

## AA Group Inventory Information

The AA spirit of unity is fostered in a healthy group!

Talk to your group about taking an inventory.

“A business which takes no regular inventory usually goes broke” *BB pg. 64.*

“Many groups periodically hold a “group inventory meeting” to evaluate how well they are fulfilling their primary purpose: to help alcoholics recover through A.A.’s suggested Twelve Steps of recovery.” *The A.A. Group pamphlet pg. 29*

The Group GSR or an impartial third party (another GSR, DCM, or DCMC) can facilitate. Let the group conscience decide.

Set a date. Get started!

Here are some suggestions on the details of conducting an inventory. Feel free to use these as you find them appropriate for your group.

- The GSR can select questions from the AA Group pamphlet and the AA Grapevine Traditions Checklist. You may want to focus on Tradition 1 (unity), Tradition 2 (group conscience), Tradition 3 (inclusivity), and Tradition 5 (primary purpose).
- As the GSR, you know your group and their strengths and weaknesses. Include questions that will lead to healthy discussions on both of these.
- Send your list of questions to the group ahead of the meeting.
- If it is appropriate for your group, begin the meeting with a prayer. Perhaps the Serenity Prayer or the Set Aside Prayer.
- Let the group know that everyone will have a chance to speak to each question; each person speaking only once until all that wish to speak have done so.
- Try to discourage back and forth discussion. All comments are to be directed to the facilitator.
- If your group is large, you may need to put a time limit on comments.
- If you have an opinion to share, do so, but make sure you do not dominate the discussion. As GSR, you are to be as impartial as possible.
- Solutions may be offered, but no vote will be taken at this time.
- Take notes and offer a full write up of the inventory to all members of the group.
- After the group has a chance to review the information, another group conscience meeting can be scheduled to discuss the solutions offered in the inventory.

Many groups periodically hold a “group inventory meeting” to evaluate how well they are fulfilling their primary purpose: to help alcoholics recover through A.A.’s suggested Twelve Steps of recovery. Some groups take inventory by examining our Twelve Traditions, one at a time, to determine how well they are living up to these principles.

The following questions, compiled from A.A. shared experience, may be useful in arriving at an informed group conscience; Groups will probably wish to add questions of their own:

1. What is the basic purpose of the group?
2. What more can the group do to carry the message?
3. Is the group attracting alcoholics from different backgrounds? Are we seeking a good cross-section of our community, including those with special needs?
4. Do new members stick with us, or does the turnover seem excessive? If so, why? What can we as a group do?
5. Do we emphasize the importance of sponsorship How effectively? How can we do better?
6. Are we careful to preserve the anonymity of our group members and other A.A.s outside meeting rooms? Do we also leave the confidences they share at meetings behind?
7. Do we take the time to explain to all members the value to the group of keeping up with the kitchen/housekeeping chores and other essential services that are part-and-parcel of our Twelfth-step efforts?
8. Are all members given the opportunity to speak at meetings and to participate in other group activities?
9. Mindful that holding office is a great responsibility not to be viewed as the outcome of a popularity contest, are we choosing our officers with care?
10. Are we doing all we can to provide an attractive and accessible meeting place?
11. Does the group do its fair share toward participating in the purpose of A.A.—as it relates to our three Legacies of Recovery, Unity, and Service?
12. What has the group done lately to bring the A.A. message to the attention of professionals in the community—the physicians, clergy, court officials, educators, and others who are often the first to see alcoholics in need of help?
13. How is the group fulfilling its responsibility to the Seventh Tradition?

About those AA Group Problems...

Group problems are often evidence of a healthy, desirable diversity of opinion among the group members. They give us a chance, in the words of Step Twelve, to “practice these principles in all our affairs.”

Group problems may include such common A.A. questions as: What should the group do about members who return to drinking? How can we boost lagging attendance at meetings? How can we get more people to help with group chores? What can we do about one member’s anonymity break, or another’s attempts to attract the romantic interest of newcomers? How can we get out from under those old-timers who insist they know what’s best for the group? And how can we get more of the old-timers to share their experience in resolving group dilemmas?

Almost every group problem can be solved through the process of an informed group conscience, AA principles, and our Twelve Traditions. Some groups find that their GSR or DCM can be helpful. For all involved, a good sense of humor, cooling-off periods, patience, courtesy, willingness to listen and to wait - plus a sense of fairness and trust in a “Power greater than ourselves” - have been found far more effective than legalistic arguments or personal accusations.

**Tradition One: Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on AA unity.**

1. Am I in my group a healing, mending, integrating person, or am I divisive? What about gossip and taking other members' inventories?
2. Am I a peacemaker? Or do I, with pious preludes such as "just for the sake of discussion," plunge into argument?
3. Am I gentle with those who rub me the wrong way, or am I abrasive?
4. Do I make competitive AA remarks, such as comparing one group with another or contrasting AA in one place with AA in another?
5. Do I put down some AA activities as if I were superior for not participating in this or that aspect of AA?
6. Am I informed about AA as a whole? Do I support, in every way I can, AA as a whole, or just the parts I understand and approve of?
7. Am I considerate of AA members as I want them to be of me?
8. Do I spout platitudes about love while indulging in and secretly justifying behavior that bristles with hostility?
9. Do I go to enough AA meetings or read enough AA literature to really keep in touch.
10. Do I share with AA all of me, the bad and the good, accepting as well as giving the help of fellowship?

**Tradition Two: For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.**

1. Do I criticize, or do I trust and support my group officers, AA committees, and office workers? Newcomers? Old-timers?
2. Am I absolutely trustworthy, even in secret, with AA Twelfth Step jobs or other AA responsibility?
3. Do I look for credit in my AA jobs? Praise for my AA ideas?
4. Do I have to save face in group discussion, or can I yield in good spirit to the group conscience and work cheerfully along with it?
5. Although I have been sober a few years, am I willing to serve my turn at chores?
6. In group discussions, do I sound off about matters on which I have no experience and little knowledge?

**Tradition Three: There is only one requirement for membership is the desire to stop drinking.**

1. In my mind, do I prejudge some new AA members as losers?
2. Is there some kind of alcoholic whom I privately do not want in my AA group?
3. Do I set myself up as a judge of whether a newcomer is sincere or phony?
4. Do I let language, religion (or lack of it), race, education, age, or other such things interfere with my carrying the message?
5. Am I overimpressed by a celebrity? By a doctor, a clergyman, an ex-convict? Or can I just treat this new member simply and naturally as one more sick human, like the rest of us?
6. When someone turns up at AA needing information or help (even if he can't ask for it aloud), does it really matter to me what he does for a living? Where he lives? What his domestic arrangements are? Whether he had been to AA before? What his other problems are?

**Tradition Five: Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.**

1. Do I ever cop out by saying, "I'm not a group, so this or that Tradition doesn't apply to me"?
2. Am I willing to explain firmly to a newcomer the limitations of AA help, even if he gets mad at me for not giving him a loan?
3. Have I today imposed to any AA member for a special favor or consideration simply because I am a fellow alcoholic?
4. Am I willing to twelve-step the next newcomer without regard to who or what is in it for me?
5. Do I help my group in every way I can to fulfill our primary purpose?
6. Do I remember that AA old-timers, too, can be alcoholics who still suffer? Do I try both to help them to learn from them?

*Traditions Checklist from AA Grapevine*

*These questions were originally published in the AA Grapevine in conjunction with a series on the Twelve Traditions that began November 1969 and ran through September 1971. While they were originally intended primarily for individual use, many AA groups have since used them as a basis for wider discussion.*