



PI Service News

*“Easy does it.....
but do it!”*

Shared Service Experience



JULY 2018

Please pass on this newsletter to your friends in the Fellowship, either by forwarding via email or by printing copies to take to your local meetings. Anyone who wants their personal copy of the newsletter should send us their email address to the address below. You can also drop a line to GSO with any items for inclusion.

Please note the contact address: aainformation@gsogb.org.uk

Holding a Service Workshop

London Region (North)'s *Sub-Committee Chair Tim M* reports:-

On the morning of 12 May 2018, **London Region (North)** held its regular Service Workshop. **The two topics were service through sponsorship and young people in AA service.** There were two sessions of one hour and twenty minutes each, each with four speakers, with refreshments provided before each session and lunch provided after the second session. The event was held at **Mary Ward House**, a very central location, and the room booked, which has capacity for 70, was full. The timing—a morning session rather than a session which straddles lunchtime—plus the availability of lunch after the sessions were greatly appreciated by attendees. Given the size of the region (> 500 groups), the attendance may seem modest, but many of the attendees were people who are heavily involved in service and sponsorship and impact many others in AA through the course of their AA life. The reach of the workshop is thus far greater than it might initially seem ('... a Spirit of the Universe, who knew neither time nor limitation.')

Questions were sought in advance from attendees and were presented to the speakers, who in part addressed these questions in their talks. The opportunity to present questions on the day in writing (the 'ask-it basket') was not taken up, but plenty of questions were posed from the floor by attendees in the question-and-answer section of each session.

Sponsorship questions: "Have you ever felt overwhelmed by the role of sponsor, why was that, and how did you solve it?" "Do you ever give advice?" "What are the bounds of what you offer as a sponsor?" "How do you schedule time with sponsees?" "Does step work always have to be done face to face?" "What do you do if your sponsee slips?" "Do you share personal things with your sponsee?" "How do you stop conversations with sponsees getting heated?" "How do you stay detached?" "Do you sponsor everyone in exactly the same way?" "Is there room for personal interpretation of the AA programme?"

Young people in AA service questions: “Do people under thirty face additional challenges, on account of their young age, in engaging with the AA programme, and specifically doing service?” “Have you found any effective solutions to this?” “In your view, is there anything that the fellowship as a whole could do to encourage young people into AA service?” “We already have PI officers at Intergroup and Region: why did the role of Young Person’s Liaison Officer come about?” “What kinds of service can young people do, both within AA, and in terms of carrying the message to the general public?” “What successes have you had in carrying the message outside AA?” “What successes have you had in carrying the message to young people inside AA?” “What is it like to serve at the AA Conference as a young person?” “What can Groups, Intergroup, and Region do to encourage young people to take up service?”

The speakers were almost all young or joined AA when they were young (under 30), six out of the eight were women, and a range of nationalities/ethnicities were represented.

Quotations from the sponsorship section:

Through unity I will find recovery; through recovery I will find service.

It is important to find out as much as you can about your new sponsee: say the prayer for empathy on page 67 of the Big Book; ask, ‘how would I behave with their mindset?’

I say to sponsees: I am going to be holding the torch; you’re going to be doing the digging.

There are three relationships to be solved: (1) the relationship with the Higher Power (2) the relationship with yourself (3) the relationship with others.

I am not responsible for anyone else’s recovery—it is the sponsee’s responsibility to surrender to the programme.

Integrity: doing what you said you would do, where and when you said you would do it.

To sponsees: if you are available, I am committed.

Quotations from the young people in service section:

I started to trust people in AA because they demonstrated they were reliable and could be depended on.

The Steps are not something I complete once and are done with—they are a loop I go around every day.

Some activities of the National Sub-Committee: helping Intergroups and Regions fulfil their roles; performing functions that cannot be performed at other levels, e.g. designing posters; holding events for ideas and experience to be shared from throughout the country; covering pockets of AA where little or no relevant service is being performed; interacting with other disciplines.

The reason I am sitting here today, 18 years sober, is because I am willing to do service.

I devote 4 hours a week to the YPLO (Young People's Liaison Officer) role.

