**2018 *CAR* Video Script**

**2 of 5: *FIPT* and Regional Motions 7 & 8**

**Slide 1**

This is the second of five videos covering material in the 2018 *Conference Agenda Report* (or *CAR* for short).

**Slide 2**

This video covers the *Fellowship Intellectual Property Trust* or *FIPT,* and Motions 7 and 8, which are related to the *FIPT*.

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Please keep in mind, these videos only cover the main points of the *CAR*. We encourage all members to read the *CAR* itself for more information, including the full World Board responses, as well as the financial impact and policy affected for each motion. Please visit [www.na.org/conference](http://www.na.org/conference) for the complete 2018 *CAR*, the other *CAR* videos, and other Conference materials.

To make it easier for members, groups, and service bodies to read through and workshop the *CAR*, the motions have been grouped into categories. Most of the categories begin with some basic background material and links to relevant documents.

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We’ll start by offering some background on the *Fellowship Intellectual Property Trust* drawn from an essay in the 2018 *CAR.* This is related to motions 7 and 8, which we’ll also discuss here.

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The *Fellowship Intellectual Property Trust*—or *FIPT—*represents the collective decisions of the World Service Conference to preserve the integrity of NA’s published message and the accountability of its publishing services. It provides the foundation for our stewardship of the NA message around the world.

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The *FIPT* came about as a result of a lawsuit prior to 1991 concerning the production and distribution of the Basic Text. It was a difficult time for all involved. The hope was that the Conference decisions would give the Fellowship common ground from which to move forward.

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The WSC took time to discuss many options and get additional clarity about intellectual property law including a question and answer session with the WSO’s intellectual property attorney.

Ultimately, the 1991 Conference was able to provide clear direction when it passed this motion:

*To reaffirm and ratify that the ownership of all of N.A.'s intellectual and physical properties prepared in the past, and to be prepared into the future, is held by WSO, Inc., which holds such title in trust on behalf of the fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous as a whole, in accordance with the decisions of the World Service Conference.*

This identified the WSO as the single management point for the production and distribution of NA’s conference-approved written message.

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After much discussion and consideration of several motions, Conference participants also voted to issue this statement to the Fellowship, in response to the struggles over illicit literature that had culminated in the lawsuit:

“The Basic Text, Fifth Edition, is the only edition of the Basic Text that is currently approved by the World Service Conference of Narcotics Anonymous for publication and sale. The World Service Office Board of Directors is entrusted with the responsibility for protecting the fellowship's physical and intellectual properties, including the Basic Text, and at the board of directors’ discretion, shall take legal action to protect those rights against any and all persons who choose to infringe upon this literature trust.”

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In the two-year cycle following WSC 1991, the Board of Trustees worked with the WSO Board, and a regional service representatives (now called regional delegates) working group to develop the *Fellowship Intellectual Property Trust*. This would provide the legal foundation for the stewardship of NA literature and the NA message around the world. As stated in Article 1, section 4 of the *FIPT*:

*The sole object and purpose of this Trust is to hold and administer all recovery literature and other intellectual properties of the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous in a manner that will help addicts find recovery from the disease of addiction and carry that message of recovery to the addict who still suffers, in keeping with the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of NA.*

By approving the *FIPT*, the Conference assigned the World Service Office the task of protecting our intellectual property on behalf of the Fellowship. Funds generated by literature sales further our primary purpose. This plays out time and again around the world as newer NA communities benefit from NAWS’ guidance and support for translations, as an example. This ensures the fidelity of the NA message in every language and funds the important work of Fellowship development, public relations, translations, and other core services

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Despite the best efforts of the 1991 and 1993 Conferences to put these matters to rest, challenges continue to appear from time to time. Most recently, we’ve seen campaigns to publish illicit literature like that of an earlier era. As we were happy to report last year, these efforts seem to have faded as NA communities have become better informed.

NA communities have rallied to reject the latest wave of unethical behavior of those involved and the publications they produce. The once-steady stream of inquiries about the illicit publication and its distribution attests to “the integrity and effectiveness of our communications” as discussed in Concept Eight and the strength of local efforts to get the word out that illicit literature does not reflect group conscience.

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Section break—no dialog

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**Motion 7:** To direct the World Board to create a Service Pamphlet (SP) that clearly and simply outlines the rights of groups to reprint Narcotics Anonymous recovery literature covered under the *Fellowship Intellectual Property Trust* and its bulletins.

**Intent:** To make a clear, simple, and easily accessible Service Pamphlet that groups can purchase or download that makes clear groups' rights in reprinting Narcotics Anonymous literature as defined by the *FIPT*.

**Maker:** Northern New York Region

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**Rationale by Region:** We addicts spent much of our lives living without choice, and we have fought hard in our recovery to regain choice. When there's even the perception that we are having our choice taken from us, as members and as groups - especially from what is often perceived as an authority figure (NAWS), our rebellious nature shines. There is a great deal of misinformation and misunderstanding around the *FIPT* and the rights that groups have to reprint unaltered NA-Approved literature. With misinformation and misunderstanding comes disunity. The hope is that with a simple and clear Service Pamphlet that members and groups can download or purchase, this can help dispel some of the fog of misinformation and misunderstanding, and in doing so help both encourage NA unity while at the same time reinforcing group autonomy and choice.

