

Just for Today: Group Inventory 2-Oct-2021

Topic	Notes
Opening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting was chaired by Catherine, Area 30 Service Seminar Chair, who was asked to come lead JFT in this group inventory • Future mentions in these notes refer to Catherine as “Chair” and individual JFT members who speak as “Member” or by their JFT job title • Meeting opened with a look at <i>The AA Group</i> pamphlet • We read the Declaration of Unity (last page of the pamphlet) <i>This we owe to A.A.'s future: To place our common welfare first; to keep our fellowship united. For on A.A. unity depend our lives and the lives of those to come.</i> • Everyone introduced themselves
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chair went over the purpose of this meeting, noting location in the pamphlet where relevant: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Group conscience description (page 28); inventory description (page 29) ○ No decisions to be made, no motions calling for changes ○ We will use the questions from this pamphlet today
Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chair went over the process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Meeting notes will be shared with inventory attendees before finalization ○ Notetakers may ask for clarification during meeting and will identify speakers as “chair” and “group member” ○ We agreed not to time but will check in to see if we need to a timer; Chair may interrupt you with a gentle time reminder ○ Expression of ideas and opinions are important, but reiteration is not; allow everyone the chance to speak before double-dipping on a topic <p>PROCESS QUESTION: What are we doing with this info after this meeting? The Chair read from p28 of the AA Group pamphlet about what a group conscience is vs a group inventory. Today we are sharing information—not making decisions or motions. Today is just information sharing. Also, we had agreed in advance to have the inventory meeting notes available shortly so everyone can comment. Steering Committees exist for each meeting. Items from the notes will be subdivided and those that pertain to a specific meeting will be routed to the Steering Committees and items that are group-wide will remain with the overall group.</p>
Inventory 8:35 am	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the basic purpose of our group? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A place where we learn to stay sober and help each another alcoholic to achieve sobriety • A place where we learn how to practice the 12 steps of AA • A welcoming place for newcomers • Learn the basic means of how to stay sober; the literature is a basic component of our group and is essential to learn how to do the 12 steps and to pass along the message of the 12 steps of AA • Learn how group members express and live the AA steps; we focus on the solution; we see each other actively learning and using the steps to address the problems in their lives • Our primary purpose is aligned with that identified in the traditions; the rest of the inventory will identify if there are areas where we are not meeting this purpose • In early days, a group member only went to open speaker meetings; this group provides a great learning possibility 2. What more can our group do to carry the message? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We don’t have commitments, which might be a great way to carry the message to other groups • Perhaps at the virtual meetings we could encourage members to unmute to say hello and thank you to speakers, to make it more engaging and unifying

- Consider adding commitments to our group
 - Need to consider some folks really need in-person virtual engagements
 - Consider other ops for fellowship, such as get-togethers after the TG breakfast, stickers on name tags identifying oneself as willing to be a sponsor
 - Consider communicating with local professionals who refer to AA that we are here and available; Chair described the Area 30 Cooperation with the Professional Communities, which is a committee that works with local professionals; there is also an Area 30 Corrections Committee that helps to bring the message to AAs on the inside of corrections institutions; conversation ensued about all the various Area 30 committees who would love to have any group member participation
 - We don't need to do carry the message as a group to these facilities since they already know about it. We need to respond to the request for AA not take AA to them
 - We could consider other ways of using the virtual meeting for doing workshops
 - We could mention this group to other groups
 - We could make our login information available online without folks having to request access; could extend our availability; we could list it on aa-intergroup.org
 - JFT contributes via the 7th tradition to central service, district 22, area 30, GSO; these organizations work to carry the message in ways beyond that of the group
 - JFT is in District 22, which would love to have you attend; it meets the 2nd Wednesday of each month, 7:30-8:30 PM. Currently virtual and will go back to in-person hopefully next year
 - JFT appears a very strong and healthy group, meaning we are even more attractive to new people
 - In-person meetings seem to be accepting of the use of profanity at meetings, which may be the wrong message we want to convey to newcomers; one can get the "wrong" message that way
- 3. Is our group attracting alcoholics from different backgrounds? Are we seeing a good crosssection of our community, including those with accessibility issues?**
- Virtual meetings tremendously increase accessibility for those with challenges attending in-person meetings due to health concerns, children, location, etc.
 - We have a ramp at the hall, which helps tremendously for access for those with a cane or wheelchair; however, a group member who attended on crutches, it was noted that the doors are really difficult to negotiate without help
 - We are a tenant of this facility so we cannot get them to change; while it is not perfect here, it is a great location; we should all put salt out regularly
 - Let's keep it simple; the conversation feels complicated; I just want to keep it simple and act with kindness and support to one another
 - We need to keep up the salt on the parking lot and ramp for safety in winter
 - Our demographic is very homogenous; is that due to our community or are we not attractive to people who are different to those similar to us; is there a way we can be more attractive to a more diverse populous
 - Our demographics may be reflective of our physical community
 - The Area 30 Accessibilities Committee is a group of people who help to overcome barriers to attending and participating in AA meetings
 - Prior to the pandemic, couldn't get a seat in the room; perhaps will return to that post-pandemic
 - JFT may seem homogenous but, for me, I learn so much from everyone; but not sure we really attract to a real cross-section of the community
 - One member noticed that when a newcomer of color attends, they don't seem to come back. We may not be doing anything wrong, but are we welcoming?

