

Reimagining & Revitalizing Service Committees

Session Materials:

- Note sheets with discussion questions
- Large sheets of paper for each table and for the front of the room and markers
- Brainstorming/Groundrules
- Facilitators Instructions/Vision for NA Service

Session Goals:

- Discuss changes and innovations in local service bodies
- Help participants understand the practice of scanning and planning
- Raise awareness of this opportunity for positive change

[Instructions for facilitators are contained in these brackets]

Introduction

5 minutes

[Facilitators introduce themselves and welcome everyone]

Slide: IDTs for the 2023-2026 cycle

For this conference cycle, the Fellowship prioritized four different Issue Discussion Topics (known as IDTs):

1. Dealing with disruptive and predatory behavior
2. Gender-neutral and inclusive language in NA literature
3. Reimagining and revitalizing service committees
4. DRT/MAT as it relates to NA

Material for these can be found at www.na.org/idt.

Today's workshop is about the third topic, and reflects the challenges and opportunities that many NA communities are encountering. NA, like the rest of the world, has been permanently altered by the pandemic. Some communities are struggling to rebuild services, while others are exploring new ways to carry the message by building on the experience gained in the last few years. We're going to talk today about what's happening in our local service bodies and communities, and about our ideas to reimagine and revitalize our service committees.

Slide: Discussions about NA services

There are already a number of conversations happening about change in NA service, prompted by the new landscape we find ourselves in:

- The Future of the World Service Conference project is discussing ways to make the conference more productive and valuable
- Regions and zones are involved in the creation of the NAWS strategic plan that will shape new projects in the future
- The New and Revised Service Tools project is focusing on virtual services, H&I, PR, and group business meetings

Slide: Previous discussions about NA services

We have talked as a Fellowship about improvements to NA services many times and in many ways in recent years, but have struggled to put ideas into action. Today we want to focus on a process that could lead to beneficial changes.

Some of those discussion topics can be found here www.na.org/idt and include:

- Attracting Members to Service
- Atmosphere of Recovery in Service

- Collaboration
- Building Communication
- Who is Missing

[Facilitator’s Note: It might be useful to show the IDT webpage at this point if that’s possible.]

Large Group Discussion: Scanning

25 minutes

Slide: Ideas for change

The IDT was worded this way in the 2023 CAR survey:

“Reimagining and revitalizing service committees (to further the reach of the NA message, improve communication, provide mentorship and training, and make service more attractive and accessible, learning from our experience the past few years)”

None of us would disagree with these aims, but how do we get there?

Slide: Taking an inventory

One approach that we are all familiar with is to begin by taking an inventory when we are trying to identify areas that need improvement. That can be just as helpful in NA service as in our personal recovery. As a large group, we’re going to think about the changes we’re experiencing right now in our service bodies and in our communities, and the main challenges we are encountering when trying to provide NA services.

Scanning gives us the opportunity to look at the internal and external factors that affect our groups and the ways we provide service. In the last several years, we have all experienced huge changes to the ways we provide and participate in service – but in many cases, our structures have not caught up with these changes. We can be prisoners of our own guidelines, and the ways we define and think about service positions might be very different from how they actually work now.

Slide: What’s changed?

Let’s begin the process by asking these questions:

- In your service committee, what’s different today than in 2019?
- In your local community (outside of NA) what’s different today than in 2019 that affects our ability to carry the message?

[Provide this example if needed: An area now meets virtually. The literature chair, who used to set up at a table in the back of the room, now has to take orders in advance and meet group members somewhere in order to get them their literature. So the requirements for the position have changed, and the time required to provide that service might be much greater.]

[Make notes at the front of the room on large sheets of paper (or on-screen if the workshop is virtual.) Avoid debate on the individual points – simply add them to the list. Review the responses with the large group.]

Slide: What are our biggest challenges?

[After a few ideas have been gathered for both questions, ask these questions.]

- With these changes in mind, what are the biggest challenges we are experiencing in our efforts to carry the NA message?

[Make notes at the front of the room on large sheets of paper and review the responses with the large group. Combine any similar ideas, making sure they are all clearly understood. Again, avoid debating the challenges – simply add them to the list.]

The next step today is to break up into smaller groups and discuss some solutions to these challenges. Before we do that, we're going to prioritize the challenges to identify which are the most important ones to address first. This is a necessary step because a service body can only address a limited number of issues at the same time.

[Lead the large group in voting for their top three challenges – giving each member three votes. Voting can be by a show of hands, or placing dots or marks next to each challenge. Identify the top three challenges and make sure everyone is clear on them.]

Small Groups Discussion Set-up

5 minutes

Slide: small group discussions

In a moment we will break into small groups to discuss ideas to address the challenges. You will need a facilitator and someone to take notes. We have scheduled 30 minutes for your small group discussions to allow enough time to build ideas. You will be asked to capture one of those ideas on the Post-it sheets.

[Divide the prioritized challenges evenly amongst the small groups, depending on the size of the workshop. Some members may wish to move tables if there is a particular challenge that they have experience with. Remind everyone to review the groundrules, brainstorming guidelines, and facilitator's instructions on the tables, and to write clearly!]

Small Group Discussion

30 minutes

[Remind everyone to use the list of changes from earlier to help focus their discussions, and remind them of the time periodically so that they get to each part of the process.]

The first step is to define a goal. This is the end result that we are aiming for. For example, if the problem is a lack of trusted servants, the goal would be to have trusted servant positions filled. This may seem like a redundant step, but experience has shown that it helps to focus the discussion about solutions. If multiple goals are identified, prioritize the top one or two. This part of the process should only take a few minutes.

Having identified the goal, discuss ideas for reaching it. These should be practical and achievable, given the available resources. The following questions may help this part of the conversation.

- Do we need to make structural changes?
- Do we need to redefine some of our trusted servants' roles and responsibilities?
- Do we need any additional resources to help us reach this goal?

Save the last few minutes to prioritize one idea and record the main points on the large sheet of paper.

[During the discussions, walk the room and help to keep the discussions moving if needed. Remind everyone to make clear notes on the large sheets of paper so everyone can read it in the next part of the workshop.]

If the issue of virtual groups or services is prioritized, these additional questions may be useful in the small groups that are discussing the issue:

- How do we provide for virtual groups looking for a home?
- What services do virtual groups need?
- What services could virtual groups provide?
- In what ways are virtual services enhancing traditional ways of providing local services?

[Put each sheet of paper on the wall when they are completed]

Large Group Discussion: Creating a plan for action

20 minutes

The final step for today's workshop is to create a plan of action to make the idea a reality. We're going to choose just one of these ideas to demonstrate this part of the process. This exercise can be undertaken by a smaller

group of trusted servants – for example, the PR subcommittee might do this for a PR focused project, or your service body might have a planning workgroup - and then brought back to the entire body for approval.

[Lead the group in choosing one of the ideas (by a vote if needed.) If clarity on anything is needed, ask questions.]

To create a viable plan, the resources that will be needed to make it happen must be defined. These are the questions for us to consider:

- Who will do the work?
- What exactly are they going to do?
- When will it be done by?
- And how much will it cost?

[It will be helpful to prepare a large sheet of paper in advance with each of these questions written on it, along with space to write in the chosen idea and the answers to each of the questions. Briefly review the plan once it is complete.]

Wrap-up

5 minutes

Slide: thanks and website link for IDT materials

Thanks to all of you for your participation. We hope you can use the work we did today to grow and refresh your service bodies. There is an online input form posted on the IDT webpage that you are encouraged to use to share the results of your discussions with the World Board, and please also remind members in your communities that all the materials for the other IDTs are posted at www.na.org/idt.