

Hawai'i Area 17 Proposal for Motion Template

Submitted by: O I G C h a i r
Contact Name: Mary N., Chair
Phone Number: 808.292.0278 **Email:** chair@oahucentralorrice.com

Motion: Create an Area 17 Standing Committee focused on Safety and Inclusion

Intent/Purpose:

- Support A.A.'s Primary Purpose by helping create meeting environments where all alcoholics feel safe, welcome, and able to participate
- Provide experience, resources, and shared best practices related to safety and inclusivity within A.A. meetings and service events
- Assist districts, groups and island intergroups without directing or governing them, in keeping with the Twelve Traditions
- Help to foster an environment in Area 17 service that is welcoming to everyone
- In this way help to create a more diverse Area 17 service body
- Be a resource to the Area Body regarding effective communication across difference so that everyone feels welcome and safe in A.A. This may include helping to create sessions for GSR and DCM schools, Group meeting Secretaries, Service Committee Sharing sessions, and Orientation.
- Research other Areas to see how they are doing in this effort.
- In this work, stay mindful of A.A. traditions and history to protect our common welfare.

Current Practice: No such committee exists at present.

Background:

As we consider this proposal: Some Thoughts from Bill W. in The Language of the Heart— Bill W's Grapevine Writings—From the 1950's and For Today

"Could A.A. really and fully transcend all of those formidable barriers of race, language, religion, and culture; all of those scars of wars, recent and ancient; all of those kinds of pride and prejudice of which we knew we had our share in America?"

Here, Bill acknowledges that A.A. exists in and of a time and place. He asks if inside the rooms, we can transcend its divisions, and he suggests the following:

"We need to learn how to communicate across cultures not just language. We need to understand the difference between intention and impact and be sensitive to it in order to successfully carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers. We need to not worry about what other people are doing or not doing in this regard. We each need to take that responsibility on ourselves."

He also gives an example to remind us that being able to communicate across differences doesn't mean we ignore them or pretend they don't exist. In fact, effective communication not only sees difference but honors it, uses what's unique about our differences to bring us together where we can then acknowledge our shared humanity and solve our common problem.

"In the beginning, for instance, it was four whole years before A.A. brought permanent sobriety to even **one** alcoholic woman. Like the high bottoms the women said they were different; A.A. couldn't be for them. But as the communication was perfected, mostly by the women themselves, the picture changed.

The ESTABLISHMENT OF A STANDING COMMITTEE is necessary and prudent in the world we live in today! The committee's work would reflect the Area 17's desire to learn how individually, and as the Body, we can communicate more effectively with other human beings—with all our differences and "in spite of all those kinds of pride and prejudice"—to protect our common welfare and break down barriers to participating in service.

Traditions:

Tradition 1: "Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity." — Tradition One (Short Form)

"Each member of Alcoholics Anonymous is but a small part of a great whole. A.A. must continue to live, or most of us will surely die. Hence our common welfare comes first. But individual welfare follows close afterward." — Tradition One (Long Form)

It also seems true that A.A. unity depends on personal recovery. Personal responsibility means we work our steps a day at a time to help protect the unity of the group. Then the group works the traditions to help us be able to work our steps. It's a perfect circle around a triangle.

Tradition 3: There are no requirements for A.A. membership other than a desire to stop drinking.

We're not a private club. No one will be screened or left out because of their race, ethnicity, sexual identity, spiritual practices, mental or physical health challenges, or inability to pay dues. Everyone is welcome, so difference is welcome. We don't have to hide differences to be active members of A.A.. As long as we take personal responsibility for the welfare of the group, just like every other member, we get to share fully about who we are, no matter who we are.

Tradition 4: Groups are autonomous, that there is no central authority or government in A.A..

Therefore, the responsibility to protect the safety of A.A. members lies with the group through solutions arrived at through informed group conscience.

Tradition 5: Each Alcoholics Anonymous group ought to be a spiritual entity having but one primary purpose — that of carrying its message to the alcoholic who still suffers. — Tradition Five (Long Form)

Tradition 9: A.A. ought never be organized but may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.

Area 17 Standing Committees are formed to serve the groups, districts, intergroups and central offices of Area 17.

Tradition 10: A.A. has no opinion on outside issues; thus, the AA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.

Tradition 10 specifically mentions *public* controversy. Not internal controversy the could

be caused by a difference in opinion on a member's personal identity. It does not say that one's race, ethnicity, sexual identity, spiritual practices, mental or physical health challenges are outside issues that can never come up in A.A. meetings. Personal identity mentioned in a recovery share does not qualify as an outside issue. Nor does raising a safety concern within the rooms qualify as an outside issue. If it happens inside the rooms, or in the case of harassment, in and around a meeting whether in progress or not ... it's not an outside issue.

