Virtual Service Basics – Draft Outline November 2024

Introduction
- What's in this resource (considering the effective length of the piece vs. the need to include all the relevant material.)
- What are virtual services?
- Why might we need virtual services?
- Brief history of virtual services, including the recognition of virtual groups at WSC 2023.
- What are the terms/language we're going to use? (Include a glossary at the end of the document.)
- Links to other resources.

Virtual Groups and Their Role in the Service System
- Options for virtual groups to participate in geographic service bodies.
- What guidance is needed for including virtual groups as part of geographic service bodies? Some may be a better fit than others – it may take time for a group to find the right service body.
- What services can virtual groups help to provide? This might include virtual outreach, virtual H&I panels, and what else?
- Relationship between virtual groups and in-person groups in the same community.
- Challenges of virtual groups participating in geographic service bodies: Members from outside the geographic area participating in local service decisions, difficulties with attending in-person service meetings, finding ways for remote members to be involved in service work.
- Benefits of virtual groups participating in geographic service bodies: Broader group conscience with increased participation, virtual group members may have technical skills that aid virtual service provision.

Virtual Service Bodies and Committees
- When to be virtual, and when to be in person?
- How to start a virtual service body.
- Options for coming together as virtual service bodies: language, time zones, geography, common needs – offer options?
- Options for virtual service bodies to connect to the wider service system. What guidance can be offered? Some may be a better fit than others – it may take time to find the right service body.

Examples of Virtual Services
Talk about the potential for growth in services, using real world examples. Include examples of how areas, regions, zones, and NA World Services may be better suited for different tasks.
- PR events
- H&I panels
- Parolee panels
- Virtual Sponsorship
- Virtual Outreach
- Virtual Fellowship workshops and presentations
- Translations

Collaborating Virtually
- Bridging geographic distances.
- Increasing accessibility.
- Sharing common experience.
- Pooling resources that address common needs.

Challenges and Benefits of Virtual Service Bodies
- Challenges of virtual service bodies: Technology challenges, cost of internet access in some communities, time zone differences.
- Benefits of virtual service bodies: More accessibility for trusted servants who are geographically distant or have additional needs, convenience of technology, new ways to provide services.
- Successful strategies for in-person service bodies (regions) to reach out to virtual service bodies (areas): overcoming doubts, ways to integrate virtual and in-person, how are virtual/in-person the same?
- Best practices for virtual service: what works in some places may not work in others – suggest options.

Hybrid Service Meetings
- What are hybrid service meetings?
- How can hybrid meetings help deliver services?
- Common technical challenges.
- Common facilitation challenges.
- Equipment basics.

Virtual Fund Flow
We are drafting a separate piece of material about this topic as this seems like an issue for all service bodies, not just those that function virtually. There will be a link to that piece from Virtual Service Basics. If you have any additional thoughts about virtual fund flow, you are welcome to share them here.
- Fund flow – what does the literature say about contributing to other levels of service?
- Options for making contributions virtually.
- Maintaining accountability.
- Virtual bank accounts – best practices.
- Focus on general principles/Traditions rather than specifics that may vary by location: inclusivity, accessibility, accountability.

Virtual Events
Depending on the finished length of Virtual Service Basics, this topic may also become a separate piece of material that is linked to. If you have any thoughts about virtual events, you are welcome to share them here.
- Planning events virtually.
- Hosting events virtually.
- Incorporating virtual elements into in-person events.

Best Practices
- Guidance on ownership of meeting platform accounts.
- Beware of redundancy and of focusing on just one or two platforms.
- Access to passwords and accounts.
- Awareness of data limits in some parts of the world.
- Scheduling virtual meetings.
- Use of AI to take notes in service meetings, including guidance about anonymity concerns when recording meetings.

Training
- What training is needed?
- Which service bodies could provide training?
- Virtual mentorship for less developed service bodies.
- Formats for training resources.

Virtual Communications
- The role of websites and cloud-based file storage in virtual services.
- Email and messaging app lists.
- Social media.