GSF Agenda and Facilitation Tips

Before the meeting: The facilitator and recorder should create a list of issues needing discussion. Issues for discussion can come from the groups, the GSF facilitator, the LSC (particularly in the linear model of GSF/LSC), or interested members. In some cases the facilitator will prioritize issues for the GSF; in other cases the GSF itself will prioritize issues. Regardless, part of the facilitator's job, so to speak, is to keep the GSF on task and help the body set realistic goals for each meeting. There won't be time to talk about everything in every meeting. The chair can help the body be mindful of how much time there is for the GSF meeting and what the body can expect to accomplish.

Groups should turn in their reports before the GSF meeting to help the facilitator develop a list of discussion topics. Group reports also ensure meeting and contact information is up to date. Any flyers or other informational material is placed in a central location for collection before the end of the meeting. If the GSF facilitates groups ordering literature from the LSC, or making contributions to the LSC, then these should be handed to the trusted servant responsible for this.

Introductions: Everyone introduces themselves and says which group they are from, whether they are a trusted servant from the LSC, or whether they are a visitor, etc. – new members/groups are welcomed.

Topics from previous meetings: These could include topics where more information was needed, or issues that were not able to be addressed at the previous meeting due to time constraints. The GSF can choose to address topics that weren't covered at the previous meeting first or it can prioritize these topics alongside any new issues, depending on the preference of the GSF.

New suggested topics: If possible the recorder writes these down at the front of the room on a large post-it, white board etc. so everyone can see them. Topics can range from issues individual groups would like help or feedback about to more general topics like a discussion of a tool or pamphlet. The GSF's primary function is to support the groups and so assisting groups in areas where they are struggling should be the top priority, but in most cases, there will be plenty of time to address other issues as well, if the GSF wishes.

Prioritizing: The facilitator can prioritize issues for the body before the meeting or those attending the GSF can prioritize issues. This can be done by a simple show of hands. One possible method is for each member to have two opportunities to raise their hands.

Discussion: Each topic is presented and discussed one at a time, beginning with a brief explanation of the topic by the group or individual that suggested it. The facilitator asks if anyone needs any clarification of the issue.

The facilitator may want to ask the body 3 questions to help consider the topic:

1. Does anyone else have experience with this topic? (The GSF may want to keep a log of previous topics and solutions to group issues in case the same topics resurface over time.)

2. What does our literature say? (Possible sources include *The Group Booklet*, *Treasurer's Handbook*, Tradition and Concept essays etc.)

3. Where can we get more information about the topic? (Possibilities include the LSC/ASC, regional body, state/nation/province body, and NA World Services.)

For more involved discussions the Basic Facilitation Guide can be used.

(**Note**: The recorder keeps a simple record of the outcome of any discussions and any solutions to group issues reached. The recorder's notes will also be helpful in the annual environmental scanning assembly.)

Workshop: Examples include Building Strong Homegroups, Tradition or Concept discussions, or general service or recovery topics.

Sample GSF Agendas

Note: We offer a couple of sample agendas here (for GSFs of about five to ten groups) because we know examples are helpful to some, but your GSF will have its own personality and needs, and the ideal agenda should spring from that. These are just a few ideas of what a GSF meeting might look like. Please just use them as a jumping off place to adapt for your local needs.

We were initially going to include sample times on the agendas but we realize that the time allotted for the GSF meeting will vary from community to community as will the amount to discuss and workshop. Part of the task of the facilitator is to draft an agenda that considers the amount of time available and prioritizes the items that are most significant.

This first sample agenda is for a GSF that is self-administered, doesn't participate in any local service, and doesn't send a delegate to the LSC.

Meeting Opening:

- o Moment of silence and NA prayer
- o Read a selection from NA literature of the facilitator's choice
- o Introductions and welcome

Discussion of Suggested Topics (See list on last page)

- o Further discuss topics from previous meetings if needed
- o Read new suggested topics and any topics that you didn't get to at the last meeting
- o Prioritize topics for discussion
- o Discuss top two new topics

Workshops (See list on last page)

- o If there is a workshop scheduled for the GSF meeting, introduce that facilitator and topic
- o Have small or large group workshop

Announcements

Closing

- o Choose location, facilitator, and recorder for next GSF if needed
- o Close meeting with Just For Today and an NA prayer of choice

This second sample agenda is for a GSF that is administered by the LSC or that has a facilitator and recorder elected by the GSF. This GSF does send a delegate to the LSC and does participate in some local service.

- Meeting Opening:
  - Moment of silence and NA prayer
  - Read GSF Purpose and Groundrules
  - Introductions and welcome

- Report from LSC/ASC delegate

- Discussion of Suggested Topics (See list on last page)
  - Further discuss topics from previous meetings if needed
  - Facilitator reads off the topics and issues that remain from previous meetings and the new ones that were submitted before this meeting and suggests two or three to discuss.
  - If there is general agreement, discuss selected topics one at a time.
  - If there is a need, prioritize the issues as a group and then discuss the top two or three priorities one at a time.

- Report on any local service work that the GSF may be participating in.

- Workshops (See list on last page)
  - If there is a workshop scheduled for the GSF meeting, introduce that facilitator and topic
  - Have small or large group workshop
  - The LSC may want to schedule workshops throughout the cycle for the GSFs, highlighting different aspects of service work and introducing GSF members to some of what happens at the LSC.

- Closing
  - Announcements
  - Remind everyone of next GSF meeting date, time, and location
  - Close meeting with Just For Today and My Gratitude Speaks

Sample GSF Topics

The list of things a GSF could talk about is potentially endless. We offer you this grab bag to inspire you and to give you an idea of the sorts of things that are possible fodder for discussion.

Group issues/challenges

- not enough money taken in through passing the basket
- "too much" money taken in through the basket
- members disrupting or dominating the meeting
- need to find a new meeting place
- many new comers, few members with time/ availability of sponsors
- challenges with NA language or identification

Group successes/ideas to share

- positive changes to group trusted servants, group time, location, etc.
- format changes
- good experiences in business meetings
- new group practices (e.g., going out regularly after the meeting)

General topics for discussion

- A specific IP or service pamphlet
- A Tradition or Concept
- Sponsorship
- Sometimes a question can generate a great conversation, like "Is there such a thing as too much service?" or "What impression do newcomers get at our meetings and how can we improve it?"

Workshops

- Issue Discussion Topics
- New tools or literature/ NAWS projects
- LSC-coordinated topics such as carrying the message to institutions, doing public relations works, working on our website, putting on events, and so on.