**Rural Service and Recovery Web Meeting**

**Approach for Workshop:**

Review and add to the list of challenges associated with rural service and recovery prior to the meeting. Decide in advance of meeting which general heading to focus on for the first meeting, with the understanding that the intent in to hold regular meetings in the future.

Share any locally developed resources prior to the meeting. These can then either be shared with attendees during the meeting, or emailed afterwards. We are also in the process of gathering locally developed resources to share on the service system webpage on na.org.

Open meeting by reviewing this list and adding any additional challenges.

Attendees share any solutions and resources they may have had success with, and discuss any processes and resources used to start the process of change.

Decide on the focus of the next meeting.

**Challenges**

These issues have been gathered from our recent correspondence with members that have expressed an interest in the rural web meeting. The list is by no means exhaustive and can be added to. The challenges have been grouped under general headings to aid the discussion process.

**Group support and resources**

Limited human and financial resources

Financial struggles in keeping multiple meetings a week open (frequently 5-9) with a large portion of attendees being from treatment and/or a small number of local members. Large financial commitment just to keep keytags and IPs available for newcomers.

Trusted servant burnout

Dominant personalities in small groups

Lack of experience in relation to applying principles of the Traditions

Limited options for newcomers in terms of support, sponsorship, rides to meetings etc.

Lack of sponsorship availability for all (from newcomers to old timers).

Encouraging rehab clients to attend NA once they’ve finished rehab

Retaining members who come to NA through rehab

Providing copies of meeting lists from multiple areas for new members from local treatment centers that go back to their local communities.

Attendance at groups due to large geographical distances and terrain

Attendance at groups due to seasonally inclement weather

Starting new groups in rural areas where no NA currently exists

Nurturing growth of rural groups

Lack of variety when it comes to who’s attending (and sharing in) rural meetings

Low population base means there are fewer addicts in the community

Groups overwhelmed by drug court attendees

Groups overwhelmed by treatment center attendees

Limited options to rent space for meetings

**Issues with other fellowships**

Mixing NA and AA message

More experience can be found in local AA communities so they tend to be more available to do service

**Service delivery**

Attendance at service meetings due to large geographical distances and terrain

Attendance at service meetings due to seasonally inclement weather

Literature distribution to isolated groups

Rural groups feel underserved by urban-based service bodies that they are a member of

PR in rural areas

H&I service in prisons where there is no NA in that community makes it difficult to make a case for NA as a recovery resource

Local members also are treatment center H&I panel members and trying to provide support to local meeting and H&I facility is difficult.

Addicts from treatment centers also need rides to meetings which becomes difficult to provide when trying to abide by H&I guideline suggestions.

Denial of the existence of a drug problem within rural communities

**Communication**

Facilitating communication between experienced groups and those that are newly established

Twelfth Step calls and other means of reaching out to addicts in rural areas

Lack of internet service or email accounts that are checked or used regularly

Skype or conference calls aren’t as effective as personal attendance

**Connection to the Fellowship outside of the immediate community**

How to help groups and members to attend local conventions and unity days in order to connect to the wider NA community

**Miscellaneous**

Anonymity in small rural communities

Challenge with local members also being employed by local treatment centers which leads to difficulties for treatment center clients making a clear delineation between NA and treatment

**Solutions**

**Communication**

Using online technology to facilitate communication and virtual attendance. Examples include Facebook, Twitter, Skype, GoToMeeting, conference calls, and Adobe Connect.

Online recovery meetings and literature that offers guidelines for establishing them.

Continue to mail hard copies of minutes for members without internet access.

**Resources**

Update IP#21, The Loner: Staying Clean in Isolation.

Contribute to the service structure financially when possible to foster the understanding that the group is a part of the whole.

Ask for funds from area when needed.

**Connection to the Fellowship outside of the immediate community**

Travel – home group members travel to different cities to attend other NA meetings and conventions outside the area, region, and state. Take newcomers to events such as this when they can go.

Sponsors take sponsees to struggling groups

Stay connected to the service structure and participate at area - no matter what.

**Service delivery**

Special one-time H&I events if resources don’t allow for a regular panel, such as phone connections to enable inmates to hear shares at unity days or convention meetings.

Regularly send literature and meeting lists to local jails.

Utilize ideas related to the SSP such as the GSF and LSC/LSB.

Shared services.

Rotate location of service meetings.

Centrally located service meetings.

Food and/or recovery activity at service meetings.

Open participation at service meetings.

Short term service commitments.

PSAs on local media.

We have made our home group meeting space available to regional subcommittee and event meetings as we are centrally located between the 2 metropolitan areas. This provides us with a few extra dollars each month (the committee's normally make a small contribution). This also gets members from out of town coming to our meetings and exposes our local members to other levels or kinds of service that they may not otherwise see. Since we are not able to contribute financially to our ASC consistently we volunteer to host the ASC meeting when it rotates a few times a year. The normal ASC rent allocation that we receive, we are able to return back to the area as part of the way we can participate in being self-supporting.

**Group and local community support**

REALLY make a big deal out of NA anniversaries, and have outside speakers and food and really talk it up as an example of what we CAN do.

Plan annual events, even if only local members show up.

Group format ideas:

* Literature studies
* Rotating formats

Inter-group activities such as Steal the Banner.

Speaker recordings, possibly obtained from a regional website, for use in isolated meetings.

We have purposely not formed any home group guidelines for participation at our business meetings/group conscience (like we hear from other larger groups) as we don't want to limit participation in any way to our decision making processes.

We have very “structured" meetings with 3 of our 5 nightly meetings being book studies. This keeps us solution oriented with less "treatment talk" and focused on the NA message. Other formats that have worked well for us is a Q&A basket meeting (questions are written and put in basket and members with a year or more share their answers). Another is a weekly IP study using Sponsorship, Triangle of ..., What is the NA Program, etc. rotating these throughout the month.

We keep baskets of cups, sugar, creamer, etc. on tables and take turns pouring coffee throughout the meeting. This keeps the "traffic" down so people are not having to get up and down so frequently during the meeting. This help us to be less distracted and focused on the meeting.

We have a NO cell phone suggestion which we highly encourage to reduce distraction.