

12 Steps to Safely Reopen Meetings- NOTES

Co-hosted by Area 29 Maryland General Service & Baltimore Intergroup

June 13, 2020

9:00am- 11:00am

Traditions & Groups

Knowing Traditions- Lori McP.

Understanding Group Conscience- Doug McK.

What Is an Informed A.A. Group Conscience? Excellent definition of Informed Group Conscience beginning on page 28 of “The AA Group”(P-16)

This is the forum for groups and group members to best consider how they may move forward to both maintain their primary purpose, keep members safe, get in touch with newcomers, etc.

Group officer Reports (IG Reps, GSRs, Corrections/Institutions, etc.) - though some committees aren't meeting in a normal way are group reps reporting? Are we asking for information from our group reps?

Frequency of meetings for group conscience; fluid; frequent check-ins

Minority opinion

Here are potential topics to discuss in a group conscience:What if our group's conscience is that attendees must wear facial coverings to attend the meeting? Will we do a Hybrid meeting? How do we consider being “autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole?” How do we cap a meeting? There will be further detail later on specifically pertaining to some of these topics. Lets hold discussion for these later.

Special Group Members' Concerns- Jen G.

- Older members- they may be at risk; meetings also rely on the wisdom of oldtimers, so it's important to include them in meetings
- Health care workers- they may need to quarantine or may be infectious, but they have also been on the front lines of this pandemic and need to support of AA meetings

- Parents of young kids- they may not have the option to come to in-person meetings and may need to extra support AA meetings after homeschooling and working for so many months
- Some people are at higher risk for getting sick- illness or susceptibility is not always evident; underlying conditions aren't always visible
- One AA member's FB post said: "Time to stop hiding in our houses living in fear" -- staying away from social gatherings does not necessarily mean that people are "living in fear." We have to be careful about not disregarding other people's needs even if they are not our needs. Live and let live.
- For hybrid meetings, anonymity is a concern for those in the in-person meeting regarding camera direction and electronic transmission (i.e. MD recording laws)
- Phone meetings are important for people who do not have internet access-- it's important to make meetings available to everyone
- People without video or who do not want to appear on video for anonymity reasons

Different Meeting Formats Available- Cynthia T.

New Service Positions- Doug McK.

(Not all necessarily new, but..)

Zoom account keeper; *rotation...*

Co-host - helps manage incoming participants, muting, etc.; list of co-hosts; *rotation...*

(screening callers; "gatekeeper;" screen-sharing; juggling)

Mailer - if a group plans to stay online only and be a chip meeting, for instance, a member may be responsible for mailing chips to recipients if they so choose to receive a chip; this person may also be mailing literature to newcomers who don't otherwise know that they can obtain literature through Intergroup or AAWS.

Group correspondent - if attendees wish to be kept up-to-date regarding what that particular group is doing, the correspondent may maintain an email/phone number list so that when group conscience decisions are made, others may be aware; Example: #Haven

Mask maker/getter - if it is the conscience of the group to provide masks for those who do not have one but wish to attend the meeting, this person can be responsible for obtaining or making masks and distributing them to attendees who need one. Cookies and coffee have been supplies that help a meeting take place - perhaps it is now the provision of masks.

Newcomer greeter - this person can make an announcement at the beginning of the meeting directed at newcomers suggesting that they stay awhile after the meeting if they have questions or need literature or would like to exchange numbers with others

Laws/Regs/Rules/Guidance

CDC- Jen G.

- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html>
- There's a difference between asymptomatic & presymptomatic people. The largest group of people infected are asymptomatic. Most are infectious about two days before the onset of coronavirus symptoms; it's estimated that 44 percent of new infections were a result of transmission from people who were not yet showing symptoms
- [Maintain good social distance](#) (about 6 feet- 2 arms length). This is very important in preventing the spread of COVID-19. Do not gather in groups. Stay out of crowded places and avoid mass gatherings.
- [Wash your hands](#) often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after you've been in a public space, or after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing. If soap and water are not available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- [Routinely clean and disinfect](#) frequently touched surfaces.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a [cloth face covering](#) when around others. The cloth face cover is meant to protect other people in case you are infected. The C.D.C. has recommended that all Americans wear cloth masks if they go out in public. This is a shift in federal guidance reflecting new concerns that the coronavirus is being spread by infected people who have no symptoms. Until now, the C.D.C., advised that ordinary people don't need to wear masks unless they are sick and coughing. Part of the reason was to preserve medical-grade masks for health care workers. *Masks don't replace hand washing and social distancing.*
- Cover coughs and sneezes. If you are in a private setting and do not have on your cloth face covering, remember to always cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow.

State- Lori McP.

Localities- Lori McP.

Meeting Space- Doug McK.

Still important to get permission from an institution for permission to be on their property!

Imperative to be in touch with the meeting space

Their rules are primary - without them, we do not have a space to meet.

Meeting space rules may overrule group conscience decisions

If operating at 50% capacity, what does that mean? Can we get a number?

How do we cap a meeting?

Back in Business

Safety Protocol Options- Jen G.

- There is a false sense of security that things are fine as we reopen. Many people are under the impression that danger is over. It is not.
- We are working on listing safety designations on meeting lists so people will know what to expect
- If you are going to meet in person, the safest way is to meet outside. The chance of getting infected at an outdoor meeting where social distancing is practiced and everyone is wearing masks is low.
- For indoor meetings large rooms are safer and small rooms are really not. Also buildings with poor ventilation are very dangerous.
- For indoor meetings it's highly suggested that masks be required.
- Determine Maximum number of meeting attendees according to local jurisdictions: Consider overflow space if too many people show up; Have 2 homegroup members go to overflow space with attendees; Seating arranged 6' apart
- Also suggested that everyone's temperature be taken before entering the meeting. If they have a temperature of 100 degrees or higher, they should not be admitted to the meeting. Someone might want to talk with them outside at a distance or call them. Groups can invest in a non-touch thermometer which costs between \$60-\$80.

- Groups might also want to purchase a supply of masks so that if some shows up but does have a mask, they can be given one
- Consider suspending refreshments and coffee; BYOB (bring your own beverage)
- Refrain from sharing literature; implement a BYOB (bring your own book) or disinfect shared lit before and after the meeting
- The basket should not be passed, but kept in location that anyone who would like to contribute can as they leave. Or continue to make electronic contributions.
- Clean AND disinfect [frequently touched surfaces](#) daily. This includes tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, toilets, faucets, and sinks. Touching contaminated objects and then infecting ourselves with the germs is not typically how the virus spreads. But it can happen. If surfaces are dirty, clean them. Use detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection. Then, use a household disinfectant. Most common [EPA-registered household disinfectants](#) will work.
- Create a checklist of surfaces to wipe down & other safety procedures - do a complete walk through from parking lot to meeting to kitchen and bathrooms to exit & locking up.
- Meeting scripts can be adjusted to include: Group & facility safety guidelines, Zoom announcement for hybrid meetings, plus how to stay connected, etc.
- For newcomers- consider putting together a pre-printed sheet of group members and phone numbers Literature, phone numbers, pamphlets, & other resources in a plastic baggie
- Greeters: no handshakes or hugs
- Have protocols in place in case someone gets tested, is positive for COVID-19, is negative for COVID-19, and what to do in terms of contact tracing
- The best way to protect yourself from coronavirus — whether it's surface transmission or close human contact — is still social distancing, washing your hands, not touching your face and wearing masks.

What if Someone Tests Positive- Cynthia T.

Contact Tracing- Cynthia T.