group discussion or whatever works for you and your community. And as always, write and let us know how it went.

