

June 12, 2020

Greetings to Area 51 Members,

We have received some inquiries about the process of reopening meeting spaces. As an Area, we do not issue mandates and regulations for groups to meet in order to hold in-person meetings. It is up to the groups to decide what policies and procedures they wish to follow through discussion and forming a group conscience. We have listed a few items below for your consideration while determining when and how to begin having in-person meeting.

When can AA groups safely re-open meetings?

- The State of NC, while in phase 2, has limited the number of people meeting indoors to 10. Gatherings outdoors are limited to 25. These guidelines change regularly and your town or county may have more restrictive measures in place. Be aware of the state and local guidelines as you make decisions about the safety of meeting in person.
- The NC Department of Health and Human Services has recommended wearing a face covering, staying 6 feet apart and washing your hands frequently for 20 seconds or using hand sanitizer.
- The building where a group meets may have certain criteria to be met in order for group to meet, therefore it is important to connect with the landlord prior to resuming in-person meetings.

What Safety Protocols Should Groups Have in Place?

- It is up to the group to decide:
  - The number of people
  - Recommended distancing (6ft apart)
  - Wearing face coverings
  - Non-contact temperature taking
  - Sanitizing high-touch surfaces
  - Refreshments and common areas
  - 7<sup>th</sup> Tradition baskets
  - Sharing literature and readings

How Do We Collect 7<sup>th</sup> Tradition Contributions?

- Consider having one group member carry the basket around
- Consider digital options of contributing  
[https://aanorthcarolina.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/SMF-223-FAQonVirtualBasket\\_en.pdf](https://aanorthcarolina.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/SMF-223-FAQonVirtualBasket_en.pdf)

What is Contact Tracing and How Can Groups Participate While Maintaining Anonymity?

- Groups should have a plan prepared ahead of time to protect everyone's health and anonymity.
- Consider how your group would inform other members, attendees, and DHHS Contact Tracers if someone attended and tested positive for COVID-19.
- What NC's contact tracing looks like.  
<https://files.nc.gov/covid/documents/about/tracing/Contact-Tracing-Flowchart.pdf>

## A.A. and the Law

- *Common sense and experience suggest that A.A. membership does not grant immunity from local regulations and being at an A.A. meeting does not put anyone beyond the jurisdiction of law enforcement officers. As individuals, A.A. members are also "citizens of the world," and as citizens we are not above the law. - [Safety and A.A.: Our Common Welfare](#)*

Many groups have been meeting virtually using technology such as Zoom, while others have been meeting in parking lots or other outdoor venues. While North Carolina loosens the restrictions put in place due to the pandemic, it is natural for groups to migrate back to their regular face-to-face meetings. It is **crucial** that groups regularly take the pulse of the group conscience, making sure that groups are listening to all voices of the group, from those more comfortable to in-person meetings to those who may have reticence to re-engaging in face-to-face meetings, due to personal reasons, such as being immunocompromised. Options to consider might involve a hybrid approach, where the meetings can phase back to a face-to-face traditional meeting, while providing a mechanism for those to continue to join in virtually.

Groups should be mindful of the Traditions while making these reopening decisions. We need to consider the health and safety of each other and to protect the reputation of A.A. in our communities.

Tradition 1 – Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity.

Tradition 2 – For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority – a loving God as he may express himself in our group conscience.

Tradition 4 – Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups, or A.A. as a whole.

Tradition 10 – Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion of outside issues, hence the A.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.

Tradition 12 – Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

*The first aspect of the Twelve Traditions is 'protection'; the second aspect is 'progress'. We are first reminded what our Fellowship's temptations really are and by what means we may best deal with them. This is our basis for a continuous moral inventory of our collective behavior -- the first step to actively casting aside our road blocks. In the affirmative or positive aspect of the Traditions we learn, both directly and impliedly, how we may best apply the high ideals of sacrifice and willing responsibility, trust and love, in our relations with each other and with the world around us. Out of these practices flows the spiritual energy that moves us along the road to full liberation. – Bill W. Freedom Under God: The Choice is Ours, Grapevine, November, 1960*

Stay Healthy and Stay Safe  
In Love and Service,  
Area 51 Trusted Servants