



Our Virtual Presence

Conversation about Virtual Meeting Etiquette and More

Our Twelve Traditions in the Virtual World

When we attend a meeting by way of phone, video conference or any other virtual style outside of a physical meeting many members experienced awe and bewilderment. We can hear members share their stories and participate in a meeting. Even if it doesn't feel the same, we are excited to hear that the message is clear; an addict, any addict can stop using drugs, lose the desire to use and find a new way to live.

The virtual NA meetings provide a similar atmosphere of NA recovery and therefore should follow our traditions. Anonymity, endorsement, and 7th tradition have been brought up as concerns. This pamphlet is to be used as a conversation starter for your group. The best way we have found to address these topics within our group is by relating these virtual meetings to our in-person meetings.

Anonymity

"Tradition Twelve in *It Works: How and Why* notes that many of our meeting formats include the statement that "what's said in this meeting stays in this meeting" We all benefit from the freedom that comes with being able to share from our hearts without being worried about public disclosure of what we said." *Guiding Principles Pp. 227-228*

Although personal anonymity comes first for every member it is a group's responsibility to harbor a space of unity by allowing each member to express their anonymity. Members can choose to not participate in video or alter their names

Endorsement

"To endorse is to sanction, approve or recommend." *Tradition Six, Basic Text.*

With so many meetings using a limited number of platforms it can seem like we are endorsing an outside enterprise. It is imperative to look at how the group is using the platform we have chosen to host meetings. When thinking of endorsement, we encourage groups to think of meetings that may be held at physical locations. Do we believe our group is endorsing a facility or platform? How can we make this clear to people attending our meetings?

Seventh Tradition

The 7th Tradition is one of the biggest things we can partake in to ensure our meetings continue in NA. Everything from electing our servants to lead the meeting to "passing the basket" still matter, and still can take place virtually. Many of our groups decide to use an online payment service to collect member donations. Many of these services keep accurate logs for a treasurer's report and each group is encouraged to look at all available options to decide what's best for your group. A simple internet search can reveal many choices for your group to consider.

The scarcest resource we have is the NA member. In this new age of Narcotics Anonymous we have been blessed with the ability to do amazing things with technology. We must ensure that we are working together to help our members use and learn this technology. We want to remember those who are coming and those who have been here. Through mentoring, we can forge a strong connection for generations of addicts in our Fellowship.

"We cannot afford to let our members contribute more than their fair share." - *Tradition Seven, Basic Text*

Talking in a Meeting

Something else we may want to consider when hosting a virtual meeting is the "chat" feature. On a phone meeting this wouldn't be an issue, but various platforms offer this service. This can weaken our meeting experience allowing us to focus on something other than the message being shared. When we choose to leave this feature on, we should think about the benefits of attendees being able to communicate with the facilitator and the cost of this. What is being shared in the chat? Is it recovery-related? Some have compared the chat to texting during a meeting while others will defend the right of a group to make its own decision. What are the benefits of leaving the chat on or off?

Etiquette in the Virtual World

The easiest way to talk about meeting etiquette or an Atmosphere of Recovery in a virtual setting would be to relate it to an in-person homegroup. Here are some questions that can help. Would an addict attend a meeting with partial or full nudity? Would an addict display using behavior while attending an in-person meeting? Would addicts talk over one another throughout a meeting?

It is important to ensure that the standards of the meeting are not forgotten. Some things can be done to avoid some of this, but each meeting will be responsible to express their group conscience about these topics.

We understand that many of us will attend a virtual meeting from our homes or a public place. These settings can be distracting to the participant and the other attendees if we are not careful to focus on our etiquette when we attend a meeting. Remembering that we represent NA in many settings is one way to focus on our behavior during these times. Am I in the middle of cooking dinner, getting my kids ready, grocery shopping or any variety of activities other than attending a meeting? These types of things are disruptive to our members and we ought to think about "what message am I sharing" when we participate in these activities during a meeting. Our message is one of hope and deserves the utmost respect, we encourage our groups to talk about what we are displaying for the world to see when we use video meetings and when to turn off a member's video feed.

Moving forward

This Bulletin has presented information that shows virtual meetings provide an atmosphere of recovery as long as we follow our traditions. In addition, we have addressed concerns of specific anonymity, endorsement of technology and 7th tradition. Finally, it is the hope of the Virtual Literature Development Team that this Bulletin will be used as a conversation starter for all members of NA.

Additional Resources

www.na.org

This is Virtually Developed Literature by Members of NA

Not to be confused with Narcotics Anonymous Fellowship Approved Literature.