Budgetary Impact:

- SCC chair for Committee attendance at Assemblies/additional person to annual budget.
- The initial Budget Line Items for Safety and Inclusivity would be high to establish the Standing Committee. Some suggestions:
 - Survey platform fees 200
 - Workshops 600 – proposal to conduct a panel/workshop on each island after a committee meeting with light refreshments
 - Printing 200

Service Material from the General Service Office



PDF DOWNLOAD - FLYERS

[Safety and A.A. Flyer](#)

... [Safety and A.A. Flyer F-228 - Safety and A.A. Flyer ...](#)



RESOURCES - FLYERS

[Safety Card for A.A. Groups](#)

... [Safety Card for A.A. Groups F-211 Safety Card for A.A. ...](#)



RESOURCES - GUIDELINES

[A.A. Guidelines on Safety and A.A. Groups](#)

... [A.A. Guidelines on Safety and A.A. Groups ... A.A. Guidelines on Safety and A.A. Groups ...](#)

SAFETY CARD FOR A.A. GROUPS

The General Service Office has made this optional card available as an A.A. service piece for in-person/online groups that wish to use it. Please feel free to utilize, choose a section(s) or adapt the text to your group's needs.

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

Any person seeking help with a drinking problem is welcome at this group. No A.A. entity determines an individual's membership in Alcoholics Anonymous. It is this group's conscience that if any person endangers another individual or disrupts the group's efforts to carry A.A.'s message, the group may ask that person to leave the meeting.

This group strives to safeguard the anonymity of A.A. members and attendees; however, keep in mind that anonymity in A.A. is not a cloak for unsafe and illegal behavior. Addressing such behavior and/or contacting the proper authorities when appropriate, does not go against any A.A. Traditions and is meant to ensure the safety of all in attendance.

The short form of Tradition One states: "Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity." Recognizing the importance of group unity, our group strives to create a safe meeting environment in which alcoholics can focus on achieving sobriety.

Service Material from the General Service Office

Additional Sharing:

- Safety is a topic within A.A. that groups and members can address. Developing workable solutions to help keep meetings safe can be based on the principles of A.A. In discussions about safety, keep the focus on our primary purpose, our common welfare, and placing principles before personalities.
- Predatory behaviors and unwanted sexual advances are in conflict with carrying the A.A. message of recovery and with A.A. principles.
- A.A. does not provide medical advice or detox services; it has no opinion on outside issues, including medication. Medical advice should come from a qualified physician.
- The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking. Groups and members strive to create a safe environment for the alcoholic who still suffers.
- If safety concerns arise, individuals can speak with a sponsor, members of the group, a trusted friend and/or a professional to address the concern.
- Service entities, such as areas, districts and intergroup/central offices, are available to help provide A.A. services and shared experience. All groups and entities in A.A. are autonomous. There is no government within A.A. and no central authority to control or direct its members, but we do share our experience, strength and hope.

For more information on this topic, see the "A.A. Guidelines on Safety and A.A. Groups" (MG-25) at aa.org.

24M – 1025 (GP)

Rev. 4/22

Item F-211

[Safety and A.A.: Our Common Welfare](#)

A.A.® Guidelines

Safety & A.A. Groups

from GSO, Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163

A.A. Guidelines are compiled from the shared experience of A.A. members in various service areas. They also reflect guidance given through the Twelve Traditions and the General Service Conference (U.S. and Canada). In keeping with our Tradition of autonomy, except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole, most decisions are made by the group conscience of the members involved. The purpose of these Guidelines is to assist in reaching an *informed* group conscience.

INTRODUCTION

Bill W., who always emphasized the loving, helpful, and tolerant attitude A.A. members should show each other, wrote in a letter in 1969: "This amount of charity does not mean that we cannot exclude those who disturb meetings or seriously interfere with the functioning of the group. Such people can be asked to quiet down or go elsewhere, or, to come back when they are better able to participate."

Indeed, Bill W. was no stranger to tumult, controversy, or disturbances at A.A. meetings. He also had faith that growth and good could come out of trouble. In *Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age*, he writes, "Within A.A., I suppose, we shall always quarrel a good bit. Mostly, I think, about how to do the greatest good for the greatest number of drunks (...) Surmounting such problems, in A.A.'s rather rugged school of life, is a healthy exercise." (p. 233).

1. THE A.A. GROUP

GROUP AUTONOMY

There is no government in A.A., and no central authority to control or direct members. As embodied in the Fourth Tradition, the formation and operation of an A.A. group resides with the group conscience of its members. As expressed in Tradition Two and Tradition Nine, it is through an informed group conscience that individual members and A.A. groups find solutions to group matters as they relate to safety.

A.A.'s Twelve Traditions developed as a statement of the principles that A.A. members formulated out of their experience of trying to

GROUP SAFETY AND UNITY

As noted in many of our Conference-approved pamphlets, each A.A. group endeavors to provide a safe meeting place for all attendees and to encourage a secure and nurturing environment. In A.A., the shared experience, strength and hope of sober alcoholics is the lifeline to sobriety; our common suffering and our common solution transcends most difficulties, helping us to create the conditions in which to carry A.A.'s message of hope and recovery to the still-suffering alcoholic.

Safety-related concerns that groups (whether in person or online) have addressed through their group conscience have included:

- Threats of violence, bullying, or stalking
- Sexual harassment, predatory behavior
- Financial coercion
- Discrimination based on race, native language, culture, age, or sexual orientation
- Gender intolerance
- Pressure to adopt a particular view or belief relating to medical treatments and/or medications
- Pressure to adhere to a particular ideology, religious belief, custom or practice

Our Traditions suggest that anyone seeking help from A.A. should be welcomed and supported in their recovery. Our experience seems to show that anyone can be an alcoholic. And, beyond question, anyone who wants to stop drinking is welcome in A.A.

Quoted from the A.A. Guidelines on Safety and A.A. Groups (MG-25)