YPLO role: construct a database of possible targets for public information, and call them all. If you make enough effort, you will indeed find people interested in the AA message. Recruit people to help, in particular people willing to do schools talks.

I used to spend a lot of time drinking—the time I spend in service is nothing compared to that.

Is there any bar to service? There is no bar. Put your hand up. You want permission? You have it. You're waiting to be asked? I am asking you.

What service can young people do? All of it!

When I do service, I do it as an alcoholic, not a young person.

Drop the identification with any characteristic that sets you apart, observing the spirit of Tradition XII and becoming part of the worldwide fellowship of AA (Tradition I).

One responsibility in service is to help eliminate certain perceived divisions within AA between social classes, the religious vs the atheists, techies and technological newbies, the old and the young. We are one.

I have to have the courage to mess things up and learn from it.

A literature table was provided with free AA service literature, with an experienced service member of AA explaining using a laptop how to find electronic versions of AA service literature on the AA in GB website and how to order AA service literature, in addition to answering other questions. A glossary of service-related terms was also compiled and provided.

Service sign-up and feedback/ideas sheets were not used by attendees, despite highlighting and encouragement. Informal, oral feedback was uniformly positive.

For the purposes of organising future workshops, the preparation documents, including the master planning document and the publicity materials, can be made available on request. They are held in an online folder to which a link can be sent. For details, contact workshops.ln@aamail.org.

Building an AA Intergroup Service Team – South West Region's *PILO Jim W* suggests:-

Service : "An experience you must not miss..."

Suggestions for Building an AA Intergroup Service Team

I hesitate to call this a "Public Information Sub-Committee" for the language is often "off putting". Also it will invite challenges from Fellowship members who disparage "organisation" and/ or insist on being "non -professional", in what they see as the correct reading of Traditions 8 And 9.

I do not think the Traditions were designed to stop Service in the form of awareness raising. Here, it is important to remember the brilliant chapter in the Big Book , " Working with Others": Instead, " relax, take it easy, don't struggle" : Doing Service I believe is Step 12 work and service is an " experience you must not miss"

Do's and Don'ts in PI Service :

Do

Check out if someone has already done something.
In PI similar to what you want to do .

Find people who want to support and help you.
(sponsor or sponsee) .
Encourage those who lack confidence but are
Skilled presenters.

Use the considerable GSO and PI resources.
Check out the Internet .
Set up a "What's App " Group of people with similar
Interests.
Phone people and ask to use their service
Booklets.
Use PI News. Hi
Steal the Gold dust
Harvest what works for others.

A list of volunteer helpers with "good ideas" can
Be put together.
Arrange to meet regularly (at least monthly)

Keep notes of meetings (secretary role)
Follow PI suggestions in Service Handbook.
(P. 17 -28)
Ask someone to sponsor you in Service,or.
Sponsor someone yourself
Shadow service roles.

Include other Service incumbents

Keep a database of professionals /schools etc.

Develop a useful pack : keep it recent and
Relevant

Steal other PI packs / GSO Packs

Meet professionals on their own terms
Eg treatment centres.

Don't

" Reinvent the wheel"

" Go it alone"

" Reinvent an even bigger wheel"

Deal with PI or any Service as a one off
Stifle suggestions or criticism.

Lose important changes

Assume everyone knows what you know.

Let other Service people isolate or struggle.

Allow information to go out of date.

Fail to review materials.

Forget to check out Agency leaders/ managers

Get involved in "controversy".

Find out about their "objections" to AA.
Try and head them off

" start off as an evangelist or reformer..."

Identify their referral patterns and terms
And conditions

"Be Careful not to moralise or lecture"

DOS.

DONTS

In presentations allow AA stories (shares) to
Be the central feature...
Hearts and minds are captured by stories,
Personal deliveries are important.

Talk technical or AA speak

Assume they have "heard it all before"

Make sure deliveries are " sane, quiet and full.
Of human understanding"

Go on too long. Over egg the pudding.

Emphasise our key "kit of tools" and key
Strengths :

Suggest AA IS THE ONLY SOLUTION.
Talk down other service providers

1. " Free" at the point of entry.
2. AA is 24/7: National and Local help.
3. Meetings are everywhere.