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**World Board Response:** *FIPT* Bulletin #1 already simply explains the guidelines for reproduction of NA recovery literature, including the rights and responsibilities of NA groups. It would be a relatively simple matter to repackage Bulletin #1 as a service pamphlet, which would go through a 90-day delegate review process. Service pamphlets do tend to be more widely distributed than bulletins. However, as written, Bulletin #1 does not address many of the *FIPT* issues groups struggle with. To maximize the usefulness of an *FIPT* piece for groups, we believe the scope would need to be expanded to include responsibilities as well as rights.

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**Motion 8:** To replace the first paragraph under "What kinds of literature should we use:" in the group booklet as follows:

**Original Paragraph**

NA World Services produces a number of different kinds of publications. However, only NA-approved literature is appropriate for reading in Narcotics Anonymous meetings. Selections from NA-approved books and pamphlets are usually read at the beginning of an NA meeting, and some meetings use them as the core of their format. NA-approved literature represents the widest range of recovery in Narcotics Anonymous.

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This motion splits the original text into two paragraphs and adds the additional language that appears in italics:

NA World Services produces a number of different kinds of publications. However, only NA-approved literature is appropriate for reading in Narcotics Anonymous meetings*, and then only NA-approved edition(s) of literature that conveys a unified message as the most current edition(s). For Basic Texts, this would be the 3rd Edition Revised and newer. Older editions of our literature as well as approval drafts, while valid in history, and while they carry a message of recovery, all carry a message that in some way or ways contradict our current edition(s) of literature and are no longer in unity with the fellowship's conscience regarding our message of recovery.*

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Selections from NA-approved books and pamphlets are usually read at the beginning of an NA meeting, and some meetings use them as the core of their format. NA-approved literature represents the widest range of recovery in Narcotics Anonymous. *It is suggested that meetings that utilize older editions of NA-approved literature acknowledge the current editions of NA-approved literature for the sake of NA unity.*

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**Intent:** To set a standard of appropriate NA literature that is based in unity of message while reinforcing group autonomy to use literature other than the current approved edition(s).

**Maker:** Northern New York Region

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**Rationale by Region:** At the WSC 2016, the question came up regarding what is appropriate literature for NA meetings? Where do we draw the line? How do we balance group autonomy with NA unity? After discussion inside and outside the region, we have agreed that the unity must start with our message and that our message of recovery remains unified back to the 3rd Edition Revised Basic Text. It carries the same message as more current editions of literature, just grammatically different. Editions prior to the 3rd Edition Revised have one or more contradictions to our current message contained within and while they each have a powerful message contained within, they are no longer in unity with our fellowship's conscience regarding the NA message of recovery. By acknowledging literature back to the 3rd Edition Revised, we reinforce group autonomy to choose to previous edition(s) of NA-approved literature – while at the same time reinforcing NA unity through unity of our message.

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**World Board Response:** The 2016 WSC addressed this in its *FIPT* discussion, including whether the six points describing “What is an NA group?” should be revised to include that NA groups only read NA-approved literature, a point made later in *The Group Booklet*. We believe it would be simpler and clearer to express that groups should utilize currently approved literature. The revisions suggested in this motion may raise questions for members unfamiliar with the distinctions between the different editions of the Basic Text and the major shift in terminology that took place with the Third Edition Revised. It also doesn’t seem useful to approve the reading of literature that has not been available for purchase for more than 20 years. While members can use whatever editions they wish in their personal recovery, the Conference decided in 1991 and confirmed in 2008 that only the most current edition of the Basic Text is approved for publication and sale by NAWS. It may be confusing to state in our literature that groups can use literature that is not currently approved for production and sale.

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PAUSE FOR DISCUSSION

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This concludes information on *FIPT*-related motions, but before leaving this topic, we’ll offer information on an *FIPT* inspection request from the South Florida Region and summarize some frequently asked questions that are also included in the *CAR*. Here’s a thumbnail sketch of the background on this request and a snapshot of the current status, but we encourage members to read the complete *Fellowship Intellectual Property Trust* essay in the *CAR*.

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In December 2016, the South Florida Region passed a motion to “…agree in principle…[to] request an inspection of the records and operations of NA World Services per the *Fellowship Intellectual Property Trust* (*FIPT*)…” The day after our April 2017 Board meeting, NAWS received a request from the South Florida Region detailing 10 concerns, some which seem unrelated to the *FIPT.* This being a legal matter, the Board consulted with attorneys and discussed it at length at our July meeting.

This was a request to invoke a legal inspection as called for in the trust document. We needed to understand clearly what we were being asked and we quickly realized we needed some clarification from the region following our July meeting. We’re currently awaiting a response from the region to our request for clarification that was sent in August.

Following are some frequently asked questions about the *FIPT* and this request, which are available in their complete form in the *CAR*.

