

SOBER VOICES NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2023

A matter of Tradition.

Tradition 1 “Each member of Alcoholics Anonymous is but a small part of a great whole. A.A. must continue to live, or most of us will surely die. Hence our common welfare comes first. But individual welfare follows close afterward.” — Tradition One (Long Form)

An incident was experienced by an AA group. A book study meeting was the normal format. The usual method was for the leader to ask a reader to read to a designated section and then share their understanding of what they have read. Then other members were allowed to share their experience and understanding of the particular section of the book read.

When an attendee that had shown no understanding of the reading or any relation to the topic, tried to "hijack" the meeting. They were asked to cease. The member had chosen not to participate in the form of meeting. They were asked not to be disruptive. They stormed out of the meeting.

They returned at the end of the meeting in an effort to bully the Chairman. A one sided argument ensued. Abusive bullying behavior escalated into shouting. The members that were left in the meeting began to experience fear for their personal safety.

Tradition 2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience

After the event, the Homegroup had a Group Conscience. AAWS Service material of “Safety and AA: Our Common Welfare” was used as guidance for deciding on how to deal with this disruptive problem. https://www.aa.org/sites/default/files/literature/smf-209_en_0422_0.pdf

- 4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole.**
- 5. Each group has but one primary purpose — to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.**

The Group decided to ask that the disruptive person lose the privilege of attending meetings in the facility.

6. An A.A. group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose

The organization that acts as the representatives of AA with the facility asked that the facility ban the disruptive person from the property. Police are to be called if they return to campus.

The organization has no ability to monitor which groups are present at what time, so total exclusion was the only course available.

WHAT ABOUT TRADITION 3????

3. The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking.

The disruptive person was not excluded from AA. They have the right to go to other meetings not held at the hosting facility.

For more information see;

FINAL REPORT EASTERN CANADA REGIONAL FORUM JULY 8-10, 2016 THUNDER BAY, ONTARIO, CANADA

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“Safety and Respect in A.A.” (Moderator: Michael D. / Reporter: Terry M.)

Workshop members approached the question about how to deal with angry A.A. members who bully other members at service meetings. For instance, what to do when A.A.s become forceful and arrogant when decisions that are made upset them. Workshop members generally agreed that the best thing to do in these situations was to walk away or ignore the offending person.

Other ideas were to have the member’s sponsor intervene and discuss appropriate behavior; read a group conscience statement at the beginning of the meeting regarding acceptable behavior at the meeting and what consequences are for not abiding. Box 4-5-9 contains good information for holding workshops to inform and communicate with group members. In addition, ask for help. If a member’s behavior is threatening, contact police—request an order give a warning. Finally, invite your delegate to attend and give guidance.

In addition, workshop attendees shared their experience, strength and hope regarding what to do when an A.A. group member observes predatory behavior. Some solutions were to: be in tune with what is happening — sponsors should talk with sponsees regarding acceptable behavior. Approach the person with the questionable behavior (gently and with love and tolerance) and address the behavior (cautiously and wisely). It is a good idea for women to surround other women, as well as rallying old-timers to protect both male and female newcomers.