

BUILDING COMMUNICATION

2008 2010

BUILDING COMMUNICATION

OUR FREEDOM, OUR RESPONSIBILITY

LEADERSHIP

Discussion questions for *Building Communication* and *Our Freedom, Our Responsibility* follow. We will post session outlines and handouts on the web for these topics, along with similar material on the third IDT, *Leadership*. Conference participants loved the new material on leadership we introduced at WSC 2008, and they're eager to hold local workshops with this material. Now you can, too.



For more information
go to

[WWW.NA.ORG/
IDT/IDT.HTM](http://WWW.NA.ORG/IDT/IDT.HTM)

FELLOWSHIP ISSUE DISCUSSIONS

The process of fellowship issue discussions continues to grow and evolve, allowing us to continually strive to work better, both at local levels and as a worldwide organization. Over the previous cycle, we discussed *Building Strong Home Groups*, *Who Is Missing from Our Meetings and Why?*, and *Our Service System*. These discussions have provided us with ideas and input that helped in the creation of tools for the fellowship, including the Building Strong Home Groups worksheet, service pamphlets, and leadership modules. These discussions also had an impact on the projects approved at the 2008 World Service Conference.

The theme for WSC 2008, and for this conference cycle, is **"Our Freedom, Our Responsibility."** Many of our biggest challenges seem to involve putting what we believe into action at every level. This includes taking the time to have a thorough, honest look at our home groups to see how we can improve, and being willing to step outside of our comfort zone and work extra hard to carry our message to addicts who may think that they don't belong here, because we know they do. This also means that we need to exercise the courage to step up and try new ideas in our service system. As our Basic Text states, "We learn that we are growing when we make new mistakes instead of repeating old ones."

The Issue Discussion Topics for the 2008-2010 cycle are *Building Communication*, *Our Freedom, Our Responsibility*, and *Leadership* (sound familiar? it should!). These topics all carry forward aspects from our discussions during previous conference cycles. Communication has been one of the important elements of our discussions on *Infrastructure* (2004-2006) and *Our Service System* (2006-2008). The topic of responsibility has come up in response to the common refrain we've heard in discussions throughout the fellowship for years, that our service efforts in many places are hindered by apathy and a lack of participation. Leadership similarly has been a topic of fellowshipwide discussion for several conference cycles now and continues to be a focus of our efforts throughout the service structure.

We all need to begin to recognize our personal ownership and responsibility for the success of NA in carrying our message and achieving our vision. By improving and diversifying our communications at every level, we can broaden awareness in the fellowship about what is happening in the NA service system. And by encouraging greater personal and collective responsibility for that service system, we can begin to develop an atmosphere of leadership among our trusted servants, as well as an increased desire to support the work done on behalf of NA groups worldwide.

As we have done in the past, we will develop session profiles with step-by-step outlines to help members facilitate workshops on these topics. These profiles, information about the Issue Discussion Topics, and topic-oriented online discussion boards will all be available on our website at <http://www.na.org/IDT/IDT.htm>. As we did in 2006-2008, we will use fellowship input from the first half of the conference cycle to refocus these discussions mid-way through this conference cycle, so be sure to check back often and watch *The NA Way Magazine* for updates.



The purpose of our services is to help our fellowship fulfill its primary purpose: to carry the message to the addict who still suffers. Honest, open, straightforward communication is essential to both the integrity and the effectiveness of the NA service structure.

Twelve Concepts for
NA Service,
Eighth Concept

BUILDING COMMUNICATION

A chain is only as strong as its weakest link. When it comes to NA service, the links in our chain are often weakened by poor communication. Reliable, consistent communication is a challenge in Narcotics Anonymous. In order to have effective services that help us better carry our message of recovery, we need to strengthen our communication at all levels of the service structure.

The unity we foster through effective communication helps keep our fellowship alive and growing. Most members embrace the importance of unity and the desire for every addict to experience freedom from active addiction. In our efforts worldwide, we are consistently motivated by the vision that one day, every addict in the world should have the chance to experience our message in his or her own language and culture and find the opportunity for a new way of life.

When our communication is impaired, our ability to carry the message is compromised. On a fundamental level, getting the still-suffering addict to a Narcotics Anonymous meeting depends on reliable and timely communication. We need accurate meeting directories, a working phonenumber, and good relations with professionals who come into contact with addicts.

Areas, subcommittees, regions, zones, and world services all perform services on behalf of our groups so that those groups may better focus on our primary purpose. Clear, consistent communication is crucial to build the trust necessary to delegate the authority to carry out these tasks. Yet, at every level of service, we seem to struggle with deciding what needs to be communicated, who needs to receive that information, and how to best to deliver that communication.

Our Eighth Concept reminds us “Our service structure depends on the integrity and effectiveness of our communications.” We rely on the integrity of our communication to maintain our services. We have an interdependent chain to share information and experience: member ↔ group ↔ area ↔ committee ↔ region ↔ zone ↔ world services. On every level of service, it is our responsibility to make information available. Integrity in this case means doing our best to keep everyone informed. Only through careful guidance and reporting can we ensure that we are delegating—not abdicating—our responsibilities.

We believe that we have both the desire and the experience in NA to come up with more effective communication tools and practices. We have heard from some areas and regions that they strengthened communication by providing a summary of decisions and discussions that members could readily understand. Others report that trusted servants connect with members just by making their reports interesting and giving presentations of the material.

We hope that discussing these questions over the course of the upcoming cycle will help us share our best practices and build upon our successes. Please feel free to choose one or two to discuss. You can have ongoing discussions over the course of several months, returning to select another question if you wish. Whatever approach you take to the discussion questions, we just want you to communicate the results to us so that we can share your input with the rest of the fellowship.

These questions focus on the chain of communication in NA. Your answers will depend on your experience in NA service and your familiarity with the different “links” in that chain. In other words, if you hold a workshop on these questions at an ASC, members might focus most closely on communication to and from subcommittees or groups and the ASC, or perhaps to and from the ASC and the region. On the other hand, discussing these questions at a regional level might prompt members to focus more closely on communication between world services and the RSC or on how information gets passed from the RSC to the ASC and back.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is working well in our communication across the different levels of NA service?
2. What are the communication links that need improving?
3. In what ways can I contribute to improving these communication links in NA?
4. What actions would help us build an effective chain of communication throughout our service structure?

Session outlines and handouts for the IDTs, including *Leadership*, will be posted at www.na.org/IDT/IDT.htm, where you can also access the IDT discussion boards.

OUR FREEDOM, OUR RESPONSIBILITY