" ...We have stopped fighting anybody or everything
We have to..."

Suggestions for Presentations

- 1) Build up presentations of different lengths (eg. 15 minutes, 45 minutes)
- 2) Customise presentations to fit the audience
- 3) Get to know your audience and share presentations with each other in the team.
- 4) Allow audience feedback and learn from it.
- 5) Construct "feedback" forms... not just "happy sheets" but invite constructive suggestions on how to improve or change presentations .
- 6) Use audience feedback to find other groups who may be interested.
- 7) Notice and be aware that some members of the audience may be actively suffering and might need specific responses after the presentation.
- 8) Be practical : keep it local and " in the now". If use WTFs advise that currency is dated.
- 9) FREQUENTLY MENTION : NATIONAL HELPLINE NUMBER : WEBSITE AND CHAT NOW.
- 10) Keep it relevant , know your local territory
- 11) Use Humourkeep it funny and exciting: have fun enjoy yourself.
- 12) Make sure if you use technology (screens, computers, projectors) that you know how to operate it and always have a back up plan.

"This is an experience you must not miss ".



East Lancs I/G's PILO Daniel C suggests a small service opportunity for all in Gratitude Week and beyond...an idea originating via **GSO Latvia** from a member called *Orests*.

500 'coins', measuring 4cm x 3mm, are offered as a method of carrying the message of A.A. in different situations. Feedback of the trial is requested...

Winchester Programme Celebrating the Centenary of Bill W's Visit

Summer 1918

"We landed in England. I visited Winchester Cathedral. Much moved, I wandered outside. My attention was caught by a doggerel on an old tombstone."

Summer 2018

We are fortunate indeed, to be able to celebrate Bill Wilson's visit to Winchester and there are several events being planned and organised by Alcoholics Anonymous and other organisations which support and understand the significance of his visit.

Sunday 8 July 2.00pm and Monday 9 July 3.00pm Cathedral Lady Chapel "An Honest Soldier", a play compiled by Philip Glassborow, which includes music and poetry from the First World War together with extracts from the writings of *Bill Wilson*.

Tickets £10 from the Cathedral Box Office or www.tickets.winchester-cathedral.org.uk and the Theatre Royal Box Office or www.theatreroyalwinchester.co.uk/whats-on

Throughout August The Backwall Gallery in the Discovery Centre An exhibition of photographs giving an insight into the workings of Alcoholics Anonymous around the world.

Thursday 16 August 7.30pm An AA Meeting will be held in **Winchester Cathedral**. It will be 'open' and all are welcome.

Saturday 25 August 10.00am – 4.00pm Cathedral Outer Close "A Celebration of Recovery". Visitors of all ages can enjoy activities as part of an event to raise awareness of services such as AA, Al-anon, NA, the Night Shelter and the Samaritans helping those who are recovering from alcohol and drug addiction and those who are struggling with mental illness.

Southern Public Information Meeting – Guildford 17/06/2018

Board Trustee for P.I. Peter F explained the purpose of the meeting was to encourage filling the PILO vacancies at Intergroups and Regions; to inform and share Experience, Strength and Hope; to stimulate our Primary Purpose; to acknowledge Intergroups as the “engine rooms” of PI; to affirm the requirement of a PI team, and how it can be built.

PI Sub Committee’s Jim W expanded on the PI Team – see earlier article.

PI Sub Committee’s Andrew H demonstrated how to access components of the **AA Filestore**, and showed the 5 new **AA Videos**

PI Sub Committee’s Charles R presented the **Public Information Service News**.

PI Sub Committee’s Julie P gave her experience of “Dealing with the Media”

Northdown I/G’s Chrissy B explained the forthcoming **Winchester Programme Celebrating the Centenary of Bill’s Visit** - see above.

Participation in general discussion followed.

PLEASE pass on your experiences to the address below. PI Service news is fortunate to receive a great deal of information from throughout Great Britain and Continental European Region.

If anything you have sent hasn’t appeared, please try again.

INTERGROUP SECRETARIES – please pass on **Public Information Service News to Group Service Representatives, by e-mail or hard copy.**

Please note the contact address: aainformation@gsogb.org.uk