

Fellowship Development

- Information is from Chapter 12 of the *Public Relations Handbook*, (2006)
- The goal of any fellowship development effort is to communicate with and assist NA members, Groups, and Areas.

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What is Fellowship Development?

- Fellowship development provides support services to any NA member, group, service body, or NA community.
- The goal of any fellowship development effort is to communicate with and assist NA members, Groups, Areas, and Regions. (from the PR Handbook).

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Some Areas may be providing what the PR handbook calls “Fellowship Development” without calling it that. examples

- several years ago Anchorage Area developed an abbreviated guide *to our Area Service*.
- Outreach is a fellowship development service that specifically assists struggling or isolated groups.
- Assembly is an example.
- Learning Days, H&I workshops,
- Periodic GSR training

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Why Fellowship Development

Areas and committees may be challenged by

- lack of participation by the fellowship;
- failure or inability to involve members with significant clean time in the service committee,
- or failure to involve new members.
- Apathy or infighting can be problems.

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Identifying problems, and planning and prioritizing solutions are important means to change. It becomes more important as we move down the service structure (groups to region).

Some of our primary Means in Fellowship Development are Unity and Attraction.

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Core Principles

Unity: “Together we can”

It is our collective service efforts that help other addicts find recovery.

- *Selflessness* – We can see our First Tradition at work when members put their individual wants and needs aside for NA’s common good.
- Working together to make NA more visible and viable in our local communities not only helps addicts find our program, but is a powerful way of practicing the unity described in the First Tradition.

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- How do we put our individual wants and needs aside for the common good of NA?
- In our service committees, how do we demonstrate that we are open and welcoming to members and groups?

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Attraction means that we function, as members and as groups, in ways that naturally draw others to us.

- **Attractive** behaviors and attitudes of individual NA members include *Respect for one another’s opinions, honor for the miracle that is each of us that we are clean, open mindedness...*
- *Timeliness, responsibility, communication, a little courtesy are **Attractive** to people outside of the program.*
- When members act in ways that are attractive, this fosters identification and gives potential members a sense of belonging.

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- How can areas practice the principle of attraction in their fellowship development efforts? (offer training to allow new members to participate effectively, get people involved in subcommittee work.)
- How can members make service more attractive in their fellowship development efforts?

There are variety of barriers that prevent NA from growing and thriving in various locations. Barriers include geography, physical disability, economic disadvantage, or a result from groups and members being detached from the service structure.

Fellowship development is an opportunity for trusted servants to carry NA’s

message by building relationships with other NA members

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Fellowship development Principles

Principles such as self-support, autonomy, carrying the NA message, and unity are what we try to promote or cultivate in FD.

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Principles:

- Trusted servants can strive to find the balance between carrying the message and respecting individuals' and groups' autonomy.
- Members often need to be encouraged to recognize how their contributions (service and financial) are a part of NA's principle of self-support.
- Empowering members and groups with the necessary service materials and support is an important foundation of strong fellowship development efforts.

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Approaching members with an attitude of goodwill and with a lack of judgment will help fellowship development efforts be more productive. Groups and areas operate in a variety of different ways.

- It is not the job of those performing Fellowship Development to manage groups or areas. Groups and Areas are vested with autonomy and the conscience of its members.
- It is important in fellowship development to provide tools to groups and areas to effectively manage themselves.
- A group's way of creatively carrying NA's message can foster energy and excitement among group members.
- There are times, however, when these creative ways can become even more useful to a group's primary purpose.

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Trusted servants need to approach this service without any preconceived ideas about members and groups that may not seem as "developed" as their own groups.

- Our ability to respectfully support groups and members gives them a better

chance at more effectively carrying NA's message to suffering addicts.

- Members should always be keen to observe what is working rather than what is not working.

The approach generally is to:

- Identify issues
- Prioritize
- Evaluate resources, particularly human resources
- Identify goals
- Develop steps to reach goals.

Process:

- Identify issues – best done by group/area assessment:
 - inventory (sample inventory)
- Identify goals
- Identify objectives.
- Execute

End

Any Questions

Obstacles and solutions

Before beginning fellowship development efforts, it is important to consider what may be some of the obstacles and solutions that are common in this kind of service.

2. Giving groups and areas encouragement to move forward in their service efforts is often the most meaningful guidance trusted servants can offer.
 - Letting members know that their approaches to service aren't violating any traditions or that their fears and challenges are similar to those faced by members around the world can be a huge relief.
 - Fellowship development depends on members learning how to evaluate their service efforts and teaching them how to know for themselves when they've stepped beyond NA traditions.
3. Respecting cultural differences, economic barriers, language barriers, geographic distance, and legal restrictions is crucial to finding effective approaches.
 - Fellowship development efforts often begin after identifying a group of people that NA has failed to reach. (we have lots of that in Alaska – think rural Alaska)
4. One of the goals of fellowship development is to help local groups have the structures and information to solve their own problems.
 - If there is a divide in the fellowship, the job of those performing fellowship development is not to manage conflicts or solve members' problems. Instead, their role is to give groups the tools to solve their own problems.
 - Practicing NA's principles and not letting personal opinions play a role is often the most helpful approach.
 - **Our focus is always NA unity and the primary purpose of groups.**
5. We always want to work toward unity in our service efforts.
 - However, with the best of intentions, some members may have unfocused passion or inflexible ideas.
 - Trusted servants can do their best to include these members rather than exclude them. Often, members will continue what they're doing whether they are included in the area service committee or not. Our role is to maintain an open attitude, a welcoming atmosphere, and easy inclusion for these members.
6. NA members can often benefit from some direction about how to focus their passion for NA.
 - Showing these members how to use their energy and passion for NA in a way

that will help their community grow is often an important aspect of fellowship development.

7. One challenging aspect of fellowship development is encountering groups that don't want to be part of the service structure.
 - If an area finds that a number of groups are hesitant about participating in the area service committee, the area can perform a service inventory.
 - This inventory helps the service body identify its strengths and shortcomings.
 - Addressing identified shortcomings may help attract groups back to the area service committee.
8. Some members can misinterpret NA's traditions and concepts.
 - These same members may also be resistant to change after they have established practices in the local NA community.
 - An attitude that lacks judgment and fosters goodwill can help members consider the traditions and concepts in a new way and be open to listening to the experience of other members.
 - Learning days and workshops are another way to address this issue—a workshop format can allow this topic to be discussed in a more impersonal fashion.
9. In many developing NA communities, meetings begin in treatment facilities.
 - Trusted servants can help groups establish their independence by encouraging them to be self-supporting. The Institutional Group Guide can be a useful resource in helping members take steps toward creating more self-supporting groups.
 - It is important to help treatment staff understand how an NA meeting functions and to help members establish NA with as little internal strife and conflict as possible.

We encourage each member of the group to contribute thoughts and ideas. Our attitude of open-mindedness helps us remember that each group is part of a greater whole. Acknowledging that we are a part of something bigger than ourselves prompts us to look at still more new ideas. Our diversity can enrich us only when we are open to its richness.

It Works: How and Why