

Group 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.

Groups interested in taking regular inventory will find a review of the Tenth Step helpful. 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 seeing a good cross-section of our community?
4. Do new members stick with us, or does 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 the 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 meeting place?
11. Does the group do its fair share toward participating in the purpose of A.A.—as it relate 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 professional 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 responsibilities 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 “slippers”? How can we boost flagging attendance at meetings? How can we get more people to help with group chores? What can we do about one member’s anonymity break? Another’s romantic emphasis on “thirteenth stepping”? How can we get out from under the “bleeding deacons,” those oldtimers who insist they know what’s best for the group? And how can we get more of the oldtimers to share their experience in resolving group dilemmas?

Almost every group problem has a resolution, which usually can be reached through the mechanism of an informed group conscience. Importantly, 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.

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¹ Excerpt from The AA Group, p 30-31