

WORLD BOARD NEWS FLASH

ISSUE DISCUSSION TOPIC

SELF-SUPPORT

For many of us, passing the basket at a recovery meeting is our first introduction to the traditions. Perhaps, before we even have thought about the traditions in any depth, we are aware of the principle of self-support, and we put money in the basket even when we have very little. But self-support is a concept that encompasses more than just financial donations. It Works: How and Why reminds us, "Many of us think of the Seventh Tradition as the money tradition. While we have come to associate this tradition of self-support with the funds we contribute, the spirit of the Seventh Tradition goes much farther than that. Whatever a group needs to fulfill its primary purpose should be provided by the group itself" (175).

How do we speak to the big picture of the Seventh Tradition and embrace the spiritual principle of self-support? Most of us not only have thought about these things, we have actual experience with them. The World Board would like to know your experience with Self-Support, and this News Flash will give you some ideas on how to provide it.

The purpose of issue discussions is several-fold. Experience has shown us that members find discussing these issues valuable, not only because such discussions encourage us to think more deeply about certain topics, but also because they help us build community within our groups and service bodies. In addition, when groups and members send in the results of their discussions, the World Board gets more insight into groups' and members' thoughts and experiences with these issues.

This topic is one of **two** selected at the 2002 World Service Conference for fellowshipwide discussion before the conference in 2004. We have found that understanding the spiritual principles of gratitude, responsibility, and anonymity (to name a few) before you begin your discussions will strengthen your understanding and assist you with the process.

Spiritual Principles

- ❖ What are the spiritual principles of self-support?
- ❖ How do we practice these principles as individuals? As groups?
- ❖ How does the practice of these spiritual principles relate to our primary purpose? Our common welfare and NA unity?

The NA Group

- ❖ What is your understanding of "fully self-supporting"?
- ❖ What is your understanding of "outside contributions"?
- ❖ Has self-support been important to your NA group? If so, how? If not, why?
- ❖ What particular things does your group do to be self-supporting?
- ❖ How does a service group integrate the spiritual principles of self-support into its activities?
- ❖ Has your group or service committee ever held an inventory/assessment meeting to discuss or study how your group supports itself? Describe your process and the results.
- ❖ Other than money, what do NA groups need in order to carry the message to addicts?

Challenges and Solutions

- ❖ What experiences or challenges have your local NA community or group(s) experienced regarding self-support, and how did you resolve them?
- ❖ What have you found to be the most effective way to educate members about the Seventh Tradition?
- ❖ Has your group ever relied on support that was inconsistent with the spiritual principle of self-support? If so, how and what happened?
- ❖ Is relying on fundraisers and events to support our services consistent with the idea of self-support? If not, how can we decrease our reliance on these funds?
- ❖ How does your group spend its donation money? What percentage (if any) do you forward to area, regional, and/or world services?



The Process

Before we go any further, please remember there's no right or wrong way to discuss the topics, and there are no right or wrong answers! While issue discussion topics are, as their name implies, designed to be discussed, it is up to you how to present the results of that discussion. You may choose to use the discussion as a way to generate ideas and get people thinking but determine that each individual who wishes can write something to send to the board. Or you may decide to have someone take notes of the discussion and write something as a group to send in. Just remember, as with our personal recovery, experience is more valuable than opinion not grounded in experience. The board is looking forward to receiving members', communities', and service committees' experience, strength, and hope on these topics.

We suggest that you strive to keep the discussion simple and loosely structured. It's a good idea to set aside 60 to 90 minutes for each topic. Other helpful hints to provide a friendly and more conducive atmosphere for discussion include eliminating physical barriers between people (like tables, etc.) and, if you have a large group, breaking into smaller groups of ten or so people. You probably want to ask one person to facilitate the group, while one person writes down important points. Prior to beginning these small group discussions, it is a good idea to set the ground rules for the discussions—give everyone respect, no cross talk, observe time limits, don't repeat what's already been said, etc. The facilitator should give everyone fair opportunity to speak (keeping time if necessary) and prevent domination by one person. Asking each person to address just one or two points he or she feels the strongest about can also help keep the discussion flowing well. Remember, the goal is to share ideas and experience, not engage in debate or argument.

Here are some other suggestions to help get the most out of your discussions:

- ❖ 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 discussions topics (note there are **two News Flashes** that address one specific issue each), before the regular committee meeting or plan a separate Topic Discussion Learning Day or workshop.
- ❖ The issue discussion question(s) could be used as topics at your local convention workshops.
- ❖ If desired, use some NA resource material, e.g., *It Works: How and Why, Twelve Concepts for NA Service, IP # 24 "Hey! What's the Basket For?"*, *IP #25 Self-Support: Principle and Practice*, *NAWS Annual Report*, and/or any other informational bulletins and/or reports your area and region have available. You can notify the WSO and purchase (or request) some of these materials if you do not have access to them on a local level.

Enjoy the process and remember, together we can!

Please send your ideas to **World Board, c/o WSO, 19737 Nordhoff Place, Chatsworth, CA 91311**. You may also fax the information to 818.700.0700. Your region or regional delegate may also be interested in the discussion results. Please note that the deadline for returning input to the World Board is **1 September 2003**.

