

What groups need to consider as they decide whether to meet in person again

(From the New England Region Crisis Response Team July 2020)

It is suggested that groups have a detailed plan for reopening in-person meetings. As NA groups, we need to keep our Traditions in mind (paraphrased here):

- 4th Tradition – Groups are autonomous, except when our actions may affect other groups or NA as a whole.
- 10th Tradition – We have no opinion on outside issues, and so should avoid being drawn into public controversy.
- 12th Tradition – We should practice spiritual principles in all our affairs, including selflessness, responsibility, trustworthiness and compassion.

Below are items groups should take into consideration when planning to reopen, and suggestions for addressing them:

Have we visited the websites to CDC and state local guidelines to be sure we are in compliance with them?

Have we spoken to the facility; do we have permission to meet where we rent? Does the facility have any specific requirements that must be adhered to when using the facilities going forward?

Do we have plans for sanitizing before and after the meeting?

- ✓ Clean all tables and chairs before members arrive; and after members leave.
- ✓ Have spray cleaner and paper towels available for those who want to clean their own areas.
- ✓ Make sure that restrooms (if open) have soap for washing hands.

Have we thought about ways to encourage personal safety?

- ✓ Wear your masks/face coverings to meetings.
- ✓ Consider not serving coffee, and suggest that members bring their own drinks.
- ✓ Have hand sanitizer available if possible.

Do we have a socially distant seating plan?

- ✓ Move chairs to allow for space between members.
- ✓ Consider designating a separate area for members with compromised immune systems – could use “reserved” signs on seats; make sure the designated space is away from high-traffic areas.

Are we prepared to take every precaution we can during the meeting?

- ✓ Readings: Download readings/books/IPs to avoid passing literature around the meeting.
- ✓ Contributions: Put the basket in a stationary place; or consider using a money app for donations.
- ✓ Have gloves and sanitizer available for anyone signing papers.
- ✓ Spray keytags with disinfectant prior to the meeting; wear gloves when handing them out.
- ✓ Create electronic versions of phone lists, or exchange phone numbers via text.
- ✓ Refer attendees to websites or apps for meeting schedules instead of using paper lists.
- ✓ Circle up without touching, and maintain physical distance.

Have we thought about ways to accommodate those not yet able to meet in person due to health or other concerns? (Example: hybrid-virtual/physical meeting)

Have we come up with a plan on how to handle situations where we may have an overflow in attendance?

Is there a completely separate space we have permission to use? (A large group, divided within a single room or space, is still a large group)

Have we carefully considered how reopening our meeting will affect our public image?

- ✓ Communicate with members and the public (as needed) about the precautions the group is taking to protect the safety of meeting attendees and the public as a whole.
- ✓ Add an announcement in the meeting format to clearly state and reiterate the precautions being taken to protect members.

Used by permission. Source - John, PR Chair, New England Region's Crisis Response Team, July 2020