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**QUESTION:** Doesn’t the *FIPT* say that any region can request an inspection?

**ANSWER:** Yes, but the request, as submitted, may not conform to the guidelines laid out in the *FIPT*. To begin with, the motion passed by the requesting region appears only to have authorized that they agreed in principle that an inspection request be drafted. To date, we have not been able to confirm that the region had the opportunity to review or approve the specific request that was submitted on their behalf. We have requested clarification from the region.

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**QUESTION**: Why did NAWS consult an attorney?

**ANSWER**: The *FIPT* is a legal document filed in the state of California. The request from the region relates directly to this document, so it seemed prudent to consult legal counsel. This is new territory for us. No region has ever called for an inspection, so there’s no experience to draw on for enacting this provision.

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**QUESTION**: Why the delay? Is NAWS stonewalling?

**ANSWER**: Some people have incorrectly compared the inspection request and the time we’re taking to fulfill that request to asking your home group’s treasurer to see the group’s records and being refused. We can see how this comparison could cause alarm. Others have noted that a more apt comparison would be a scenario in which a group member asks the treasurer to spend money and is told by the treasurer that s/he would need to consult with the rest of the group. We aren’t stonewalling; we’re simply trying to be responsible stewards of the Fellowship’s resources.

Put simply, it just takes time to work through all that’s involved with this request. Getting clarification from the region is our first order of business. It’s not clear that they intended to initiate this large of a project—the estimated fees from our CPA are $100,000 for their involvement alone—so we felt obliged to inform the region about the level of time and effort involved in the enterprise, as proposed, and the expense this labor would generate. It also seemed to us that the WSC would want a chance to discuss the matter, given the level of investment this request would require.

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**QUESTION**: Why don’t you just give them what gets handed to the auditors?

**ANSWER**: We hire a reputable independent CPA firm to perform an annual audit of NAWS’ finances. Their team spends weeks in the Chatsworth office each spring reviewing a myriad of randomly selected documents and ledgers, independently contacting each of the banks we use, and comparing our practices and records to published policies and established accounting practices. This annual audit costs us between $20,000 and $30,000, and the results are reviewed by an audit committee, presented to the Board, and published in each Annual Report. This process conforms to accounting industry standards and has not been called into question previously by the WSC. Annual Reports that include the independent auditor’s report dating back to 2003 are posted online at [www.na.org/ar](http://www.na.org/ar). Again, we’re still awaiting clarification from the region, but it doesn’t seem like the request is simply to duplicate this process

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**QUESTION**: Why wait for the WSC to resolve this?

**ANSWER**: Given the investment of Fellowship funds required—even if the request were to be scaled back—we feel compelled to consult with the Conference and give the WSC an opportunity to address this matter. NAWS is moving forward with all deliberate speed while maintaining our commitment to integrity and accountability. It’s an important matter, and it’s worth taking the time to resolve this thoughtfully.

Regional delegates have every right to raise legitimate concerns about trust-related activities. When and if an inspection is performed, we want to be sure it addresses the needs of NA as a whole. If the Conference shares the requesting region’s concerns, we would immediately comply with a request.

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**QUESTION**: What’s this talk about changing the *FIPT* as a result of this request?

**ANSWER**: The inspection provision in the *FIPT* has not been updated since the document was approved by the WSC in 1993. We were a much smaller Fellowship at that time, and our services and budgets were organized differently in those days. As part of a comprehensive review, World Services was restructured, and a single, unified budget replaced separate budgets for the Office, Conference, & Convention. This took place years after the *FIPT* was approved. Prior to the restructuring, the office and convention budgets were not reviewed and approved by the Conference.  Since restructuring, the Conference reviews and approves all our operating expenses in a unified budget. As a result of this restructuring, one Board—the World Board of NA—would be elected by and accountable to the World Service Conference.

And while all of that makes sense in terms of accountability, it does complicate matters in terms of an *FIPT* inspection. Income and expenses associated with the intellectual property held in trust are not tracked separately; they’re now mixed with other revenue streams at World Services, and none of our expenses are categorized as *FIPT* or non-*FIPT* expenses. Separating out trust-related funds from current ledgers would be no small task.

The resources that would be required to fulfill the request, as written, set off some alarm bells. We were not comfortable devoting that much time and money without consulting the WSC. The idea that a single region can initiate an inspection process, without regard to its cost, seems more aligned with the WSC of the early 1990s than with the collaborative, consensus-based body we have today. Given the nature of our Conference today, we feel obliged to give the WSC an opportunity to discuss the possibility of amending the *FIPT* in the future.

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We hope this presentation has helped in your discussion of this material. Please note that there are four other videos that focus on other *CAR* contents. These videos, the *Conference Agenda Report*, and the *CAR* survey are available online at [www.na.org/conference](http://www.na.org/conference). Hard copies of the *CAR* may be purchased from NA World Services.

We welcome your questions and your feedback on these videos, the CAR, and all other issues at [worldboard@na.org](worldboard%40na.org).