

## RE-OPENING A.A. GROUPS

***The following was presented May 13,2020 in district 618 Area 49 & edited for clarity May 22, 2020 and edited again, June 4<sup>th</sup> ,2020 for use in Area16-Georgia. Area 16 wishes to thank Area 49 for their work in putting this together and sharing it for the benefit of A.A. groups.***

***This document is intended to provide you with information for your group, not to tell your group what to do, it is up to the group to have an informed conscience.***

Prior to the issued stay-at-home orders, GSO sent a letter March 19, 2020 that can be found on aa.org, if you click on the icon “Updates on Corona Virus (COViD-19)”

[https://aa.org/pages/en\\_US/update-on-covid-19-coronavirus](https://aa.org/pages/en_US/update-on-covid-19-coronavirus) Here’s an excerpt:

The General Service Office is a repository of shared group experience and functions as a resource center for A.A. members and groups who are looking for the shared experience of the Fellowship. Providing guidance on health issues is outside the scope of the A.A. sharing that G.S.O. offers. However, we might suggest contacting your national, state/provincial and local health authorities for appropriate information.

Once your group develops its own informed conscience about safely reopening spaces for your meetings, the group may send its experience to GSO by writing to Jeff W. at

[groupservices@aa.org](mailto:groupservices@aa.org).

When the stay-at-home started in March, there were media reports from around the country about AA members continuing to meet and being cited by authorities.

- Tradition 4 (affecting other groups or AA as a whole)
- Tradition 5 (primary purpose – to carry its message to the still suffering alcoholic). Was this an alcoholic’s first glimpse of AA?
- Tradition 10 (controversy)
- Tradition 11 (attraction)

In Alcoholics Anonymous, we stay safe through practicing all 12 Traditions.

A service piece put out by GSO is titled "[Safety and A.A.: our Common Welfare](https://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/smf-209_en.pdf)" [https://www.aa.org/assets/en\\_US/smf-209\\_en.pdf](https://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/smf-209_en.pdf) - it reminds us to talk about issues of safety before they arise, that safety is something each member attending an A.A. meeting can be mindful of, and that common sense and experience suggest that A.A. membership does not grant immunity from local regulations and being at an A.A. meeting does not put anyone beyond the jurisdiction of government mandates.

In Alcoholics Anonymous, we stay safe through practicing our 12 Traditions. As we begin to think about reopening our meeting spaces safely, we have much to consider and our 12 Traditions to guide us:

- Trad 1 Unity
- Trad 2 - group conscience, is it informed?
- Trad 3, accessibility and inclusivity

We have members who have no internet access and no phone

We have members who now get to more meetings online than they've ever been able to (physical, or other accessibility concerns).

- Tradition 7 - Is the group aware of the recent draw down of \$3 Million from AA's prudent reserve [https://www.aa.org/assets/en\\_US/smf-209\\_en.pdf](https://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/smf-209_en.pdf) ? That individual members may contribute online: <https://contribution.aa.org/> ? Or, that when groups contribute online, the same dollar mailed in to GSO is equal to \$1.20 contributed online?

***Bearing in mind the Traditions, here are questions your group may wish to consider:***

- Has your home group scheduled a group conscience or business meeting to consider resuming face-to-face meetings?
- Is your group familiar with the latest CDC, state, and local regulations concerning large group meetings? Where can these regulations be found? How can these regulations be communicated to the group?
- Has your group considered how its actions and decisions could affect other groups, or could affect AA as a whole?

## RE-OPENING A.A. GROUPS

- Will your group's regular meeting place limit capacity while following government mandates regarding physical distancing? If not, how will your group meet the needs of alcoholics and also avoid controversy?
- Will your home group consider the use of online or call-in meetings during live, face-to-face meetings and why would this option be considered? If online or call-in meetings are utilized during a live, face-to-face meeting, will this raise issues of anonymity?
- Will hospitality service continue? If so, what safety measures could your group adopt?
- Will your group supply hand sanitizer? If not, how will your group conduct meetings safely?
- Will your group continue to share literature between members during in-person meetings?
- Concerning COVID-19, should our group be concerned with any legal liability issues? If so, what might these be?
- If masks are required, will your group supply a mask for those without one? Will the greeter's role be expanded to offer masks? Will there be a need to create new group service commitments regarding safety? Will a member be asked to leave if they do not wear a mask—And how can this be handled lovingly?
- How will your group practice Tradition 7? Has your group considered vectors in passing a physical basket? If so, how can the basket be passed safely?
- How has your group considered following government regulations in light of practicing the Traditions—specifically Traditions 4, 5, 10 and 11?

Other Traditions to consider:

- 6 no endorsement (we are in an AA meeting, not a Zoom/Google Hangouts/any named platform meeting. The group has chosen a particular platform).
- 8 forever nonprofessional
- 9 committees responsible
- 12 anonymity, different than privacy. Principles before personalities.

Informational: <https://aa-intergroup.org/> was founded in the 1990's, and hosts remote meetings using varied technologies.

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As your groups develop their own informed conscience, please consider sending them in to GSO to Jeff W. at [groupsservices@aa.org](mailto:groupsservices@aa.org)

As we journey through this period, you may wish to share your experience in a story to GV/La Vina.

AA is going to be even better than ever as we grow through this experience provided, we follow our 36 Spiritual Principles.