



“Our Freedom, Our Responsibility”
WSC 2008



**June 2008 Northern California AD Report on NAWS
Workshops at the California Mid-State Convention**

Leadership in NA Workshop at California Mid-State Regional Convention (June 7):

Last weekend NAWS ran two concurrent workshops for the first time on the new leadership materials developed and presented to us at the Conference. Given that the other workshop was at the Southern Zonal forum on the East Coast, I chose to attend the one at the California Mid-State Convention in Visalia.

The workshop was focused on the introductory principles and discussions of what Leadership in service means to us in NA. This was done primarily to target the workshop to the general NA membership at the convention; rather than a more sophisticated service audience. This is essentially Module 1 of the overall Leadership tool kit we are developing. The SEZF were presented more of the material from the 2nd module, which will be more similar to what we are going to have experienced today.

The workshop was facilitated by Steve R (WSO Fellowship Services Team Leader) and De J (NA Way Editor), from NAWS Staff. We had about 6 tables with 8-10 members each. The staff started right off with bribes – WCNA 30 Convention Bags for every full table – to quickly get people to move to fill up tables rather than stay dispersed throughout the room. This was a good trick, as Lenny and I spend a lot of time trying to cajole people into coming together every time we introduce the small group process.

The workshop started with the history of the Leadership Issue Discussion throughout our fellowship and confronted directly the oft-stated misconception that “we have no leaders in NA” by examining our Traditions and Concepts.

As a large group, we looked at Concept 4. *“Effective Leadership is highly valued in Narcotics Anonymous; Leadership qualities should be carefully considered when selecting Trusted Servants.”* We looked at this concept in light of the following questions:

1. What does this Concept tell us about Leadership in NA from a Committee/Group perspective?
2. How do we individually apply this Concept as Na leaders?

After doing this exercise as a large group, we took a similar approach to some Traditions and Concepts in a small group setting. For example, some tables took Tradition 1 & Concept 9, while the other tables took Tradition 2 and Concept 3. Each table applied the 2 questions above to their assigned Traditions and Concepts and then presented their findings to the large group.

This is a very effective workshop approach for a novice service audience, such as new GSRs or that you may find at event workshops. It gets the group to carefully look at and identify application of leadership principles in terms of how we apply them in service.

Due to time constraints, we didn't get to do the second half of the exercise, which is an opportunity to apply the theoretical discussions above to a real world scenario using the characteristics of an effective team. The idea here is to embrace Teamwork as part of Leadership by looking at the following:

1. Characteristics of an effective team:

Clear Roles and Responsibilities

- Team members understand their responsibilities/ expectations for performance
- Team as a whole understands its function, results it must produce and how that supports the function and roles of other bodies in the service structure and other leaders.

Clear Purpose and Direction

- Team is driven by a central purpose
- Team has agreed on clear goals and a strategy to reach those goals <you should see a tie-in to the Area Planning Tool here>

Team Skills and Behavior

- Team members exhibit team skills and behaviors such as effective communication & conflict management

Operating Values:

- The team has agreed how they will work together, including ground rules for discussion, how they will handle disagreement or conflicts, etc.

2. Tips for Leading Effective Service Committees:

- Make goal-setting and prioritizing a team activity, with regular progress checks and adjustments based on new information on needs, issues, etc.
- Set ground rules for team discussion
- Recap assignments at the end of each meeting (Steve R suggested keeping a post-it on the ASC wall at each meeting and writing down the tasks that arise during the meeting and then doing a group review of what needs to be done at the next meeting).
- Get to know team members – their strengths, what they are passionate about, etc. Use this to increase team effectiveness and productivity.
- Celebrate team accomplishments and recognize individual contributions (Certificates of appreciation are great for this).
- Make sure team members have the information and tools to support them in fulfilling their assignments

Scenario: *The more experienced members of the ASC are frustrated. The ASC doesn't seem to be functioning well as a team: The H&I committee wants more money for literature than the ASC has budgeted for. Many GSRs just come to buy their literature and leave. Activities wants to do their third event without submitting a budget for the first one. Three people want to be convention chair but none are willing to stand for PI/PR chair.*

Questions:

- *What could be the source of the problem?*

- Which of the characteristics of an effective team is the group not exhibiting?
- What could the Chairperson do to help get the ASC back on track?

Building Strong Home Groups Workshop at California Mid-State Regional Convention:

I was expecting this to be very repetitive and well-traveled ground, but I was surprised to find the opposite. NAWA staff have refined the session profile for this workshop so the focus is now on actively engaging small groups in using the Group Worksheet as a tool for group inventory. One of the flaws or oversights in the group worksheet itself is that it starts right off with solutions without really providing a context for members to see how or where it connects to common group problems.

The new session profile starts off by giving different tables a problem scenario and pushes the table into using the group worksheet to brainstorm solutions, prioritize their favorites, and make definitive action to get the solutions in place. For example, at our workshop, our tables were given the following 2 common group scenarios:

1. The meeting atmosphere is somewhat disrupted by a large group of newcomers that come to the meeting late, sit together in the back of the room, and leave the meeting early. These members are not joining in with the group.
2. The facility landlord has indicated that he is very unhappy with the group. The meeting space has been left in disarray, and cigarette butts have been left on the patio outside the front entrance.

Using the Group worksheet to troubleshoot these problems will give home groups practical experience with the process. I'm hopeful that we can take these "next steps" in holding more *"Building Strong Home Groups"* workshops throughout the Region this year. I'd like to see these as part of our NA 101/Regional Assemblies.

In Service,

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