	<p>4. Do new members stick with us, or does the turnover seem excessive? If so, why? What can we as a group do to retain members?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to balance attraction with promotion • It seems like new members do stay and turnover does not seem excessive • The virtual platform has allowed us to expand our attraction to others • Each meeting seems to have different flavors, which works to attract different folks; however, it does seem like there are some issues at some meetings that are unappealing • Sponsorship helps to retain members • Just a reminder that we can speak up at this inventory if there are difficult topics—we can safely discuss controversial issues here today • Just a reminder that AA has literature available on group safety; perhaps we need to relook at that • What can we do anyway? We cannot regulate others' behavior. • Love and tolerance of others is our code; we need to let people find their own way • Should we re-examine the job of the greeter at the in-person meetings? • I recently returned to the 7am in-person meeting and I felt unsafe and stopped attending. Feel very sad about that. Has heard that my experience is not unique. • The evolution of recovery includes learning how to speak up and take care of oneself; sometimes we need to learn how to speak up and take care of ourselves • While I historically had taken the "hands off" mind one's own business approach, I have seen a group due to safety issues. AA has recently updated its Safety Information and we should consider ways to ensure the group is aware of this information and possibly distribute to the Steering Committees. AA takes safety seriously and we should be aware of if there is new information. • The JFT Group Service Representative (GSR) mentioned that she will send the new Safety Information to the Secretary; we could consider ways to implement that into the meetings or to the Steering Committees • CHAIR called for those who have not spoken yet to consider speaking. • One meeting attendee introduced himself that he doesn't necessarily consider himself a group member since he just attends the meeting • One member introduced oneself as new to AA so not speaking but happy to participate • A group member noted that its hard to have an opinion on safety issues if one was not at a specific meeting where the issue occurred; while we do want to ensure folks feel safe • There was a regular meeting attendee that was a real problem; a group member called Central Service, who said if you kick out someone, we can take you out of the meeting list • Meeting cultures are very different and cultures evolve, especially over the pandemic • Safety is perceived differently among all of us • Note was sent via Chat that in-person group members are not always wearing masks per the City of Arlington mandate, so this person feels unsafe to attend the in-person meetings • Chair reiterated the new AA safety literature and gave a brief overview, to encourage each of us to consider it. AA.org →What's New→ Safety.
<p>Next Steps</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We stopped here since we met our time allotted. The questions we did not address are listed below. • The group Secretary offered a few options for next steps. • One group member said that the first 4 questions are basically a summary of all the questions and we seem to have enough content to chew on for a long time—let's stop here • We agreed to vote not to make the decision but to take the temp of the group: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Want to continue with the questions at a separate meeting ○ Want to stop here and assimilate what we have • The group seemed split so the Chair suggested we vote on this at a business meeting

Closing	<p>We read the Responsibility Statement (final page of The AA Group Pamphlet): <i>I am Responsible. When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of A.A. always to be there. And for that: I am responsible.</i></p>
Pamphlet Questions Not Addressed	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Do we emphasize the importance of sponsorship? How effectively? How can we do it better? 6. Are we careful to preserve the anonymity of our group members and other A.A.s outside the meeting rooms? Do we also leave what they share at meetings behind? 7. Does our group emphasize to all members the value of keeping up with the kitchen, set-up, clean-up and other housekeeping chores that are essential for our Twelfth Step efforts? 8. Are all members given the opportunity to speak at meetings and to participate in other group activities? 9. Mindful that holding office is a great responsibility not to be viewed as the outcome of a popularity contest, are we choosing our officers with care? 10. Are we doing all we can to provide a safe, attractive, and accessible meeting place? 11. Does our group do its fair share toward part, as it relates to our Three Legacies of Recovery, Unity and Service? 12. What has our group done lately to bring the A.A. message to the attention of professionals in the community — the physicians, clergy, court officials, educators and others who are often the first to see alcoholics in need of help? 13. How is our group fulfilling its responsibility to the Seventh Tradition?

Sources:

- *The AA Group* pamphlet in English: (https://www.aa.org/assets/en_us/p-16_theaagroup.pdf) and in Spanish (https://aa.org/assets/es_ES/sp-16_theaagroup.pdf)
- The AA Service Manual in English: (https://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/nopage/bm-31-aa-service-manual-combined-with-twelve-concepts-for-world-services) and here in Spanish (https://www.aa.org/assets/es_es/nopage/bm-31-aa-service-manual-combined-with-twelve-concepts-for-world-services)